

**St. Paul's United Church
February 11, 2018**

Gathering

Singing

Announcements, Lighting the Christ & Peace Candles

Prelude: Be Thou My Vision - arr. Brant Adams,
Andrew Smart, saxophone

Call to Worship:

Let's go up the mountain.

Let's go up to the place where the land meets the sky

where the earth touches the heavens,

to the place of meeting,

to the place of mists,

to the place of voices and conversations, to the place of listening.

Let us pay attention to the ways through which God speaks,

for God's presence is in, with, and under everything.

The dazzling brightness of God's glory is before us.

Let us go to the mountain, open to God's emerging light,

and listening for God's words.

Hymn: VU 103 How Good, Lord, To Be Here (tune 715)

Prayer: **Holy One, on mountaintops and valley floors**

you reveal to us the light of your love.

Our hearts desire is to bask in the amazing glory

of your divine presence.

With each encounter we are changed and transformed.

Help us, Lord of Light, to live our lives

as a reflection of divine glory.

May we walk among our brothers and sister as a blessing,

bearing light into dark places,

hope to displace despair, and love that casts out hate.

God, be with us as we worship, and as we share

the risk and challenge of living our faith.

Shine in our hearts and lives.

May Your name be praised, glorious God, as we sing:

Lord's Prayer: (VU 959) (sung)

Peace: "The peace of Christ"

Word

Celestial Singers: Everywhere I Go - Natalie Sleeth

YCC Time

YCC Song: VU 299 Teach Me, God, To Wonder

Scripture: Psalm 50 (VU 775)

Musical Praise: O Hold Thou Me Up – Benedetto Marcello

Scripture: Mark 9: 2-9 (Pew Bible pp. 820-1)

Sermon: "The Climb"

Hymn: VU 371 Open My Eyes, That I May See

Response

Offertory: Retrospection - Florence Price

(African-American composer 1887-1953)

Offertory Response: (VU 543)

We give thee but thine own,

what e'er the gift may be;

all that we have is thine alone,

a trust, O God, from thee.

Prayers of God's People

Sending Forth

Hymn: VU 104 We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding

Commissioning & Blessing

Postlude: Fugue all Gigue - D. Buxtehude



Sacred Mountains

We are surrounded by mountains, sacred mountains, which watch over us, beckon us, call us to approach and begin the journey. Mountaineering is a risky venture and exhausting, but our mountains are accessible. Every day we meet them and their magic tells us: just stop, just turn aside here for a few moments, let me lift you to the sacred place. There are no gates or barriers. These mountains don't close after sunset. They just lie in wait, offering a quiet space, inviting us to a new view. Even with the greatest disabilities, the frailest limbs, the faintest heart, there is a place for us. No one is too big or small. No one is unworthy. Touch the mountain and we touch the earth, we touch the universe, we touch God. Just to say we are coming is more than half the journey. It is to say we belong, to enter the wide embrace of the mountainside, and to say, yes, to love. There is a mountain stream for the thirsty and its waters are there for cleansing. There is peace and forgiveness and renewal. The wind of the Spirit sometimes blows strongly, challenging us to stand firm, or gently touches us with memories of God's goodness. Climb the mountain and you see a long way. People you have not noticed. Distant needs which want to say also: "I am here". And in the silence of the sacred space are voices of hope, of joy, of pain, of possibility. Climb the mountain and you will see Jesus. But most roads run past the mountain and hurry away to noise and distraction. Mountains become incidental scenery to be forgotten or photo - shots for two dimensional living. The mountains come and go, hiding in the clouds, emerging to ask again, always patient and knowing, always there for you and me.

~ written by William Loader