

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

We praise you, O God, and celebrate your presence with us.

ORGAN PRELUDE: “Morning Reverie” by Carl Simone

SANDRA RUTTAN

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Collier Street United acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg people. The Anishinaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy, who made treaties 16 & 18 possible.

Hewitt Holmes



Today, as a community of faith, we commit to honouring the history and culture of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

We move forward in a spirit of reconciliation and good relations with all peoples.

LIGHTING OF THE WORSHIP CANDLE

Hewitt Holmes

RESPONSE: VU #414 “God Be Praised at Early Morn” v.2

SANDRA RUTTAN /CHOIR

WELCOME & NEWS

How are you today? **We are blessed and highly favoured.**

Hewitt Holmes

WE PRAISE AND PRAY

Your glory fills all heaven and earth, all time and space.

^WORDS FOR THE GATHERED:

Hewitt Holmes

Come to praise God, all you faithful people!
Come, for God welcomes you and offers to draw close.

Praise to God, who rules over all the earth.

Praise to God, who is as near as our next breath.

Sun and moon and stars shine in praise to God.
God created them and established for each a place.

God has a place for us in this world;

we have come that God may instruct and equip us.

Mountains and hills, trees and animals praise God.
Let all the rulers of the earth do so as well.

God provides abundantly for our needs.

God makes of one family all who dwell on earth.

^ PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND RENEWAL

Hewitt Holmes

***HYMN:** VU 228 “Sing Praises to God” (v. 1,2,3)

SANDRA RUTTAN /CHOIR

SILENCE

WORDS OF LIFE:

Hewitt Holmes

Loving God, glorified on earth by the witness of Jesus Christ,
touch our lives with love that creates disciples,

that we may learn to love one another.

Teach us new attitudes so we will welcome the new heaven and new earth you have promised and work together to live as your people. Amen.

RESPONSE: MV #60 "God, We Give You Heartfelt Praise" by Timothy Tao *SANDRA RUTTAN/CHOIR*

WE GROW IN TOGETHER

Your gifts surround us and dwell within us. We are your children.

^WORDS FROM SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:36, 11:24-26; 15:36 (Inclusive Bible) *Anne Snell*

Let us listen to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church...

^{4:36} There was a certain Levite from Cyprus named Joseph-to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas, which means "encourager."

^{11:24} for he was good and faithful and filled with the Holy Spirit. And a large number of people was brought to Christ.

Barnabas then left for Tarsus to look for Saul,

and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they remained there, meeting with the church and instructing a large number of people. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

^{15:36} After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's return to all the cities where we preached the word of God and see how they're doing."

*This is Life-giving Word for the People of God. **Thanks be to God.***

SERMON: "The Encourager In a Migrant World!" *Hewitt Holmes*

WE RESPOND TOGETHER

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Pie Jesu" by Andrew Lloyd Webber *SANDRA RUTTAN / SHERRY PARKER*

OFFERING & PASTORAL PRAYERS *Hewitt Holmes*

WE GO TO BE GOD'S COMMUNITY

You come to heal our divisions and overcome our prejudices loving us into discipleship.

HYMN: MV# 180 "Sing, Sing Out" v. 1,2,1 *SANDRA RUTTAN/CHOIR*

^CLOSING BLESSING: MV#218 "May the Love of the Lord" *SANDRA RUTTAN/CHOIR*

PIANO POSTLUDE: "Look Up, Child" by L. Daigle, P. Mabury & J. Ingram arr. M. Schinske
SANDRA RUTTAN

ASIAN HERITAGE



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To be candid, when I received an invitation to create a worship service and Bible study for Asian Heritage Month 2018, I hesitated at first. I am grateful for this opportunity to share why I accepted.

Why me? I wondered, when I was asked. Is it because I am “Asian?” There is nothing politically incorrect or derogatory about calling me that, but still, this identification is never easy to accept. Judith Butler writes, in *Vulnerability in Resistance*, that names, categories, and descriptions are applied to us before we even begin to change them or make them on our own. This rings true for me. I was never identified as “Asian” until I came to Canada. The label was applied to me before I was able to articulate what that meant for me. The label “Asian woman” is only applied to a woman when she is outside Asia, usually before she identifies herself as such. When I arrived in Canada I was made to represent all of Asia and all Asian women as if it were natural that, as an “Asian woman,” I would be able to do so.

As a scholar, I have researched how the term “Asia” came about and what it means or points to. I learned that the very notion of Asia is a colonial construct and the product of a Western colonial gaze. It is a name used to differentiate those who migrate into or who are subsumed by the colonial or non-Asian space, in my case, Canada. (I wrote about it in *What Young Asian Theologians Are Thinking*, edited by Leow Theng Huat.) The application of the term “Asian” to me implicitly communicates that I am not from here, even though legally I am Canadian. I do not hold any other passport. As long as one thinks that Canada is a White European space, such representation makes sense. But is Canada a White European space? What is the cost and the loss of viewing Canada that way? What is at stake?

Or do we all in Canada and The United Church of Canada want to move beyond the White space? Can we create a different space, where different people from different places, now called Canada, co-dwell in peace and with respect? This ability and responsibility must include honouring and acknowledging the First Peoples to live on this land. Unless one is Indigenous, everyone is an immigrant, coming from somewhere, some time ago, and having decided or happened to make Canada home.

That is why I decided to accept this invitation to create a worship service—Surrounded by So Great a Cloud of Witnesses—and a Bible study—Scripture and Incense. The seemingly tokenizing gesture of allocating May as Asian Heritage Month is a really modest step that contributes to creating a country (and a church) as a space where different cultures, ethnicities, languages, traditions, and practices are recognized as valid and celebrated as valuable.

I chose to talk about burning incense, a ritual and religious practice many people of Asian heritage do at home and at sacred places. The burning of incense is found in most Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions and Indigenous spiritual practices. Yet, White missionaries came to Asia and banned the burning of incense because it was deemed superstitious. Many Asians who became Christians find themselves conflicted by this teaching; most giving up their ancestral tradition and wisdom, while some resisted this exclusive and chauvinistic view of Christianity.

In fact, Psalm 141 connects the burning of incense with prayer: “Let my prayer be counted as incense before you” (v. 2). Judaism has a long tradition of incense use, going back to the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 30:8, 34). Burning invokes the Spirit. The smoke in the air symbolizes and connects the dead and the living. While there are many and different reasons and ways to use incense as prayer in worship, burning incense can be considered as an intercessory way to honour ancestors, saints, and the dead.

As we set out to move beyond the White space and create a different vision of Canada and the United Church, perhaps we can honour our own Christian traditions and ancestors who went before us by burning incense, knowing and praying that our life is not ours alone but is part of a diverse past and leads to a new and surprising future.

—The Rev. Dr. HyeRan Kim-Cragg in 2018 was the Lydia Gruchy professor of practical theology at St. Andrew’s College, Saskatoon, and author of a 2018 worship service and Bible study for Asian Heritage Month.

In 2022, HyeRan is the Graduate Degree Director, Timothy Eaton Memorial Church Professor of Preaching at Emmanuel College, at the University of Victoria in the University of Toronto.