CELEBRATING A NEW COVENANT

Rev. Emmanuel K. Ofori

First United Church

Elgin Presbytery

London Conference, UCC

March 18, 2018

Presider: Rev Dr. Donna Kerrigan (Elgin Presbytery)

Representative from Presbytery: Ellen Palmer (secretary)

Guest Preacher: Don Gibson

Ministry of Music: Jody McDonald-Groulx

\*\*congregational responses are printed in bold.

**We Gather to Celebrate**

Welcome and Announcements: Bill Beamish

Hymn: VU #509 “Here I am Lord”

Greetings: Ellen Palmer, secretary for Elgin Presbytery.

Call to Worship

\*We are summoned here by our Holy God, who calls us each by name, knows our lives and our living. God gathers us in the name of Jesus.

(All)**This is the house of God, the place where we worship. This is also the place where prophets cry for peace, justice, and righteousness.**

This is the place where God reaches down into the corners of our lives, offering us holy love.

(All)**This is an ordinary, extraordinary place. United in faith and joy, we are thankful to be here.**

Anthem: Sr. Choir

Opening the Scriptures

Prayer (Presider)

Come to us Holy God, and bless us with your sustaining presence. Encircle us with your love and draw us into your living Word, so that we may be bound together as disciples of Jesus. Send your Spirit upon us to open our ears, our hearts, and our minds. **Amen**.

Hymn: VU#642 “Be Thou My Vision”

Responsive Reading: Psalm #?

New Testament Reading: Choice?

Reflection: Rev. Don Gibson

Offering – *The collection today is a free-will offering to London Conference*

Musical offering – Esther Wendel-Caraher

**We Dedicate Ourselves in a New Covenant**

Opening prayer (Presider): Here in God’s presence, we celebrate a new ministry and covenant together to serve God and to care for God’s creation. Let us say together the United Church creed that unites us:

(ALL)**We are not alone, we live in God’s world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God’s presence, to live with respect in creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

Presenting the Warrant to Covenant: I call Ellen Palmer, secretary for Elgin Presbytery to present the warrant to covenant at First United Church

Presenting the Minister: I call Ray Bosveld, chair of the Interview Team to present the minister, newly called at First United Church:

Chair: We present Emmanuel K. Ofori, who has been called to the Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care at First United Church. We believe he is well qualified and has been prayerfully and lawfully selected.

Statement of New Ministry (Presider): Rev. Emmanuel, you are undertaking the Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care at First United. You and the congregation are called to join in worship, study, prayer, and outreach. Presbytery will be responsible for the oversight of this pastoral charge and will support you in this ministry. London Conference will be responsible for overseeing your ministry. Friends, let us ask for God’s grace as we now covenant together.

(All) **Gracious God, by our baptism you have called us to Christ’s ministry. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us as we commit ourselves to work together in Christ’s name. Amen.**

Covenanting

Presider: Rev. Emmanuel, in the presence of this community, do you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility? (I do)

Will you accept the care and oversight of London Conference and, with its other members, be responsible for encouraging and overseeing the church’s life? (I will, with God’s help)

Will you join in the community and fellowship of Elgin Presbytery and, together with its other members, be responsible for nurturing the church’s life. (I will with God’s help)

Will you accept the support and encouragement of First United Church, Elgin Presbytery and London Conference? (I will, with God’s help)

I invite the congregation of First United Church Pastoral Charge to please stand as you are able.

Will you join with Emmanuel in a ministry of worship, study, prayer and outreach within this pastoral charge and in the world and will you do so in faith, hope, peace and love? **(We will, with God’s help)**

Will you be in partnership with Elgin Presbytery in the ministry of congregational oversight, resource-sharing, and mutual accountability? **(We will, with God’s help.)**

Congregation, please be seated. Members of Presbytery, please stand.

Members of Elgin Presbytery, will you welcome Emmanuel and covenant with him and First United Church congregation in a ministry of oversight, resource-sharing and mutual accountability? **(We will, with God’s help.)**

Will members of London Conference also please stand.

Members of London Conference, will you support Emmanuel and this congregation in effective leadership, sharing in their ministry to each other and to the world? **(We will, with God’s help)**

Presenting the Symbols of Our Ministry: Chris Ross

*(those with symbols to present, please come forward)*

Bible: Emmanuel, on behalf of the Church School of First United Church, please accept this Children’s Bible. Be among us as one who studies and share the Living Word with all of us and especially the children of this congregation. Help them to know and love the Holy Word of God. Help us all to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the church today.

Candle: Emmanuel, on behalf of the youth of First United Church, please accept this candle as a symbol of Christ’s light in the world. Be to all of us, and especially the youth of the congregation and community, a representation of Christ’s Light, shining in this often dark world. Help us to turn to Christ in times of darkness and despair.

Wine and Bread: Emmanuel, on behalf of the congregation of First United Church, please accept this symbolic gift of the Holy elements of communion. Let our mutual fellowship and the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine be nurturing and fulfilling in our walk together.

Bell: Emmanuel, please accept this gift of a bell fashioned from the original bell that hung in the tower of the ‘first’ First United Church. Please accept this as a gift from the Official board of this church. Let it be a symbol of this church’s history and our commitment to move forward with you, creating new histories as we walk together in faith in Christ.

Jumbo: Emmanuel, please accept this gift that represents our beloved Jumbo, symbol of our city St. Thomas. Let this gift represent our welcome to you and your family to the city. We hope you have many, MANY wonderful years in this city and that God blesses you with joy and prosperity as you make St. Thomas your home.

Presider: In the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, and by the authority of Elgin Presbytery and London Conference, I declare that the covenant which has been made here within the United Church of Canada has been duly witnessed, and the relationship duly constituted. May God bless this new ministry.

Disbanding the Interview Team

Presider: Will the Interview Team please stand as you are able?

Members of the Interview Team, you have completed the required process of the United Church of Canada, which is now culminated in this covenant. I now declare that this team is now disbanded.

Friends here present, please show your appreciation to the Interview Team for all their time, effort and dedication in fulfilling the task that was put before them.

Responding to the Covenant: Prayers of Thanksgiving (Rev. Emmanuel)

Hymn: VU# 884 “You Shall Go Out With Joy”

Blessing and Commissioning

Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of ev’ry day. Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know God will guide you in all you do. Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see. God will be there dwelling in our hearts. Go now in peace, in faith and in love.