

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

gathering

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP PLANNERS



**A Prayer Resource for the
43rd General Council 2018**



The theme for the 43rd General Council is “Risking Faith, Daring Hope.” These words and the associated image will be an evocative presence throughout the General Council meeting.

Theme

“Risking” and “daring” are strong action words that call forth our courage and our trust in God. In times of fear, when we may be tempted to retreat into the familiar, comfortable, and “safe,” we are called to a faith that takes risks, that dares to hope in a future we cannot yet see. This hope is not passive, but rather propels us to stretch beyond our assumed limits, to risk profound transformation for the sake of our own healing and the healing of the world.

Logo

The dove—a symbol of faith, love, and peace—soars in the midst of a blue wave, representing the many challenges that threaten to overwhelm us. The wave can also be seen as a tide of positive change. We move forward with the wave, determined to meet challenges with strength drawn from our faith. The dove passes through the wave and is warmed by the sun, a symbol of all life that gives us hope.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Those of us who are settlers in Canada, or whose ancestors were settlers in Canada, acknowledge, with gratitude, the land and the First Peoples who traditionally walked the land in the area that is now called Oshawa, Ontario, the location of the 43rd General Council. The traditional territories include the Wendat, the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of Scugog, the Hiawatha, the Alderville, and the Métis Nations. The Williams Treaties were signed for this area of land. We also respectfully acknowledge the First Peoples who traditionally walked the land in the areas of Canada where each of our congregations worship.

All scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV – English) and Parole de Vie (PDV – français).



Warm Greetings and Welcome to the 43rd General Council!

On behalf of the *Gathering* Advisory Board and the *Gathering* editors, contributors, and production staff, welcome to the 43rd meeting of the General Council of The United Church of Canada, and welcome to this worship resource. We trust that these resources will be a helpful guide to you as you discern the moving of the Spirit in this meeting.

Gathering is a periodical by and for worship leaders and planners. It is the pulse of United Church of Canada worship practice and theology. Just as the General Council is a gathering of the gifts of the church for the church, so, too, are the worship resources of *Gathering*. To your work, on behalf of the church that we love and the church we are becoming, we offer the wisdom contained in these prayers and reflections.

For each day, we have provided a morning prayer and an evening prayer, a hymn and a scripture for reflection, a phrase to hold in your thoughts, a question about putting faith into action, and words of reflection. To create this booklet, we invited a variety of voices—reflecting the diversity of our denomination—to share their thoughts with you; the voices also include the insights of many who are fairly new to ordered ministry. To each contributor, we are grateful.

These reflections may be used in any order you wish. There are more daily reflections than meeting days so that each day you might choose a topic that resonates with you at that time.

At the end of this booklet you will find resources that may prove useful when you are invited to lead a worship service based on your experience at General Council.

Blessings as you risk faith and dare hope!

The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard, Chair, Gathering Advisory Board.

Gathering, a magazine for worship planners, shares liturgies, prayers, music, and new ideas for marking church seasons that have been submitted by the wider church—and beyond. For subscription information, see page 23.



Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren ***Ut omnes unum sint***

That All May Be One ***Que tous soient un***

For Your Arrival at the 43rd General Council

God, help me to know that everyone in this Council is my brother, sister, and sibling, made in the image of God, infused with the Spirit of God, and filled with the possibilities of God. Help me penetrate beyond their words to what they are trying to say. Help me perceive beyond their exterior into their heart and soul. Help me to travel in the path of their journey and accompany them as they express their ideas. Eternal God, enter this moment of time and infuse it with a wider vision of what you propose. Amen.

Ivan Gregan, Port Wallis U.C., Dartmouth, N.S., Gathering Advisory Board.

For Your Departure from the 43rd General Council

I must go my way and leave behind not only the weight of yesterdays, but also the blessings of yesterday. I leave behind what I cannot change and cherish all the changes that have come to my soul. As you, O God, were with us through our deliberations, so you, O God, are before us, calling us into a new creation, formed by your hands of love, inspired by your Spirit of imagination, and sustained by a great cloud of witnesses who accompany us home. Through Jesus, in whom the Christ dwells, Amen.

Ivan Gregan, Port Wallis U.C., Dartmouth, N.S., Gathering Advisory Board.



Prayer for Beginning the Day

Holy One, as I prepare for this day of the 43rd General Council, help me prepare to serve you and serve the church. Grant me the strength to honour my personal truth, even when it may be unpopular or difficult to share. Help me to let go of the thoughts I hold that are driven by fear or anger. Work through me to express gratitude and joy for all the many ways I will be blessed by the church today.

God, show me where I have failed to look. Open my heart to that which I have been unable to feel. Keep me focused on the details where your love can be infused. Keep me focused on the bigger picture of the church—the gathering of those who wish to follow Jesus. Keep me focused, keep me present. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

1 John 4:11–12

Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and [God's] love is perfected in us.

Hymn for Reflection

“Love Is the Touch” (*More Voices* 89)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

Creator, show me where your love is needed.

Reflection

As we move into our roles as commissioners for GC43, my prayer is that, while tackling challenges that feel overwhelming in size, we do not lose sight of the small moments and opportunities to be the church. Even when timelines feel tight, may we still be willing to take the risk of being honest with each other and take the time for difficult conversations that lead to deeper and more resilient relationships. I pray that we do not become so caught up with the agenda of the meeting that we forget to notice the many blessings around us—the enormous act of hospitality involved with organizing GC43, the

many dedicated church members who have made sacrifices in order to be present—and the list, truly, goes on and on.

As so much of our United Church culture revolves around meetings, I pray that GC43 may be a space where people learn and reflect on how to be church through meetings. The quality of our relationships is such an essential aspect of being able to be a healthy and vibrant church.

How do we ensure that everyone's needs are being taken care of? How do we ensure that all voices are attended to? How we treat each other in a meeting is just as much a reflection of who we are as a church as the policy we vote on. May we dare to create an environment where people can take care of hearts and bodies without these acts of self-care being shamed or judged.

Faith in Action

What can I do right now to ensure that this space is one that reflects God's love and justice?

Prayer for Ending the Day

Holy One, at the end of a long day, I thank you for this opportunity to be a part of The United Church of Canada. Thank you for the moments of learning I experienced today.

(Take a moment to pause, breathe deeply, and reflect on an important lesson from today.)

I offer to you, in this moment, my frustration and confusion. Help me carry the work that feels heavy. Remind me that I am not alone in any of this.

(Take a moment to pause, breathe deeply, and reflect on a frustrating or confusing experience or feeling from today.)

God, I ask that you continue to watch over the friends, family, and community who are currently back home. Amen.

Michiko Bown-Kai, East End U.C., in the Dish with One Spoon Covenant, Toronto, Ont.



Prière en début de journée

En observant divers lieux urbains, il m'arrive de les imaginer comme de vastes plaines où coulent des ruisseaux et où poussent des herbes et des fleurs sauvages, comme si aucun humain ne s'y était établi à ce jour. Dans ces paysages imaginaires, il n'y a ni asphalte, ni édifice, ni maison, ni voiture.

Prière

À travers la ville qui s'éveille et qui remue, ramène mes yeux Seigneur vers l'essentiel. Derrière les mouvements de notre humanité, que mon esprit reste calme et centré sur le message et la mission que je porte depuis si longtemps, pour Toi.

Lecture des écritures et réflexion

Psaume 122, 1.6-9

Quelle joie quand on m'a dit :

« Allons à la maison du Seigneur ! »....

Demandez la paix pour Jérusalem !

« Qu'ils vivent tranquilles, ceux qui t'aiment !

Que la paix soit dans tes murs,
et le calme dans tes palais ! »

À cause de mes frères et de mes amis,
je te souhaite la paix.

À cause de la maison du Seigneur notre Dieu,
je demande pour toi le bonheur.

Cantique

« Spirit of Life » (*Voices United* 381)

Esprit de Dieu, viens en mon cœur;

crée en mon âme des chemins de compassion.

Souffle en moi la joie d'aimer,

que mes actions accomplissent ta justice.

Au cœur du temps et pour toujours

rends-moi fécond, Esprit-Saint, Esprit-Saint.

Traduction et adaptation : Christine Marie Gladu.

Au cœur du jour

À cause de la maison du Seigneur notre Dieu,
je veux ton bonheur.

Réflexion

Nous cheminons dans ce qui se dessine comme une Église en mouvement continu. Nous sommes

à la recherche d'un véritable chez-nous que nous pourrions investir et adopter pour longtemps. Nous sommes parfois à la recherche de cette stabilité en Dieu et en notre cœur, une stabilité qui nous permet de nous pencher sur les questions de fond et de remonter progressivement à la surface de nos vies et du quotidien. Mais non! Ce mouvement incessant des vagues nous transporte là où l'on ne veut pas aller, et nous devons consacrer beaucoup d'énergie à demeurer simplement à la surface. Pourtant, le fond marin est là, silencieux et calme, comme une résidence de l'Absolu. Là, tout se crée, tout s'opère en Dieu, dans une éternité qui irradie vers la surface lumineuse où nous nous agitons.

Dieu est là, et la vague est de Lui, vient de Lui, est Lui. Par comparaison, le paysage urbain est notre création, sur la terre vierge de Dieu. Nous y bâtissons nos villes et notre Église, et dans ce travail incessant subsiste Sa Parole : « Je veux ton bonheur ». Que jamais cette Parole ne nous quitte, dans le ballonnement des vagues, le mouvement des villes, ou le brouhaha de notre esprit! Paix!

Foi en mouvement

Quelle influence nos décisions exercent-elles sur la pratique religieuse et le nourrissage de la foi des croyants et des croyantes?

Autrement dit, de quelle manière les questions de fond agissent-elles sur les événements de surface?

Prière en fin de journée

Cette fin d'une journée de travail amène le réconfort d'un repas partagé, de la détente dans la paix et l'espérance de toujours faire mieux demain. Accompagne-moi mon Dieu dans cette tâche que tu m'as confiée. Fortifie-moi et inspire-moi de nouvelles idées, de nouveaux chemins et de nouvelles solutions pour vivre ensemble dans cette Église formidable et porteuse de vie, que Tu as voulue pour nous. Amen.

*Christine Marie Gladu, candidate au ministère ordonné,
Saint-Andrew's United, Delson, Qué.*

Prayer for Beginning the Day

We breathe and know that you are God,
united as your people in this place.
We **breathe** and know that you are God,
filling us with your breath of life.
We breathe **and know** that you are God,
even in our inevitable moments of exhaustion.
We breathe and know that **you are God,**
not us.
We breathe and know that you are God.
Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

Galatians 6:9–10

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

Hymn for Reflection

“Guide My Feet, Lord” (traditional spiritual)
Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race.
Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race.
Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race,
for I don’t want to run this race in vain.
(*Tune can be found at hymnary.org.*)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

Guide my feet today, O God, so I may not grow weary.

Reflection

As a past commissioner to GC41, I am well aware that General Council can feel like an exhilarating-yet-ultimately-exhausting marathon. Long days, detailed remits, endless amendments, and more can drain one’s energy and deplete one’s reserves. Yet, all marathon runners know the importance of *breathing*: of regularly bringing in fresh oxygen, of releasing stress and carbon dioxide, and of rhythmically centring one’s self while in motion.

So often, however, we forget to breathe. In the midst of busy work, we can also forget the one who gives us breath, rest, and life in abundance! So, commissioners of GC43, as you whole-heartedly embrace your opportunity to “work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith,” (Gal. 6:10) may you remember to breathe. May you remember to find rest in God. May you “not grow weary in doing what is right... [and] not give up” (Gal. 6:9). For God is with us; we are not alone!

Faith in Action

How will I make time to breathe and be open to the guidance of God?

In the midst of my weariness, how will I find rest from God?

Prayer for Ending the Day

We breathe and know that you are God,
knowing that we are not alone.
We **breathe** and know that you are God,
letting go of what we need to empty.
We breathe **and know** that you are God,
for we have experienced your rest and life.
We breathe and know that **you are God,**
and we are grateful for your guidance.
We breathe and know that you are God.
Thanks be to God!

Matthew Heesing, M.Div. student at AST, serving Diamond Valley P.C., Turner Valley, Alta.



Prayer for Beginning the Day

Holy and Sovereign One, Servant Christ, Breath of Life, we are here for your sake, to build your realm, to serve the world in your love. So breathe your Spirit into our very beings, and out, through us, into creation. May we faithfully discern and heed your call as we undertake our work today. Some things may end. Transform death into new life that equips us to “proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

Mark 15:33, 38–39

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.... And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

Hymn for Reflection

“In the Quiet Curve of Evening” (*Voices United* 278)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

You are here. Loving God, you are here.

Reflection

I read something (on millennialpastor.net) that hit home. A pastor of my general age (as old as you can get and still be considered a Millennial) was reflecting on a major difference between him and his parishioners: while many of a certain age were grieving the loss of the overflowing pews and flourishing Sunday schools they once knew, he wasn’t, because he couldn’t remember them. He was born into today’s church, called to serve the church as it is now, not as it once was.

I hadn’t realized how confusing and frustrating I had found the lament over the loss of how things used to be and how great it would be to go back to those times. Going into ministry, my dream was to engage people with social justice and spiritual practices, to help them tap into and develop the

sense that we are the inheritors and caretakers of a spiritual path with roots thousands of years deep. Sometimes, it is so hard to reconcile this with lament and longing for days gone by. The cognitive dissonance is jarring, the spiritual whiplash painful.

In the midst of dreaming and lament, we find the gap between what church can be, what it is, and what many grieving people remember and idealize. Parker Palmer might call this the “tragic gap.” For Mark, it is the ripping of the temple veil. However we see it, as the hymn writer Juliana Howard puts it, “in the gaps between the meaning” God is there (“In the Quiet Curve of Evening,” *Voices United* 278). May we as The United Church of Canada experience God in the absence of what was as well as in the presence of what is and what might be.

Faith in Action

Where are the gaps in which you experience the presence of God today?

Prayer for Ending the Day

God, when humans managed to mess up a good thing in Jesus living among them you burst forth with a power and presence beyond anything we could have asked for or imagined. You worked through the followers of the risen Christ to share your good news with the world. Please help me to trust that today, whether or not our decisions were the exact ones you had hoped we would make, you will use them for good and continue to work through us for good. Bless all those I love, and those with whom I am frustrated. I entrust you with my worries, celebrations, tensions, and anything else upon which I need to loosen my hold in order to rest and awake refreshed tomorrow. “In the quiet curve of evening,” in the waning light and in the blossoming dark, you are there. Thank you. Amen.

Chelsea Masterman, Westminster U.C., Medicine Hat, Alta. and Redcliff-Irvine P.C., Redcliff, Alta.

Prayer for Beginning the Day

Gracious God,
you are our Cloud of Presence by day
and our Pillar of Fire by night.
Set your path before me this day.
Focus my intention and open my heart
to your leading,
so everything I do, I do for the sake
of your glory and your kingdom.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

2 Corinthians 4:5-7

For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

Hymn for Reflection

"God of the Bible" (*More Voices* 28),
especially verses 1 and 5

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

God be in my head, and in my understanding.
(The Book of Hours, 1514)

Reflection

The late Stephen Covey, businessperson and management guru, wrote about maintaining our focus on "the main thing." This is something that is easy for leaders in the church, clergy or lay, to forget. It is especially easy when we are driven by fear, whether it's the fear of deficits, or the fear of the disappearance of congregations and ministries. Our first inclination is to try to re-jig things, to preserve what we have rather than to better serve our mission. The "main thing" takes a back seat to survival.

When we are tempted by this, however, Paul offers us a simple reminder. "We do not proclaim ourselves" (2 Cor. 4:5) he says. Instead, "we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" (2 Cor. 4:7). Our institutional structures—whether congregation or denomination—are not important in and of themselves. Rather, they are metaphorically "clay jars" that are there to carry God's power and purpose, which is the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ to join in God's mission of healing and reconciling the world.

I pray, as we move forward as a denomination, that we do not make decisions out of fear for the sake of preservation and that we are not doing things just to patch this clay jar, which will inevitably fall away. Instead, I hope that we are able to stay with "the main thing" and that the "clay jar" we are fashioning for present use is built to carry the everlasting treasure of the gospel into the future.

Faith in Action

How can you focus on "the main thing" and discern the difference between clay and treasure in the deliberations?

Prayer for Ending the Day

Gracious God,
you are our source and you are our end.
As I end this day,
I thank you for the privilege to serve your church.
I give you thanks for your wisdom
and the presence of your Spirit;
and I ask you for forgiveness where I was impatient,
or when I was quick to judge.
I give this day over to you in trust.
Help me to sleep easy
and to be still in the knowledge that you are God.
Amen.

Ryan Slifka, St. George's U.C., Courtenay, B.C.

Searching for Miracles in Love



Prayer for Beginning the Day

I come, O God,
not in search of miracles,
but in search of your love.
I notice a world
that often seems to be bitter and harsh.
Give me words of life
that I may perceive the world
through a lens of kindness.
Help me to fill my heart with loving deeds.
Guide me today in your Spirit and truth.
In Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

John 5:5-9

One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up... Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Hymn for Reflection

"Take, O Take Me as I Am" (*More Voices* 85)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

Rise, take your mat, and move into well-being.

Reflection

Jesus was at the Beth-zatha pool in Jerusalem, by the Sheep Gate. It was the Sabbath day, but Jesus was not in a typical place of worship; he was in a place of pain, suffering, and sickness, a place that healthy people avoided. The story shows us something of the concerns that interested Jesus. He was not interested in how to keep the religious holiday or the Sabbath. Jesus' primary concern was with those who were in pain and sorrow.

The pool of Beth-zatha was an extremely competitive place. It did not matter who arrived

first, who was most sick, or what their individual stories were. For each of them, their only goal—their urgent goal—was to enter the pool first. Some people who were ill would hire others to put them into the pool, and some would have been helped by friends. However, the man Jesus approaches had no money and no friends. Thus, each time he heard that someone had been healed, the angrier he would have become.

Jesus offers the man an alternative and he does this even on the Sabbath, because love is more important than religious rules and structures. Jesus' love is for people.

I believe that love, justice, and peace are values that have priority in The United Church of Canada. We can be the friend to those who have no friends. We can be healing to those who need healing. "[God] is still working, and [we] also [are] working" (John 5:17).

Faith in Action

In a fiercely competitive society, at the edge of the pool, who is my neighbour? Who is eagerly awaiting help? What is blocking them?

Prayer for Ending the Day

Generous God, hear my prayer.
Use us for healing in a wounded world.
Pour the water of your life onto our dry land.
Give us the heart to take care of our neighbours
in need around us.
Make us channels of your love in all the world.
Amen.

Hyun Heo, Kipling U.C., Kipling, Sask.

Prayer for Beginning the Day

God who holds all things together,
rescue us this day from every kind of fad teaching
or tricky scheme,
and, instead, guide us together with one another
and with Christ,
who is the head of this body
of which we are but a part,
as we grow together in love. Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

Ephesians 4:14–16

Therefore, let us no longer be immature, tossed
around on the waves and carried about by the wind
of every teaching or human cunning or crafty and
deceitful scheming. Instead, through speaking the
truth of love, may we grow up in every way into
Christ, who is the head, from whom the whole
body is joined together and holds together through
each one of its ligaments, so that each part in its
proper way would make the whole body grow as it
builds up in love. *(translated from the Greek by Mitchell
Anderson)*

Hymn for Reflection

“Christ Has No Body Now but Yours”
(More Voices 171)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

The whole body grows as it builds up in love.

Reflection

There is always a temptation to trade the challenge
of the gospel for something easier, for a new fad
teaching or for the latest cause of the day. It would
be so easy to set aside the way that Jesus shows us
when he dies for us on the cross to reconcile and
make new and instead rely on our own wisdom and
strength. Yet, inevitably, our wisdom would fail,
our strength would fall short, and we would be lost,
tossed around on waves and carried about by the
wind of our foolish schemes. We are held together
and joined together in Christ as his body, and the

whole body grows as it builds up in love. So, today,
may we follow the way of Christ, in whom we are
joined and held together, and may we grow and
build ourselves up in love.

Faith in Action

We are the body of Christ, joined together and held
together. Where do you see the ligaments of risking
faith and daring hope joining us together in love
today?

Prayer for Ending the Day

God who builds us up in love,
I thank you for the times today
when we have been connected
to one another and with you.
As we grow together,
may we build ourselves up in love,
joined together as the Body of Christ,
following always in the way Jesus shows us. Amen.

*Mitchell Anderson, dēnesuṭinē, Lanigan and Nokomis P.C.,
Nokomis, Sask.*

SHARE YOUR PRAYERS
WITH THE WIDER CHURCH



Have you written prayers that have worked
well for you and/or your congregation? Have
you written new hymn lyrics or a seasonal
drama? *Gathering* would love to share your
ideas with the wider church, so please
submit them to gather@united-church.ca
and the whole church will pray—and sing
and dramatize—along with you.



Prayer for Beginning the Day

O God, I am grateful
for this opportunity to gather
and this opportunity to be your church.
Be with us today
in the midst of all our conversations.
Grant us the willingness to listen deeply,
to be curious,
to notice and be noticed.
Grant us daring, risky conversations today.
Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

John 4:1–40 (*for the whole story*)
But [Jesus] had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”

Hymn for Reflection

“Come, Let Us Sing” (*Voices United 222*)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

I am thirsty for what God is offering today.

Reflection

Here in John’s gospel, a beautiful and striking scene is about to unfold in the heat of the noonday sun. Jesus, tired and parched, sits down at a well and engages a Samaritan woman in conversation. She is inquisitive, curious, and well-informed, and, like Jesus, she is thirsty. Together, they engage in the longest conversation in the gospels. Their conversation is mutual and vulnerable, full of curiosity and genuine reciprocity. It is a conversation that matters, and both are changed.

This is one of the scenes I think about when asked about my call to ministry. Yet, when the soft lens pulls back and the French horns stop playing, I am dropped into the stark reality of my life

and I remember all the places where I resist such conversations. The challenge is not in conversing with the stranger, but in conversing with fellow students, colleagues, volunteers, and congregants. When the stakes are high, I opt for silence and self-doubt rather than curiosity. I relinquish integrity and resist vulnerability and mutuality when misunderstanding is palpable—afraid to risk the possibility of wading into the tension, afraid to be swept away, afraid to be seen. Perhaps sitting in the discomfort and familiar patterns feels easier than risking. But I am thirsty....

Faith in Action

The philosopher Kierkegaard said that communication hinged on “setting the other free.” Where are you being called to set free deep and vulnerable conversation?

Prayer for Ending the Day

Spirit, bless all of our relationships
in the space of this General Council.
May each of us wander
into new and unfamiliar territory
with courage, hope, and curiosity.
May we be open to the Truth. Amen.

Barbara McGill, Centre for Christian Studies, Winnipeg, Man.



Prayer for Beginning the Day

Holy God of Love, I thank you for guiding me safely into another day. I give thanks as we gather this morning, prepared to be your presence in your world. I ask that you renew and open my spirit so that I may feel your presence and receive your voice throughout the day. Help me to remember that we are an Easter people, called to bring your love and your light into this torn and battered world. May I be touched by your gentle nudges, by your grace, and by your compassion.

God of love, we understand that our church and its people are in a time of transition as old ways and traditions fade away and new life takes hold. Help me to trust in the way forward and to know that the work of the church is always to build up your agency of love and to live out the gospel every chance we have. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

Isaiah 43:19-21

I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Hymn for Reflection

"I See a New Heaven" (*Voices United* 713)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

God of love and mystery, send us light, hold us in love, and guide us forward in peace.

Reflection

I have a vision for The United Church of Canada as we move forward.

I dream that our beloved United Church continues to make its voice heard as we grow in strength and support around Indigenous justice, racial justice, poverty, and homelessness.

I dream that the peacemakers grow to be the loudest voices and that the voices of greed, selfishness, and corruption fade to shadows and then disappear.

As the gospel is lived out in the streets of our country, I dream of all of us in the United Church doing God's work to show and bring the kin-dom of God always just a little bit nearer.

As a minister in The United Church of Canada, I pray that all who meet me, notice God's love, compassion, hope, and more, in me.

I pray daily, that we may empty ourselves in order to be filled with God's tender kindness and love. And I pray for us all that when that love arrives, we do all we can to pass it on.

Faith in Action

Where do you strongly feel your call pulling you forward, affecting daily choices and decisions?

Prayer for Ending the Day

God of silence, peace, and rest, thank you for this day. As I close my eyes and start to dream, I ask you to be with me as I enter the realm of sleep, allowing my spirit and mind to process the work we did today. It is challenging, O God, to sort and sift through it all. I pray that when I rise tomorrow, my mind is clear and my spirit renewed. We want to do the work of love, the work of being the Body of Christ in your world. Grant all of us clarity and harmony as we strive together to discern your voice and your presence as we move through being and becoming your beloved United Church of Canada. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Lorraine Ashdown, St. Andrew's Wesley U.C., Vancouver, B.C.



Prayer for Beginning the Day

From these first morning thoughts, open doors for me, Creator, as I continue on my journey of seeking truth and love for all people. This General Council celebrates the history of our church and acknowledges the truth of the past as it has been; yet it also looks forward to all kinds of possibilities to come. May I risk faith and dare hope today. Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

Acts 2:17

In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Hymns for Reflection

“Hey Ney Yana” (*More Voices* 217)

“I Am the Dream” (*More Voices* 106)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

If I want something different in life, I need to *do* something different.

Reflection

I remember vividly a conversation I had with a woman attending an event where I was also a participant. Segwun called me to her room to let me know that she didn't think church was for her anymore. It broke my heart to see her so torn, her shoulders shaking as she sobbed. I sat with her for two hours as she talked and cried about what was happening in her heart and mind. I really had no words for her, but, as I held her closely, I listened and prayed. The question came to my mind: Is this the church that God/Creator intended it to be? Over the next couple of days, I concluded that though we may be endeavouring to be the church the Creator intends, there is still much to be done.

Our faith is not an end in itself, but it is a means to an end. For me, that has meant finding my

way home to myself and to my Cree heritage, to the worldview and the ways of living life of my ancestors, of the generations since, and of those to come. In the early years of my involvement in church, I did things exactly the way White people did because I believed that to do so would bring me results. Then, at an international gathering, a letter was read that opened me to the destruction behind the message brought with Christians to North America—that our First Nations' cultures and identities were to be denied. As peoples from all over the world shared ceremony, dances, songs, and prayers from their own heritages and contexts, I recognized that these traditions were God-given. I left the gathering praying that God would teach me and others, through our ancestors, the ways of our peoples.

Since then, I have prayed for spiritual revival and cultural restoration for myself, my family, and my community. I sense a gentle, loving nudging that the church is not as relevant and honouring to all as it can be. A young girl from Toronto, when asked about the Apology made by The United Church of Canada to Indigenous Peoples, said that the apology may need to be that the United Church invites the Indigenous peoples' ways of worship into the mainstream church. This affirmed my thoughts.

Faith in Action

How do we celebrate what we have in common while honouring our diversity and gifts?

Prayer for Ending the Day

In Indigenous cultures, the teachings are not explained in detail. Sometimes we are given a little bit at a time to hold onto, to chew on. Today, what have you been given to chew on? Spend time in quiet thanks to the Creator, open to the wisdom you are being offered. Ekosi, hiy, hiy, thank you.

Susie McPherson Derendy, Cree York Factory Band, Knox U.C., Brandon, Man.



Prière en début de journée

Louons YHWH, Dieu libérateur, libératrice!
Celui-Celle qui a fait sortir les Israélites d'esclavage en Égypte.
Celui-Celle par qui les prophètes ont demandé des comptes aux puissants.
Celui-Celle par qui le Christ, condamné et exécuté, est revenu à la vie.
Rendons grâce pour le soutien constant de l'Éternel-le pour ceux et celles qu'Il-Elle appelle.
Merci d'avoir soutenu Moïse qui ne croyait pas pouvoir parler en public.
Merci d'avoir donné à Déborah l'autorité et la sagesse pour conduire et libérer son peuple.
Merci d'avoir aidé Samuel qui se trouvait trop jeune, d'avoir pris soin de Jérémie qui était épuisé et découragé.
Merci pour les femmes au tombeau et les apôtres après elles à qui Tu as donné le courage de répandre la Bonne Nouvelle de la résurrection de Jésus et faire ainsi parvenir jusqu'à nous ses enseignements.
Nous implorons ton Saint Nom, ô Dieu, afin que ton Esprit continue de chuchoter à notre oreille, que nous soyons attentifs et attentives à ton appel.
Ouvre nos yeux à ta lumière, celle qui s'infiltré à travers toutes les brèches.
Ouvre nos cœurs à ta volonté pour que nous contribuions à ton royaume d'amour et de justice.
Ravive la flamme de notre foi; intensifie notre confiance en Toi.
Accroche-Toi à chacun de nos pas pour que nous n'oublions pas ta Présence...
Pour que nous n'oublions pas que là où Tu nous appelles, Tu nous soutiens. Amen.

Joëlle Leduc, Ministère régional des Laurentides, Québec, Qué.

Lecture des écritures et réflexion

Actes des Apôtres 3, 1-6

Un jour, Pierre et Jean vont au temple pour la prière de trois heures de l'après-midi. Près de la porte du temple appelée « la Belle Porte », il y a un homme infirme depuis sa naissance. Chaque jour, on l'apporte et on le dépose là. Il demande de l'argent à ceux qui entrent dans le temple. L'infirme voit Pierre et Jean qui vont entrer, il leur demande de l'argent. Pierre et Jean tournent les yeux vers lui et Pierre lui dit : « Regarde-nous! » L'homme les regarde avec attention. Il pense : « Ils vont me donner quelque chose. » Pierre lui dit : « Je n'ai pas d'argent, je n'ai pas d'or, mais ce que j'ai, je te le donne : Au nom de Jésus-Christ de Nazareth, lève-toi et marche! »

Cantique

« Viens, Saint-Esprit, Dieu créateur » (*Voices United 200* ou *Nos voix unies 27*)

Au cœur du jour

C'est le Christ ressuscité qui marchera avec nous.

Réflexion

Les trois personnes qui interagissent au début de cette histoire, Pierre, Jean et l'homme infirme à la porte du Temple, font toutes un pari de foi. Pierre et Jean mettent leur foi dans la puissance du Christ ressuscité et osent offrir la guérison; le mendiant met sa foi dans les paroles des deux apôtres et ose se lever. À cause du pari de foi de toutes les personnes impliquées, le miracle d'une vie guérie et renouvelée s'ensuit! L'exemple de cette transformation inattendue attire d'autres gens par la suite et donne l'occasion de raconter l'histoire de Jésus. La transformation se répand comme des rides sur l'eau.

N'est-ce pas ce que nous espérons? Une véritable transformation dans la foi, un renouveau de la vie de l'Église? Le pari de foi est alors de ne pas attendre comme des mendiants à ce que nous



recevions ce dont nous avons besoin. Osons un changement plus radical, osons nous mettre debout et commençons à aller de l'avant. Cela entraînera un changement de style de vie – z'l'homme guéri ne peut plus s'attendre à ce qu'on lui offre de l'argent gratuitement. Avancer par ses propres forces signifie assumer la responsabilité de pourvoir à ses besoins. L'audace d'espérance c'est de croire que nous pourrons aller de l'avant par nos propres moyens. Car c'est le Christ ressuscité qui marchera avec nous dans une vie renouvelée au gré de nouvelles rencontres et de nouveaux apprentissages. La joie et la gratitude en découleront d'elles-mêmes!

Foi en mouvement

N'est-ce pas ce que nous espérons? Une véritable transformation dans la foi, un renouveau de la vie de l'Église?

Prière en fin de journée

Dieu, par ton regard bienveillant,
vois si nous sommes accroupis par peur
de lever les yeux vers des horizons inconnus;
vois si nous sommes immobilisés
devant les incertitudes de la nouveauté;
vois si nous manquons d'imagination et d'audace.
Et guéris-nous par l'expérience de la résurrection :
prends-nous par la main pour nous montrer
comment nous lever,
rends-nous confiants lors de nos premiers pas
dans une nouvelle direction
et affermis-nous dans notre volonté d'avancer
en mettant toute notre espérance en toi. Amen.

*Angelika Piché, pasteure et directrice, développement et formation, Ministères en français
Le Séminaire Uni, Montréal, Qué.*

Le canard branchu est reconnu comme notre plus beau canard. Il niche dans les arbres Le nid est situé dans un arbre de 1 à 15 m du sol. Il est habituellement près de l'eau, mais il arrive que la femelle choisisse un arbre assez éloigné de l'étang. Après l'éclosion, les petits se servent de leurs griffes pointues pour grimper jusqu'à l'entrée du nid et, en agitant leurs ailes, se laissent tomber sur le sol, qu'ils atteignent en général sains et saufs. La femelle les guide ensuite jusqu'à l'étendue d'eau la plus rapprochée, où ils restent ensemble huit ou neuf semaines à se nourrir.

Je n'ai connu rien d'autre que les ténèbres,
la tranquillité et la chaleur de mon œuf.
J'émerge hors de ma coquille bien douillette.
La lumière du soleil m'éblouit.
Le vent me frappe de face.
Je ne sais plus où je suis.
Me voilà poussé vers les bords du nid.
Je ne veux pas tomber. J'ai peur.
Je veux crier au secours.
Qu'est-ce qui m'attend en bas?
Je me laisse tomber.
Mes faibles ailes n'arrivent pas à adoucir ma chute.
Je roule par terre.
Tout m'est inconnu. Tout est différent.
Mais je ne suis pas seul.
Je fais confiance.
Je me laisse bercer par l'eau claire de l'étang.
Je me laisse guider par ma mère
qui me protège et me montre comment me nourrir.
Le soleil me réchauffe.
Je n'ai plus peur.
C'est ici que je grandirai.
Je deviendrai grand et fort ...
et beau.

Nicole Beaudry, Bells Corners U.C., Nepean, Ont.

Prayer for Beginning the Day

Sovereign God,
who showed us your power
in the helplessness of the cradle and the cross,
give us faith to be weak like you,
that in our weakness
we might show others
the power of your most Holy Spirit.
In the powerful name of the Weak One we pray.
Amen.

Scripture for Reflection

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

But [God] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Hymn for Reflection

“Nada te turbe” (“Nothing Can Trouble”)
(*Voices United* 290)

A Phrase for the Heart of the Day

Your grace is enough.

Reflection

The assurance that divine grace is sufficient, because power is perfected in weakness, is a nice sentiment after losing a soccer match, or not receiving a relatively inconsequential promotion at work. But when the stakes are high, forget weakness; we want power. Perhaps this is especially true of the church in our time and place as we undergo enormous change. I suspect that we still long to be the social institution to which folks look for moral guidance, spiritual wisdom, and community leadership.

But this is not so. We are decreasingly powerful. The United Church of Canada is getting weaker. Yet Paul was on to something: the power of God is

made perfect in weakness. For just as broken bread is the tangible sign of the goodness of God, and just as the cross is the ugly witness to the beauty of redemption, a weak church—a feeble Body of Christ—signals our trust in a resilient God. Just as in his weakness Jesus Christ reveals the powerful God of love, the church that serves Christ in real vulnerability and strong faith witnesses to the power of the One who came in weakness.

This era of powerlessness is precisely the time when the stakes are high for the church. So the question becomes: Will we who follow Jesus dare to trust God and be weak?

Faith in Action

How might the church witness to God’s power in weakness?

Prayer for Ending the Day

Thank you, God, for this good day.
I thank you for your many gifts and blessings.
I glorify you for love
made known through others.
I praise you for your grace
poured over our mistakes
and for your power
made known in our weaknesses.
I trust that you are still at work in your church.
Holy One, bless us and keep us,
in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Morgan Bell, Mount Horeb U.C., City of Kawartha Lakes, Ont.



Call to Worship

From the Conference where the sun first rises
to the Conference of northern lights
to the Conference where the sun last sets,

**from sea to sea to sea
we have gathered here.**

**Speaking French and Oji-Cree,
Japanese and Lingala,
Salish and English,
and more.**

We gather here,
to listen deeply.
To speak our truth,
confident:

We are not alone.

barb janes, GC43 Worship Team, Winnipeg, Man.

Come, let us worship the Creator with hearts open
to all peoples.

Let us worship the God of Diversity, who made
the world in colours, in seasons, in endless variety;
who created the diversity of the Earth's people
in God's image.

We were created to honour one another and in so
doing we honour the Holy One. Let us honour the
Creator today by reflecting in our worship and in
life...the image of the Sacred One – LOVE.

*Susie McPherson-Derendy, Cree York Factory Band,
GC43 Worship Team, Brandon, Man.*

- Some of these prayers will have been used during worship at GC43.
- You may also wish to draw ideas from the reflections provided throughout this booklet.
- When using these worship materials, please remember to give credit to the writers.

Come to this holy place,
with all your joys and your sorrows,
your hopes and your fears,
your doubts and your beliefs.
Come into this sanctuary,
so that we may join together
in worshipping our loving, compassionate,
and generous God.
Come, let us wonder and worship together,
risking faith and daring hope
as followers of the Way of Jesus.

Venons en ce saint lieu, apportons-y nos joies et nos
peines, nos espoirs et nos craintes, nos doutes et
nos convictions.

Venons dans ce sanctuaire, et qu'ensemble nous
adorions notre Dieu, Dieu d'amour, de compassion
et de générosité.

Venons dans l'émerveillement et l'adoration, au
risque de la foi et dans l'audace de l'espérance,
disciples du chemin de Jésus.

*Susan Lukey, Editor, Gathering Worship Resource.
Traduction et adaptation : D. Fortin / MiF.*

Opening Prayer

We breathe and know that you are God,
united as your people in this place.

We *breathe* and know that you are God,
filling us with your breath of life.

We breathe *and know* that you are God,
even in our inevitable moments of exhaustion.

We breathe and know that you *are* God,
not us, not us.

We *breathe and know* that you *are* God.

We breathe and know that you are God. Amen.

Notre respiration nous dévoile que tu es Dieu :

ensemble, en ce lieu, nous sommes ton peuple.

Notre respiration nous dévoile que tu es Dieu :

tu nous insuffles ton souffle de vie.



Notre respiration *nous dévoile* que tu es Dieu :
**même dans nos inévitables moments
d'épuisement.**

Notre respiration nous dévoile *que tu es Dieu* :
nous ne le sommes pas, mais vraiment pas.
Notre respiration nous dévoile que tu es Dieu.

**Notre respiration nous dévoile que tu es Dieu.
Amen.**

*Matthew Heesing, Diamond Valley P.C., Turner Valley,
Alta. Traduction et adaptation: D. Fortin / MiF.*

Eternal God, let the Light of Christ shine before us:
as a Map, guiding our journey,
as a Lighthouse, piercing through life's storms,
and as a Porchlight, welcoming us home.
Send your Spirit among us
and help us sing to your Glory
in the words Jesus taught us to say, "Our Father...."

*Ivan Gregan, Port Wallis U.C., Dartmouth, N.S.,
Gathering Advisory Board.*

Sung Response: "Lord, Listen to Your Children
Praying" (Voices United 400) or "O God We Call"
(Voices United 411)

Loving God,
Please be present with us now
In this time of expectation,
As the sun returns to rest.
We have come, exactly as we are
Little pieces of ourselves still trailing behind
Still scattered, preoccupied, clinging
Needing to be gathered
Bring us to your calming embrace.

Sung Response

Compassionate God
Please be merciful with us now
In this time of longing.
We have come, exactly as we are
Aware of our sharp edges and missed opportunities

Sometimes frustrated, regretting, doubting
Needing to be restored.

Bring us into your healing Spirit.

Sung Response

Living God
Please be human with us now
In this time of renewed possibilities.
We have come, exactly as we are
Open to meeting you in ourselves
And our neighbours,
Especially those who don't reflect our face.
Awake, called, gathered
Needing to be led
We are here, God.
Sung Response

*Bri-anna Swann and Jason Meyers, GC43 Worship Team,
Toronto, Ont.*

Prayer of Confession

Loving and forgiving God,
**Put your laws in our hearts
and write them deep in our minds,
so that when we are distracted by shiny
buildings, convenient technologies, fear,
destruction, and the persuasive promises of
false prophets, we will not be led astray. Amen.**

Words of Affirmation

Friends, may your heart be in full assurance
of God's amazing and unwavering grace
everlasting. And may we always provoke one
another to love and good deeds, constantly
encouraging one another.

*Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and
Spirituality. Originally written for Seasons of the Spirit
2018.*



Our hearts yearn to serve you, O God.

**Our minds long to love you
as you should be loved.**

**Our bodies ache to live
as the blessing you call us to be.**

**But we know that sometimes we are afraid
to risk living our faith in you;
sometimes we can't bring ourselves
to dare to hope in what Jesus shared.**

**This we know; this we bring,
trusting that there is nothing that can
separate us from your love.**

(a time of silent prayer)

Words of Assurance

Blessed are you! Holy are you!

In God's love there are new possibilities,
new opportunities to risk faith and dare hope.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Susan Lukey, Editor, Gathering Worship Resource.

With Children

or with the whole congregation

Show the 43rd General Council logo. Invite everyone to identify the parts of the logo and then share the reason for the colours and symbols. (See the description on page 2 of this booklet.)

or

Share a story of someone who has dared hope and risked faith, such as Joan of Arc, Malala Yousafzai, Terry Fox, the widow in Luke 18:1-5, or the boy in John 6:1-13. Or share a story of someone you know who has demonstrated this way of living. Point to God's power at work within us that makes risking faith and daring hope possible.

Sharing Your GC43 Message

When sharing your experience of General Council, the stories of the people you have met and from whom you have learned will be the most moving feedback you can gift to your listeners. You might wish to share some of the decisions made at General Council, but remember those decisions will be available to your listeners in many forms. Your personal experience is what will testify to your faith and hope.

You might share:

- the most moving moment for you
- your most difficult decision and why
- your most enjoyable moment
- the person at GC43 who influenced or inspired you the most
- where you saw God's Spirit moving at GC43
- what you are most thankful for coming out of the experience
- where you hope that the United Church will be risking faith and daring hope in the coming months and years

Hymn Suggestions

"May the God of Hope God with Us"

(Voices United 424)

"To Show by Touch and Word" *(VU 427)*

"I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" *(VU 509)*

"Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" *(VU 563)*

"You Call Us Out" *(VU 569)*

"We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection"
(VU 586)

"Blest Are They" *(VU pp. 896-897)*

"God of the Bible" *(More Voices 28)*

"Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope" *(MV 33)*

"Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah!" *(MV 121)*

"Draw the Circle Wide" *(MV 145)*

"Christ Has No Body Now but Yours" *(MV 171)*

« Jésus, je voudrais te chanter » *(Nos voix unies 63)*

« Comme un souffle fragile » *(NVU 96)*

« Mets de l'huile dans ma lampe » *(NVU 146)*



Scripture Suggestions

Look for words and images that mirror instances of risking faith and daring hope in the lectionary passages for the day, or consider these scriptures:

Isaiah 43:19-21

Can you see that God is doing a new thing?

Psalm 42

Why are you cast down, O my soul?

2 Corinthians 4:5-7

A treasure in clay jars

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

A new, reconciled creation in Christ

Galatians 6:9-10

Do not give up

Ephesians 3:14-21

God's power can accomplish abundantly more than we can ask or imagine

Matthew 5:1-16

Be blessing, salt and light in this world

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus is known in the breaking of the bread

Reflection

Psalm 8 (*Voices United* p. 732) with the following reflection:

We will risk celebrating God's presence
in ourselves
Even though we are in danger
of creating God in our own image
Even though we might overlook
our finitude and failing
Even though we could potentially elevate
ourselves beyond our station.
In hope, we will dare to celebrate God's
presence in ourselves
In our own vocations and ministries
In our own gifts and talents
In our own bodies and souls
In our own lives.

Ted Dodd, GC43 Worship Team, Winnipeg, Man.

Prayers of the People

Gracious and compassionate God,
we bring the prayers of our hearts
to be held in your heart
and in the faithful hearts
of this worshipping community.

We pray for healing
in a broken and despairing world:
may we risk faith and dare hope
for you are with us, Gracious God.

We pray for community
in a fractured and feuding society:
may we risk faith and dare hope
for you are with us, Gracious God.

We pray for courage
in the face of violent speech and actions:
may we risk faith and dare hope
for you are with us, Gracious God.

We pray for vision
in a cynical and distrustful time:
may we risk faith and dare hope
for you are with us, Gracious God.

We pray for (*add your own prayers or provide a time
of silent prayer*):

may we risk faith and dare hope
for you are with us, Gracious God.

We gather all of our prayers in the name of Jesus,
who truly risked faith and dared hope
as he taught his disciples to pray,
"Our Father..."

Susan Lukey, Editor, Gathering Worship Resource.

Loving brother, Jesus,
guide us in the way of faithfulness,
so that we will not be led astray.
Lead us on the path of righteousness,
so that we can be your disciples.
Carry for us the burdens
that we cannot bear alone, (*silence*)
so that the journey will not be too long for us.
Provide for us nourishment for our bodies, mind,
and spirit, when we become weak, (*silence*)
so that we can endure the obstacles in our way.
Pray for us when we do not know how
to pray for ourselves, (*silence*)
so that we can draw strength and comfort
from your presence.
We join these prayers together in the prayer
that you taught us, “Our Father....”

Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality. Originally written for Seasons of the Spirit 2018.

Commendation and Blessing

Everything that we plant will not grow.
Everything that we build will not stand.
But continue to plant seeds of hope,
and build communities of love.
Do not be discouraged,
because we do not work in vain.
The Grace of God, the Love of Jesus, and the
Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
works with and through us. Amen.

Toutes nos semences ne porteront pas fruit.
Toutes nos constructions
ne résisteront pas au temps.
Malgré cela, continuons de planter
des semences d’espérance
et de bâtir des communautés d’amour.
Ne nous décourageons pas,
car notre travail n’est pas inutile.
La grâce de Dieu, l’amour de Jésus et la
communion du Saint-Esprit œuvrent en nous
et à travers nous. Amen.

Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality. Originally written for Seasons of the Spirit 2018. Traduction et adaptation : D. Fortin / MiF.

Go from this place of worship,
filled with the Spirit.
Risk faithful actions and words.
Dare living hope in a cynical and despairing world,
for we are followers of the Way of Jesus,
upheld by God’s compassionate love. Amen.

Susan Lukey, Editor, Gathering Worship Resource.



In 2018, as we mark 34 years of *Gathering* and 44 years since it all began with *Getting It All Together* we want to say,

Thank you

to all who use *Gathering* to plan and inspire your weekly worship,
to all of our contributors who generously share your materials,
to all who have served as Editors and Music Editors,
to all who are serving and have served on the Gathering Advisory Board, and
to all those at the General Council Office who support the publication of *Gathering*.
Together we make *Gathering* a gift from God's people for God's people. **Thank you!**

Gathering in community to hear God whisper hope and possibility.
Gathering at font to feel the outpouring of God's well-being and love.
Gathering at table to taste God's assurance and challenge.
Gathering in prayer, which is work we are called to do for God's world.
Gathering in song to experience the transcendent rhythm of the Holy.
Gathering in community to perceive the image of God reflected in each other.
Gathering with others to share pain and joy, disappointments and dreams.
Gathering to be changed in the encounter with each other and with God's Word.
Gathering to be encouraged to dare faith, seek justice, and live hope day by day.
Gathering the gifts of God for the people of God and beyond.
Gathering is our radical act in a scattered world.

Susan Lukey, High River, Alta., Editor of Gathering.

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Downloadable prayers

Each issue comes with a code that worship planners can use for unlimited downloads of the prayers that appear in that issue. Without the code, the price is \$4.95 for each download.

Surely **God** is in this place!
Help me notice.



Dieu est sûrement dans ce lieu!
Aidez-moi à le percevoir.

— inspired by Brother Lawrence

— inspiré par le frère Laurent