

Other times, especially in places where speaking openly about 2S and LGBTQIA+ inclusion can put people at risk, it happens more quietly—through safe spaces, trusted relationships, and acts of accompaniment.

At the heart of this work is a simple but powerful truth: every person is created in God's image and loved fully by God. That love is not conditional. It is not limited by identity, orientation, or circumstance. Through acts of compassion, protection, and welcome, Mission and Service partners reflect that love in tangible ways.

This work can take many forms. It may look like creating a community meal where everyone is welcomed without question. It may mean ensuring a young person has supportive adults around them. It may mean offering spaces where people can gather safely, share their stories, or simply exist without fear.

Sometimes it means walking alongside someone who has fled their home country because their safety was threatened due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. In a new community, through the care and support of others, they may begin to experience something many of us take for granted: the freedom to live openly, safely, and fully as themselves. That kind of welcome is life-changing.

"One of our partners in Kenya has advocated strongly for the human rights of sexual minorities, and that has caused him to be in jail, caused him to risk his life to be able to do that", says Rev. Michael Blair. The United Church's first openly gay General Secretary is now helping to advocate for sexual and gender minorities in other countries.

"When we hear these stories, we can see that this is a life and death matter," he says.

We know the journey toward safety, affirmation, and justice is not complete, in Canada or around the world. Many 2S and LGBTQIA+ people still face discrimination, isolation, and violence. The work of building truly welcoming communities is ongoing. In the face of these realities, acts of care create room for healing and hope. They witness to a faith rooted in justice, compassion, and God's expansive love for all people. They remind people they are not alone and that they are worthy of safety, belonging, and joy.

Through Mission and Service, our gifts help support the ongoing work in Canada and around the world. Together, we are helping nurture communities where people can experience belonging and the reminder that they are cherished by God exactly as they are.

We give thanks for the many communities and partners who continue this work of affirmation, compassion, and inclusion every day of the year. Make a gift to Mission and Service today. Together, let's help share a message the world deeply needs: there is room for everyone in God's beloved community.

Call to Worship

We are one flock,

we are called to be one in community.

We have boldness before God

because we know we are loved and known

and so, in the same, way let us love each other, siblings and cousins.

not only in word or speech

but in truth and action—let us join together as one flock to worship the one God.

Amen.

Sung Call to Worship VU 409 (vs 1) *"Morning Has Broken"*

Morning has broken like the first morning,

blackbird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!

Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

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Lighting of the Christ Candle and the World Candle

As we light our candles this morning, we are invited to think about our call to stewardship of the Earth.

A moment of silent reflection: Where do you see the effects of climate change in our area? How does this affect you? Are you spurred to action or overwhelmed and anxious? Or are you choosing the "head in the sand" way of coping and ignoring what you see?

Listen to God's words for you this morning from 1 John:

"let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him"

Opening Prayer

Holy One, Heart of Creation, you know us and call us into bold service.

We come together this day to celebrate your creation,

the beautiful streams that surround us and provide us with food and water, and that are often the centre of our communities.

We come to hear hard stories of where our still waters have been lost, communities broken.

Open our hearts to hear the cries of our family, of partners in Canada and abroad so that we may be empowered to act in love for one another. For you are our shepherd, who leads us toward green pastures. Amen.

Opening Hymn VU 331 “The Church’s One Foundation”

- ¹ The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord;
we are his new creation by water and the Word;
from heaven he came and sought us that we might ever be
his living servant people, by his own death set free.**
- ² Called forth from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth;
one charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name professing and at one table fed,
to one hope always pressing, by Christ's own Spirit led.**
- ³ Though with a scornful wonder the world sees us oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping; their cry goes up, 'How long?'
But soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.**
- ⁴ Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of our war,
we wait the consummation of peace forevermore;
till with the vision glorious our longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.**
- ⁵ We now on earth have union with God the Three in One,
and share through faith communion
with those whose rest is won.
Oh, happy ones, and holy! Lord, give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.**

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Passing of the Peace

Prayer for Reconciliation

Holy One,
we are blessed to live in a land of plentiful natural resources.
We are blessed to have rules of law that protect our human dignity.
We recognize that these blessings are not extended to others,
we recognize that our privilege allows us to exploit others.
We recognize that, in this country and overseas,
mining has allowed us to reap the rewards of natural resources
while also harming your creation and fracturing communities.
We recognize the harm caused by our want for more.

Heal us in our desire for ever more resources;
forgive those times when we do not speak up against injustice,
and embolden us to be agents of your change in this world.
For the building of the kin-dom, Amen.

Assurance of Love

Scripture assures us, The Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want (Psalm 23).

“Whenever our hearts condemn us...God is greater than our hearts,
and...knows everything” (1 John 3: 20).

As a shepherd cares for scattered sheep, our God cares, forgives us, and
calls us into community.

Members of the one flock—we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Theme Conversation

Where have you seen climate change impact our community?

Our Scriptures Today

1 John 3: 16-24

Reflection

Hymn

VU 678

“For the Healing of the Nations”

**¹ For the healing of the nations, God, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.**

**² Lead us forward into freedom, from despair your world release;
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.**

**³ All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.**

**⁴ You, Creator-God, have written your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind;
that, by our response and service, earth its destiny may find.**

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Invitation to the Offering

Offering Music

Offering Response VU 542 “We Give You But Your Own”
We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.

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Offering Prayer

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Creator, Shepherd who laid down his life for love of us,
be with us in the light of the violence in our world.

Be with the families of Gaza, with those in Sudan,
with the people of Ukraine,
and with all who live in fear in places of war and displacement.
Hold close the grieving, the wounded, the hungry,
the imprisoned, the uprooted, and those who do not know
whether their loved ones will come home.

May their stories break open our hearts.
May they call our country and our world
to reject cruelty, domination, and indifference,
and to choose justice, mercy, and a peace
that protects the dignity of every person.

Be with us, too, in our own home place, in the Rideau Lakes watershed.
Where low water and drought have strained lakes, creeks, wells, and
wetlands;
where shorelines erode under heavy rains and runoff;
where excess nutrients feed algae and choking plant growth;
where invasive species spread and unsettle what is native;
where warming waters place stress on fish, birds, and fragile habitat.

Help us to discern the best way forward for Big Rideau, Upper Rideau,
Lower Rideau, and the streams and wetlands between;
for the shorelines we alter,
for the septic systems we maintain or neglect,
for the fields, roads, and properties whose runoff reaches the water,
and for every choice that shapes the health of this watershed.

Teach us to understand the blessings we have received from the earth and
from these waters, and to use them wisely, humbly, and with gratitude.

We pray for all who work from the land and water, for farmers, labourers, and those whose livelihoods depend on creation's gifts.
We pray for scientists, stewards, volunteers, and land defenders, for those who monitor, restore, question, and protect.
May we show compassion and love to one another, and courage enough to act for the common good.

Today, we have special prayers for:

Joy	Leah	Ellen Jane	Haley
Liam	Serge	Jennifer	Bill
Janet	Lainey	Sandy	Mark
Carol	James	Ellen & Art	The Olson
Kim H.	Brynnley	Robin	family-loss of
Fran	Kim P.	Grace	Chris

And as a community we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:

Our Father....

Closing Hymn

VU 481

"Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

**¹ Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.**

**The supper is ended, O now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.**

**The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.**

**God's grace did invite us, God's love shall unite us
to work for the kingdom and answer its call.**

**² With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,
the tasks of our everyday life we will face.**

**Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.**

**With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.**

**Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
give honour to Christ and the name that we bear.**

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Living our Faith this Week

Today my challenge to you is very concrete. I would like you to consider implementing one thing new into your life this week to show your love of God's creation, and your concern for climate change and the human impact on our earth. If you get a chance, send me a note about what you're doing.

Commissioning and Benediction

Sung Benediction

**Go now in peace, never be afraid,
God will go with you each hour of everyday.
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, watching us in love.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. Amen. Amen. Amen**

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