

Where Now for Visible Justice?

North America-Turtle Island
Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute



PRAYER BOOK

Edited by Deivit Montealegre

 THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ÉGLISES

  World Council
of Churches

3 - 16 August 2026 Detroit, USA - Toronto, Canada

“Where Now for Visible Justice?”

North America-Turtle Island Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute



NATI-RETI
2026

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Morning Prayer · 3 – 16 August 2026

Detroit, Michigan · Toronto, Ontario

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Spiritual Life Working Group

This Prayer Book was prepared by the Spiritual Life Working Group (SLWG) of NATI-RETI 2026, a joint initiative of the Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches USA, with the accompaniment of the World Council of Churches.

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About NATI-RETI 2026

The North America-Turtle Island Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute is a regional expression of the global ecumenical movement, adapting the World Council of Churches' Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) model to the context of North America–Turtle Island.

A Milestone in Ecumenical Formation

Convened by The Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches USA, with the accompaniment of the World Council of Churches, NATI-RETI marks a renewed chapter in cross-border collaboration, a shared platform for emerging Christian leaders from the United States and Canada to engage in deep theological reflection and spiritual fellowship.

A Pilgrimage Across Borders

NATI-RETI 2026 is a fully immersive residential program. By engaging the distinct religious and social landscapes of Detroit and Toronto, participants explore the intersections of faith and public life, nurturing the visible unity of the church, the relatedness of justice and mission to that unity, and the church's witness across confessional and national lines in a polarized world.

DATES 3 – 16 August 2026

PHASES Detroit, Michigan (USA) · Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

THEME “Where now for visible justice?”

Prayer Life as Formative Learning

The spiritual life at NATI-RETI 2026 reflects a deep commitment to weaving together spirituality and theological reflection as mutually enriching dimensions of a holistic ecumenical formation. This institute is envisioned not simply as a time of academic engagement, but as a space for personal and communal transformation: spiritually, intellectually, and relationally.

This book supports the spiritual formation of all participants, nourishing the heart of the shared journey, grounding theological exploration in worship, and creating space to encounter the Spirit in our diversity.

Morning prayer is not a warm-up to the day's program; it is the first act of theological reflection. Across two weeks and two cities, the six thematic pillars of the institute find resonance in the arc of these prayers, as the common question: Where now for visible justice? is carried from Detroit to Toronto and offered, each morning, to God.

DAY 1

Opening Celebration

Where Now for Visible Justice?

Monday, 3 August 2026 - 14:00 – 15:00

GATHERING MUSIC / PRELUDE

Instrumental or sung music gathers the community as they arrive.

PROCESSION AND GREETING

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland, National Council of Churches USA

WORDS OF WELCOME

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

WELCOME & GREETINGS

National Council of Churches USA — Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President & General Secretary

Canadian Council of Churches — Pastor Peter Noteboom, General Secretary

Ecumenical Theological Seminary (ETS) — Rev. Dr. Theodore Turman, President

WCC President for North America-Turtle Island — Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith

CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION

Led by Keith Swartzendruber, National Council of Churches USA

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: We have come from across this great continent.

All: We come because the Spirit is moving.

One: We come following Jesus, the One who brings good news to the poor, proclaims release to the captives, removes the blinders of prejudice and hatred, and sets free the oppressed.

All: We long to learn and walk in the ways of God's love and justice.

One: Holy Spirit, Loving God, Blessed Jesus, we ask that you move in our midst.

All: We come with open ears, open hearts, and open minds.

One: Here in this place may light, love, and hope inspire us and God's Spirit strengthen us for the work ahead.

All: God, be with us.

One: You who dismantle doors and remove barriers, open our hearts to praise you, that we might live as neighbors and friends, no longer strangers and enemies. Open our hearts to the transforming power of Your love, that we might be Your people — one body in Spirit, proclaiming jubilee, freedom, and justice for all. Be with us now and enliven our spirits in service to You and to those whom we meet.

All: Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Capo 3: F(D) C⁷(A⁷) F(D)

1 Blest be the tie that binds our
 2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we
 3 We share our mu - tual woes, our
 4 When we are called to part, it

hearts in Chris - tian love; the fel - low - ship of
 pour our ar - dent prayers; our fears, our hopes, our
 mu - tual bur - dens bear, and of - ten for each
 gives us in - ward pain; but we shall still be

kin - dred minds is like to that a - bove.
 aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
 oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
 joined in heart, and hope to meet a - gain.

5 This glorious hope revives
 our courage by the way;
 while each in expectation lives
 and waits to see the day.

6 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
 and sin, we shall be free;
 and perfect love and friendship
 reign through all eternity.

Words: John Fawcett, 1782 · Music: Dennis, attr. Johann G. Nägeli, 1828. Public domain; score from Hymnary.org.

SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 61:1–4

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Isaiah 61:1–4 (NRSVue)

SCRIPTURE READING

JOHN 17:21–23

That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

One: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

John 17:21–23 (NRSVue)

MEDITATION

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, National Council of Churches USA

SYMBOLIC INAUGURAL ACT

The Six Pillars — Lighting of the Candles

Six candles of different colors represent the six thematic pillars. Four facilitators and two staff members light the candles.

United States (Bishop McKenzie): These six candles represent the six thematic pillars that will guide our common witness during this gathering: Climate Justice, Secularism and Laicity, Anti-Racism, Interfaith Dialogue, Indigenous Solidarity, and Confronting Wealth Disparity.

Each is a light entrusted to us — not to be admired from a distance, but rather to illuminate our shared path of discipleship.

Each pillar is named as its candle is lit.

We light this candle for Climate Justice.

We light this candle for Secularism and Laicity.

We light this candle for Anti-Racism.

We light this candle for Interfaith Dialogue.

We light this candle for Indigenous Solidarity.

We light this candle for Confronting Wealth Disparity.

Canada (Pastor Noteboom): These candles remind us that justice is never a single issue, but many faithful commitments held together. As these flames burn side by side, they call us to walk together in hope, courage, and mutual accountability.

Water Ritual

Water from Canada and water from the United States are poured into a bowl, representing the two countries coming together.

Bishop McKenzie: And just as these lights shine together, we now bring together the waters of our two nations...

Bishop McKenzie: We gather in this space as two nations, joining together in our commitment to reflect Jesus' prayer that we might all be one, as He and the Father are one, so that the world might believe.

Pastor Noteboom: We join our hearts and minds together in a world that needs our witness as we seek to be transformed through worship, prayer, fellowship, learning, and growing together. Iron sharpens iron and deep calls to deep.

Bishop McKenzie: We come together to honor the call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God as we strive for visible unity and seek righteousness to be embodied throughout our nations in North America and across the global village.

Pastor Noteboom: We proclaim today that Justice and Unity start with us. As Christ's ambassadors, we pray that our words and actions, and the way we live out our faith, are consistent with the redeeming love of the One who died so that all may have abundant life.

Bishop McKenzie: Where now for Visible Justice? It is here — in us, through us and for us. May this water represent the bond created between us. May it flow unencumbered across borders, breaking down obstacles real and imagined. May God's Spirit strengthen and fortify us to do this work. May we respond courageously and with determination in this moment that beckons us to work together to overcome injustice and build up righteousness in our lands.

Two separate containers of water are poured into one, representing the two nations and the Great Lakes, which hold over 80% of North America's fresh water.

Pastor Noteboom: We give thanks for the living water that Jesus promised and the sustaining water of the Great Lakes, which hold over 80% of North America's fresh water. Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. These lakes bring life to us as shared inhabitants and neighbors on Turtle Island. As we combine these waters, may we join our own lives together in commitment to learn from one another and to grow together as followers of Jesus, who gives us the water of eternal life.

Bishop McKenzie and Pastor Noteboom: Amen and may it be so.

LITANY OF COMMITMENT FOR THE RETI JOURNEY

Led by Dr. Loida Martell, Facilitator

One: Let us commit to one another at the start of this great journey. God, who provides a way when there seems to be no way, we come seeking guidance. Be with us as we commit to forming this new community.

All: We commit ourselves to love those with whom we will live, learn, lament, and laugh, freely offering grace and treating each other with the respect and dignity that we would hope to receive as well.

One: We give thanks for the gift of new experiences.

All: We commit ourselves to listen to the stories of those whom we encounter.

One: We seek the multitude of ways that You live through the lives of others.

All: We commit ourselves to learn the new ways You are working throughout the communities we encounter and those we learn about.

One: We yearn for wisdom and truth.

All: We commit ourselves to honor the lives of those who provide guidance for us as we seek Your justice.

One: As we embark on this journey, let us fully embrace this opportunity.

All: We commit ourselves, with our whole bodies, minds, and hearts, to be open to Your leading, O God, during these next weeks as we learn where we are to seek visible justice in the world around us.

All: Transform, mold, and shape us for Your service. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

Led by Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland, National Council of Churches USA

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

SENDING HYMN

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love 2223

The musical score is written for four-part harmony (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in F major, 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music with lyrics underneath. The first system has four measures with lyrics for four different parts. The second system has five measures with lyrics for four different parts. The third system has five measures, with the last two marked as a 'Refrain'. The fourth system has seven measures with lyrics for four different parts. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, key signatures, time signatures, and chord symbols (Fm, Bbm, Cm) above the staves.

1. We are one in the Spir- it, we are one in the Lord, we are
 2. We will walk with each oth- er, we will walk hand in hand, we will
 3. We will work with each oth- er, we will work side by side, we will
 4. All praise to the Fa- ther, from whom all things come, and all

one in the Spir- it, we are one in the Lord, and we pray that all
 walk with each oth- er, we will walk hand in hand, and to - geth - er we'll
 work with each oth- er, we will work side by side, and we'll guard hu- man
 praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son and all praise to the

u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:
 spread the news that God is in our land: And they'll know we are Chris- tians by our
 dig - ni - ty and save hu- man pride:
 Spir - it, who makes us one:

love, by our love; yes, they'll know we are Chris- tians by our love.

Words and music: Peter Scholtes. © 1966 F.E.L. Publications, assigned to The Lorenz Corporation.

BLESSING AND SENDING

Rev. Dr. Soren M. Hessler, Facilitator

Morning Prayer

Tuesday, 4 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

INVOCATION

Come, let us listen for the voice of God: in the rhythm of the lakes and streams, in the song of the living earth, in the quiet stirrings of the Spirit within us. Let us open our hearts to the One who goes before us, dwells among us, and renews all creation.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Spirit of Life, you speak through the beauty and mystery of the world around us and through the deep places of our hearts. Gather us into your presence and awaken us to your renewing Spirit among us. When doubt looms large and the burdens of this world weigh us down, draw us up! Move us toward hope and trust. Open our ears to hear your voice, our minds to receive your wisdom, and our hands to join your work of justice and healing for the earth and all its people. Through your grace, make us a living song of praise. Amen.

PSALMODY

PSALM 29

The Voice of God in a Great Storm — read responsively

High Voices: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Low Voices: **Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendour.**

High Voices: The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over mighty waters.

Low Voices: **The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.**

High Voices: The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

Low Voices: **The Lord makes Lebanon skip like a calf
and Sirion like a young wild ox.**

High Voices: The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

Low Voices: **The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

High Voices: The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl
and strips the forest bare, and in his temple all say, “Glory!”

Low Voices: **The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.**

All: **May our God give strength to all people!
May our God bless all people with peace!**

Psalms 29 (NRSV^{ue})

SONG

I Hear Your Voice

Lyrics: Tammy Wiens

Music: Sheldon Sorge



C G/C F/C C F C/E

I hear your voice in the sound of the o - cean, thun - der - ing waves form a
 I hear your voice in the roar of the wild - fire, bill - ow - ing flames turn a
 I hear your voice in the song of the li - lies, grace - ful - ly clothed they

7 D# Gsus4 G7 C Dm /C /B Eaug

great foam ing tow'r. My life seems small in the swell of the
 for - est to dust. My doubt looms large, I am search - ing for
 toil not in vain. My wor - ry fades, there is no - thing too

12 G#m⁽⁶⁵⁾ Am Dm C/E F G E/G#

break - ers, my heart is drawn by the tides of your pow'r.
 ans - wers; none can be found, yet in you do I trust.
 troub' - ling, hope is re - stored when I call out your name.

17 Am Em F C/E Dm

God says, "I AM who I AM now and al - ways, glo - ry and

22 Am F G C Em

strength be - long on - ly to me! I go be - fore you, with -

27 F C F/A C/G Dm G C

- in you, to guide you; you are my art - work made per - fect and free."

"I Hear Your Voice" — Words: Tammy Wiens, based on Psalm 29; Music: Sheldon W. Sorge. © 2015 Sheldon W. Sorge. Used with permission.

SCRIPTURE READING

God's Artwork — a Medley of Scripture on Creation

Group 1: In the beginning, God saw everything that was made, and indeed, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

Group 2: **By wisdom the Lord founded the earth; by understanding the heavens were established. (Proverbs 3:19)**

Group 1: In God's hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being. (Job 12:10)

Group 2: **The land mourns, and all who live in it languish; even the creatures of the field and the birds of the air are perishing. (Hosea 4:3)**

Group 1: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it. (1 Corinthians 10:26)

Group 2: **All things have been created through Christ and for Christ; in Christ all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16–17)**

Group 1: This is the word of God.

Group 2: **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

If possible, go outside for the Reflection and the remainder of the liturgy through to the Benediction; if it is not possible to go outdoors, adapt the instructions accordingly. Invite participants into awareness of contact and weight of the earth. They will begin with their shoes on, but in the second part of the meditation they will remove their shoes. Guide the meditation using these instructions:

Feel your feet where they meet the ground (or floor).

Notice the pressure in the soles of your feet, your heels, and toes. Notice the balance, the steadiness.

Beneath your feet, this ground (or floor) is your foundation, beneath that foundation is soil, and beneath that soil is the ancient rock of the earth. (Pause)

Feel the groaning of creation.

Remove your shoes and touch the earth.

Feel the grass and the soil beneath you.

Breathe the air, smell the trees, and hold them close.

Listen to the birds and tune in to the restlessness of the Great Lakes. (Pause)

Listen to the groaning of creation.

Hear the groaning of the soil, the sighing of the trees, the crying of the Great Lakes, the trembling air,

the whisper of the grass, the songs of birds beneath the moving clouds.

What are they telling you?

What are they asking of you? (Pause)

Respond to the groaning creation.

How will you respond to the earth?

How will you respond to the waters that cover the earth?

How will you respond to the wind and sky?

Creation is speaking. God is speaking.

What does it mean for you to listen to God's creation's longing?

SYMBOLIC ACT

The Altar of Hope

Participants use the shoes they removed during the Reflection. Preferably this is done outdoors, but it may be done indoors if necessary.

At the centre of the gathering space, create the Altar of Hope — simple, open, and close to the earth. Participants are invited to come forward carrying their shoes, sandals, or boots: symbols of their journey through life and their walk upon groaning creation.

One by one, each person gently places their footwear to form the shape of a cross — a living symbol of humanity's shared pilgrimage with the groaning creation: the earth that cries, the lakes and oceans that rise, the forests that mourn, and the creatures that long for healing. As the

cross takes shape, silence is kept. The sound of footsteps, the touch of soil, and the breath of the gathered community become prayer.

When all the shoes have been placed, these words may be spoken:

We lay down the marks of our journey
upon this Altar of Hope.
May our steps no longer wound the earth,
but walk gently with creation.
May we hear the groaning of the soil,
the lakes and oceans, the air, and all living beings.
And may this cross of worn footsteps
become a sign of hope, justice, and renewed life.

Participants may then stand barefoot for a moment, feeling the ground beneath them — remembering that all are connected to the earth and called to walk a path of care, compassion, justice, and hope.

INTERCESSIONS

Responsive Petitions: A Call Rooted in Faith

- One:** The earth groans beneath the weight of human excess, and many communities bear burdens they did not create. Yet we trust that God’s renewing Spirit is still at work among us and throughout creation.
- All:** **Open our hearts to hear your voice and follow your way.**
- One:** We grieve the losses brought by rising lakes and oceans, fierce storms, drought, fire, and changing climates. We pray for all whose homes, livelihoods, and futures are at risk.
- All:** **Renew the earth, O God.**
- One:** We lament the injustices that place the greatest burdens on those with the fewest resources and the least power.
- All:** **Teach us to seek justice, walk humbly, and care for one another.**
- One:** By your Spirit, call your church to faithful witness and courageous action, that we may nurture the earth and protect the well-being of future generations.

All: Teach us to be your faithful stewards.

One: This is our prayer and our calling: a journey of ecological metanoia — a turning of hearts, communities, and systems toward life.

All: Amen and Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

May the mountains of God's grace and the oceans of God's love embrace us all and carry us forward through Jesus, the Living Water, and the breath of the Spirit. Safe in God's embrace, let us voyage with clarity of vision and courage. Your renewing Spirit gives us song.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

I Hear Your Voice - Refrain

C Em F C/E Dm

God says, "I AM who I AM now and al - ways, glo - ry and
Dieu dit, "Je suis qui je suis pour tou - jours, gloire et

6 Am F G Am Em

strength be - long on - ly to me! I go be - fore you, with -
force n'ap - par - tien - nent qu'à moi! Je vais de - vant toi, en

11 F C/E F C/G Dm G7 C

- in you, to guide you; you are my art - work made per - fect and free."
toi pour te con - duire; tu es mon ouv - rage, par - fait, libre en joie."

The chorus is sung in both French and English. Words: Tammy Wiens; Music: Sheldon W. Sorge. © 2015. Used with permission.

Morning Prayer

Wednesday, 5 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

INVOCATION

- High Voices:** Creator God, we thank you for gathering us in this place. This morning we pause to remember that all life comes from your generous hand and is sustained by your love.
- Low Voices:** **We thank you for the plants, animals, waters, and lands that nourish and sustain life.**
- High Voices:** We thank you for the gifts of the earth that shelter us, clothe us, heal us, and connect us to one another.
- Low Voices:** **We thank you, O God, for the wisdom to receive these gifts with gratitude and care.**
- High Voices:** Teach us to see ourselves not as owners of creation but as members of its community, entrusted with its well-being.
- Low Voices:** **May we honour the life of all you have made.**
- High Voices:** Strengthen us to live simply, share generously, and walk gently upon the earth.
- Low Voices:** **May our worship reflect your love for creation and our care for one another. Fill us with your renewing Spirit and receive our praise.**

Adapted from Creation Justice Ministries, "Environmental Justice with Indigenous Peoples."

OPENING PRAYER

Prayer of Confession

- One:** Giver of Life, in the midst of your good creation, we recognize a plundered earth and we groan with creation:
- All:** **Have mercy on us.**

One: Giver of Life, in the midst of poisoned waters we groan with creation:
All: **Have mercy on us.**

One: Giver of Life, in the midst of polluted air we groan with creation:
All: **Have mercy on us.**

One: Giver of Life, in the midst of mountains of waste we groan with creation:
All: **Have mercy on us.**

One: Giver of Life, in the midst of the world at war, and because of the Church's sinful participation in the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny, we groan with creation:
All: **Have mercy on us.**

One: Giver of Life, we who are made in the image of God have gone astray. Attitudes of conquest and greed harm us all. Creation groans with us.
All: **Have mercy on us.**

Assurance of Grace

One: Hear the good news. In Christ, God is reconciling all things — things in heaven and things on earth. Though we have sinned against one another and against creation, God's mercy is greater than our failures. Through Christ we are forgiven, and through the Spirit we are renewed for lives of justice, gratitude, and care.

All: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Adapted from Creation Justice Ministries, "Environmental Justice with Indigenous Peoples."

PSALMODY

PSALMS 96, 104, 148

Responsive reading

One: Praise the Lord!

All: **While we have breath, we will sing; your renewing Spirit gives us song.**

One: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise the Lord, sun and moon, and all you shining stars!

All: While we have breath, we will sing; your renewing Spirit gives us song.

One: Praise the Lord from the earth, praise the Lord all sea creatures and all waters, fire and hail, snow and frost, and stormy wind.

All: While we have breath, we will sing; your renewing Spirit gives us song.

One: Praise the Lord, wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

All: While we have breath, we will sing; your renewing Spirit gives us song.

One: Let heaven celebrate! Let the earth rejoice! Let the lakes and oceans and everything in them roar! Let the countryside and everything, everywhere, celebrate!

All: While we have breath, we will sing; your renewing Spirit gives us song.

One: The Lord is coming to establish justice on earth! We wait for the Lord!

All: While we have breath, we will sing; your renewing Spirit gives us song.

SONG

I Hear Your Voice - Refrain

God says, "I AM who I AM now and al - ways, glo - ry and
 Dieu dit, "Je suis qui je suis— pour tou - jours, gloire— et

6 Am F G Am Em
 strength be - long on - ly to me! I go be - fore you, with -
 force n'ap - par - tien - nent qu'à moi! Je vais de - vant toi, en

11 F C/E F C/G Dm G7 C
 - in you, to guide you; you are my art - work made per - fect and free."
 toi pour te con - duire; tu es mon ouv - rage, par - fait, libre en joie."

I Hear Your Voice — Refrain

Reprise. Words: Tammy Wiens; Music: Sheldon W. Sorge. © 2015. Used with permission.

SCRIPTURE READING

COLOSSIANS 1:15–20

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Christ is the head of the body, the church; the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that Christ might come to have first place in everything. For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

One: This is the word of God.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

From “God’s Sacred Earth: A Renewed Commitment,” National Council of Churches (2024).

We believe that the created world is sacred — a revelation of God’s power and gracious presence filling all things. As partner communions of the National Council of Churches, we lament the shattering of the splendid gifts of this web of life, the ways we ignore our responsibility for the well-being of all life, and the destruction of species and their habitats at a rate never known in human history. We are called to care for God’s good earth in ways that sustain life on the planet, provide for the needs of all humankind, and increase justice. We acknowledge and lament that colonialism and racism have exacerbated the impacts of climate change and environmental injustices on minoritized people, and we recommit ourselves to working in solidarity against these systemic harms.

Churches, as communities of God’s people in the world, are called to exist as representatives of the One who creates, restores, and sustains. We are called to worship God with all our being and actions, and to treat creation as sacred. We all must engage in ensuring a thriving future for all creation, and cling to the true Gospel — for “God so loved the cosmos” (John 3:16) — rejecting the false gospels of our day.

Therefore, we urgently call all churches, all followers of Christ, and all people of goodwill to join us in:
rediscovering and celebrating the presence of God's creation in prayer, preaching, and worship,
educating on creation care, climate, and environmental justice with our communities,
advocating for climate and environmental justice,
seeking justice for communities of colour and low-wealth communities that bear
disproportionate impacts of environmental harm, and
healing creation through ecological restoration, biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and
adaptation.

Guiding questions for silent meditation:

1. Where have you encountered God's sacred presence in creation, and how is that experience calling you to greater care for the earth and its people? 2. As you review the points of the statement above, which one most speaks to your context today? Or feels most achievable in your setting? What is one specific step you could take in the next six months to put it into practice?

SYMBOLIC ACT

Web of Creation

Materials: one large ball of green or natural-coloured yarn or twine.

Invite participants to stand in a large circle: Today we have remembered God's gifts, confessed our failures, received God's grace, and recommitted ourselves to the care of creation. As we form this web, let us remember that all life is connected and that in Christ all things hold together.

The leader holds the end of the yarn, names a gift of creation (for example, fresh water), and tosses the ball across the circle. Each participant who receives the yarn holds onto a section, names something for which they are grateful or something they are committed to protecting (forest, pollinators, clean air, future generations, community gardens, rivers, wildlife, oceans, justice, etc.), and tosses the yarn to another participant. Continue until a "web" forms.

When the web is complete:

One: Look around you. No strand stands alone. Every life touches another life. Every choice affects another part of creation. This is the sacred web of life entrusted to our care.

Then invite everyone to gently lift the yarn (eye level).

One: In Christ all things hold together. Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another.

All: **Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another.**

INTERCESSIONS

One: God of life, we pray for the earth and all living things. Renew forests and rivers, grasslands and oceans, and all the creatures with whom we share this common home.

All: **Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another.**

One: We pray for communities affected by drought, fire, flood, rising seas, and environmental degradation. Sustain those who are vulnerable, strengthen those who serve, and inspire us to seek the common good.

All: **Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another.**

One: We pray for communities harmed by poverty, racism, and environmental injustice. May those who bear the greatest burdens receive justice, protection, and hope.

All: **Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another.**

One: We pray for your Church throughout the world. Teach us to proclaim the Gospel not only with our words but also through lives of gratitude, stewardship, and compassion.

All: **Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another.**

One: We pray for those gathered in this room. Where we have been indifferent, awaken us; where we have grown weary, strengthen us; where we are uncertain, guide us in faithful action.

All: **Renew us, O God, to care for the earth and one another. Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER

All: All that God has created is behind us. All that God continues to create is before us. God's creation surrounds us and lives within us. We are the artwork of the One who created us in love. In Christ, all things hold together, and in Christ, all things are being reconciled, re-created, made new. All is held in beauty. All is held in beauty. Amen.

Adapted from Creation Justice Ministries, "Environmental Justice with Indigenous Peoples."

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

Go now with gratitude for the gifts of creation,
with humility for the ways we have fallen short,
and with hope in the God who is making all things new.

May the Spirit who renews the earth renew your hearts.

May Christ, in whom all things hold together, guide your steps.

May the Creator's love sustain you as you seek justice, cherish creation, and serve your neighbours.

Go in peace to love God, care for the earth, and work for the flourishing of all life.

Amen.

Morning Prayer

Thursday, 6 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

Before the service, each participant receives three small pieces of paper and a pen or pencil, with a surface to write on. A basket is placed at the front of the chapel — or at the centre of the circle — to receive the laments offered during the Intercessions.

INVOCATION

**All: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
 the world, and those who live in it.**

Psalm 24:1 (NRSV^{ue})

OPENING PRAYER

Offered by the leader.

God of justice and hope,
You have created order in the world
and given us institutions to keep that order,
Creating space for people to flourish and be safe.
Thank you for the freedom to practise our faith.

God of wisdom and grace,
As we participate in society and live out our faith
May we do so in a way that loves all people
and honours those who are different than us.
Help us to use wisely the power that we have.

May our actions reflect those of Jesus,
Who came to bring good news to the poor,
To proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Final stanza from Luke 4:18–19 (NRSVue).

PSALMODY

PSALM 145

Read antiphonally: one group reads the normal type; the other responds in bold.

I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.

**Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.**

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.

**One generation shall extol your works to another
and shall declare your mighty acts.**

They will recount the glorious splendour of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works I will meditate.

**They will proclaim the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.**

They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

**The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.

**All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your faithful shall bless you.**

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom
and tell of your power,

**to make known to all people your mighty deeds
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.**

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

**The Lord is faithful in all his words
and gracious in all his deeds.**

The Lord upholds all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.

**The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.**

You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.

**The Lord is just in all his ways
and kind in all his doings.**

The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

**He fulfills the desire of all who fear him;
he also hears their cry and saves them.**

The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

**My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.**

Psalm 145 (NRSV^{ue})

SONG

Go Down, Moses

When Israel was in Egypt's land;
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

Refrain:

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt's land.
Tell old Pharaoh,
Let my people go!

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said;
Let my people go,
If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead,
Let my people go. [Refrain]

No more shall they in bondage toil;
Let my people go,
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
Let my people go. [Refrain]

"Go Down, Moses" — African American spiritual, public domain. Text from One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: An African American Ecumenical Hymnal, no. 633.

SCRIPTURE READING

ACTS 17:16–33

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this pretentious babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him

and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

“Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed, but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” At that point Paul left them. But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

One: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Acts 17:16–33 (NRSV^{ue})

REFLECTION

In groups of two or three — five to ten minutes, depending on time available.

How has your personal faith been received by others who do not share your faith?

How have you seen society respond to Christianity? (Skip if time is limited.)

How might pluralism, or a society becoming less Christian, create possibilities for people to be open to Christianity in new ways, as happened with Paul in Athens?

INTERCESSIONS

Offered by the leader.

God of wisdom and justice,
You invite people of faith to work together
for a better, more humane world,
So we bring our prayers to you.

We thank you that religious values and principles
are often shared across cultures,
Able to inform and guide civic life
and bring benefits to our nations and all people.

Yet, we lament that religion and government too often
have acted and spoken in ways that do not promote
equality, justice, and human dignity.

Each participant takes a few minutes to write down one or more laments — anything that angers or saddens them — about the place of faith in society, today or in the past, or about ways that government or other institutions have misused their power or maligned God's name.

Recognizing that we are unable
to fix these problems in our own power,
We bring our laments to you.
We trust that You are just in all your ways:
you save those who call on you
and punish the wrongdoers.

Participants bring their laments to the front of the chapel.

God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.
Together we lament those times
that the love of our faith and our country
has been misused for exclusion, exploitation, or oppression.
Help us recognize the roles our traditions or institutions have had
in condoning or benefiting from this.

Help us enter into conversation, mutual learning, and collaboration
with others willing to address these concerns.
Help us recognize that how we understand the relationship of religion and politics
may be different from other traditions of the world
and that our own frameworks may not be helpful to others.

Help us build healthy communities
that respect and uphold the dignity of all.
May we care for our neighbours,
safeguard the well-being of strangers,
and build reconciled communities.
May we unite in advocating for the just treatment
of those who are not like ourselves,
whether racially, sexually, religiously, or nationally.

When we grow anxious about the state of faith in our lands,
May we remember that, just as You rescued
the people from Egypt, You are still active today,
Drawing people to you,
People who are hungry for good news.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

Adapted from "The Problem of Religious Nationalism, in the US and Globally: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches."

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the
Holy Spirit be with all of you.

2 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSV^{ue})

Morning Prayer

Friday, 7 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

OPENING SONG

“Dios está aquí”

Led simply on guitar, with no spoken introduction. Begin by humming the melody twice, then alternate between Spanish and English, continuing until it comes to a natural conclusion. When the song concludes, hold ten to twenty seconds of silence.

2049

God Is Here Today

(Dios Está Aquí)



God is here to - day; _____ as
Dios es - tá a - quí, _____ tan

cer - tain as the air I breathe, _____ as
cier - to co - mo el ai - re que res - pi - ro, _____ tan

cer - tain as the morn - ing sun that ris - es, as
cier - to co - mo la ma - ña - na se le - van - ta, tan

WORDS: Trad. Mexican; trans. by C. Michael Hawn
MUSIC: Trad. Mexican; arr. by C. Michael Hawn and Arturo González
Trans. and arr. © 1999 Choristers Guild

DIOS ESTÁ AQUÍ
Irregular

GOD’S NATURE



cer - tain when I sing you'll hear my song. _____
cier - to co - mo que le can - to y me pue - de o - ir. _____

Spanish Text & Music © 1976 Javier García Mateo. English Translation © 1999 C. Michael Hawn, Choristers Guild.

OPENING PRAYER

A Guided Breath Prayer

The leader invites the congregation to find a comfortable position, feet grounded and hands resting comfortably.

As we pray, we focus on our breathing in, and with each breath out we repeat the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Breathe slowly in... “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Again, breathe slowly in... “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Breathe slowly in... “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” And one last time, breathe slowly in... “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”

One: In the book of Ephesians, we hear that “God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved.”
Let all God’s people say:

All: **Amen.**

Traditional breath prayer · Ephesians 2:4–5 (NRSVue).

PSALMODY

LUKE 1:46–55

The Magnificat — with “Come Out!” reprise

Led as a call and response: one reader and one song leader, the congregation joining the “Come Out!” reprise. The song leader sings four measures, and the congregation sings them back.

Come Out!



1. Come out! Come out of your com-for-ta-ble spac-es.



Come, meet Je-sus in the dif-fi-cult plac-es.



2. Have you not heard? Ev-'ry val-ley's ex-alt-ed;



moun-tains made low— but the low-ly are lift-ed.

From: *Roll Down, Justice!* (CGBK72).

Text: Tanya Linn Bennett and Mark A. Miller.

Music: *Come Out!*, by Mark A. Miller.

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Reader: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all

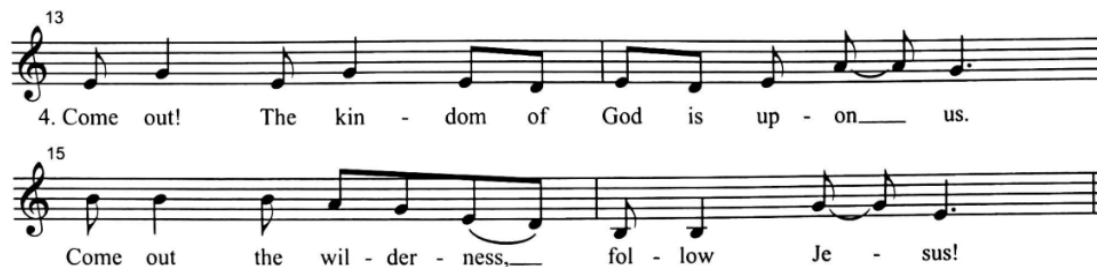
generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

All: “Come Out!” reprise — verses 1 and 2 (congregation echoes the song leader)

Reader: Indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;

All: “Come Out!” reprise — verse 4 (congregation echoes the song leader)

Reader: he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.



Luke 1:46–55 (NRSV^{ue}). “Come Out!” — Text: Tanya Linn Bennett & Mark A. Miller; Music: Mark A. Miller. © 2015 Choristers Guild. Reprinted by permission.

SCRIPTURE READING

EPHESIANS 2:14–22

For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer

strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

The third section of the Belhar Confession is our reflection for this morning.

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world; that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker; that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Cor. 5:17–21; Matt. 5:13–16; Matt. 5:9; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21–22).

We believe that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity; that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world (Eph. 4:17–6:23; Rom. 6; Col. 1:9–14; Col. 2:13–19; Col. 3:1–4:6).

We believe that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity; and that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine which, in such a situation, sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and colour, and

thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ.

Find one or two conversation partners and reflect together: When encountering professed Christians who hold or enact racist doctrines, how can we respond both as individuals and as the larger body of Christ?

The Belhar Confession • Reformed Church in America.

SYMBOLIC ACT

The Wall Comes Down

The assembly begins in two groups facing each other across an open aisle. The dividing wall of which Ephesians speaks. The movement unfolds during the sung Kyrie that follows; let the singing carry it.

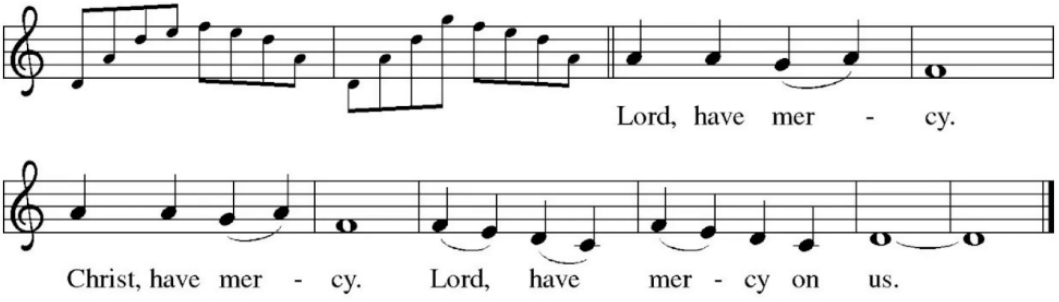
With each Kyrie response, the leader invites a few more people to cross the open space and intermingle, until the wall between the two groups is gone. When all have crossed, the community forms a single circle; hands are joined for a brief moment, a sign that the dividing wall is down, and then released, so each can hold the prayer book and sing.

INTERCESSIONS

With the sung Kyrie

A chime cues the Kyrie; the leader sings it once, then invites all to sing.

Kyrie



Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

Music: Swee Hong Lim
Music © 1990 General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115.
All rights reserved. Used by permission.

One: Let us pray to the Living God, offering your prayers silently in your hearts, or aloud, after I say “We lift our voices to you, O God.” For those suffering from the injustice of racism, colourism, and all other forms of discrimination, we lift our voices to you, O God...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: For those doing the work of anti-racism, we lift our voices to you, O God...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: For those who were taught to hate and discriminate, that they might find your love and that it might change their ways, we lift our voices to you, O God...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: For our countries, cities, and all leaders who hold positions of power, that they might act to lead boldly to a new way, Your way, we lift our voices to you, O God...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: O God, hear our prayers. Move our hearts. We pray in the strong name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who beckons us into unity. And so we pray together the prayer he taught, each in the language of their heart.

Prayers written by Brian Hehn. Kyrie: Music by Swee Hong Lim, © 1990 GBGMusik. Used with permission.

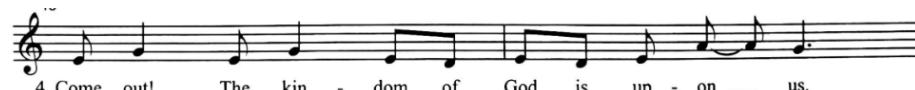
THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

Let us go out as a singing people!

Come Out!



"Come Out!" Words: Tanya Linn Bennett & Mark A. Miller; Music: Mark A. Miller. © 2015 Choristers Guild.

Morning Prayer

Saturday, 8 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

OPENING SONG

“Thank You For This Day”

Sung a cappella and by rote, often as a call and response using four measures at a time. At the opening, a slower, more prayerful tempo is appropriate.

Thank You for This Day

Native American Church

dm

The musical notation is written on four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third and fourth staves repeat the final phrase of the song, 'heal - ling, this heal - ling this, hea - ling day, This heal - ling, this heal - ling, this hea - ling day!'. The notation uses various note values and rests to create a rhythmic pattern suitable for singing a cappella.

Thank you for this day, Lord, Thank you for this day;

Thank you for this day, oh Lord, Thank you for this day. This

heal - ling, this heal - ling this, hea - ling day, This

heal - ling, this heal - ling, this hea - ling day!

Verses:

Add your own lines such as: 'Thank you for this Life, this food, these friends, etc.' Sing it around a circle with each person adding a line.

Source: The Native American Church.

OPENING PRAYER

A Guided Breath Prayer

The leader invites the congregation to a comfortable position, feet grounded, hands resting.

As we pray, we focus on our breathing in, and with each breath out we repeat the phrase, “Spirit of God, ignite my heart.” Breathe slowly in... “Spirit of God, ignite my heart.” Again, breathe slowly in... “Spirit of God, ignite my heart.” Breathe slowly in... “Spirit of God, ignite my heart.” And one last time, breathe slowly in... “Spirit of God, ignite my heart.”

One: When the disciples had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Friends, the Spirit of the Lord is stirring within us and between us. Let all God’s people say:

All: Amen.

Prayer crafted by Brian Hehn. Acts 1:6–8 (NRSVue).

PSALMODY

PSALM 139

Normal type read by the leader; bold type read by the congregation.

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,”
**even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
**I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.**

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

I try to count them — they are more than the sand; I come to the end — I am still with you.

O that you would kill the wicked, O God, and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me —
those who speak of you maliciously and lift themselves up against you for evil!

Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen.

Psalms 139 (NRSVue).

SONG

Reprise: “Thank You For This Day”

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 4:16–29

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’”

And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land, yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many with a skin disease in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.

One: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Luke 4:16–29 (NRSVue).

REFLECTION

An excerpt from a letter written by M. Roger Holland II, dated 21 June 2021.

“The spirit of the Lord spoke to Isaiah and said “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8) In his earthly ministry with his disciples, Jesus declares that “the harvest is abundant but the labourers are few.” (Matthew 9:37) This, as Jesus observes that in the towns and villages

he visited there is much sickness, illness and disease. Do we not see that among us now? The disease of racism, the sickness of gender discrimination, all continuing in the midst of a global pandemic. Today in the life of the Church, we acknowledge the Memorial of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, an Italian Jesuit and patron saint of Roman Catholic youth who lost his life in 1591 while caring for the sick during a plague that broke out in Rome, contracting the disease himself. While it is not my intention to lose my life, we do now find ourselves in the grips of multiple, simultaneous pandemics, and our community in need of healing from various diseases. Might it be that we are being called to work in the vineyard in the midst of a shortage of workers?

I do not purport to be able to fix or solve any of these issues, certainly not by myself. However, I pledge to work with you in all the ways you articulated prior. Kate, have you seen the end of the last Star Wars movie or Avengers: Endgame? The lone heroes in the story, in each case, see others come to their aid just when it seems all is lost. They do not fight the battle against the common enemy alone (Emperor Palpatine and Thanos, respectively). I have hope that others will be inspired by our example. We just need to stand up and fight the big, bad monsters until the reinforcements show up. Just like in the MeToo movement, after a brave soul or two come forward, there are others that find their courage to join the fray. “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” Let us respond as Isaiah did, while praying that the master of the harvest will send more workers for his harvest, for such a time as this, because there is yet work to be done.”

Your brother,
Roger

For reflection:

How are you being called to take risks? What about the work or task you are called to makes it risky for you?

What is the conflict, or work, that you might be called to orchestrate for a better future?

Who or what might we join forces with, so as not to be isolated in the work of anti-racism or gender equality?

From “The Fire This Time: A Black Catholic Sourcebook,” ed. Kim R. Harris, M. Roger Holland II, and Kate Williams, pp. 326–327.

SYMBOLIC ACT

One Body, Singing

The leader invites everyone to come forward from their places and gather into a single circle, taking up again yesterday's image of one body.

Once the circle has formed, each person rests a free hand on their own heart and all say together, once and aloud (not sung), the day's breath prayer: "Spirit of God, ignite my heart." A brief silence follows: a moment of self-examination before God, who has made us fearfully and wonderfully and knit us together as one.

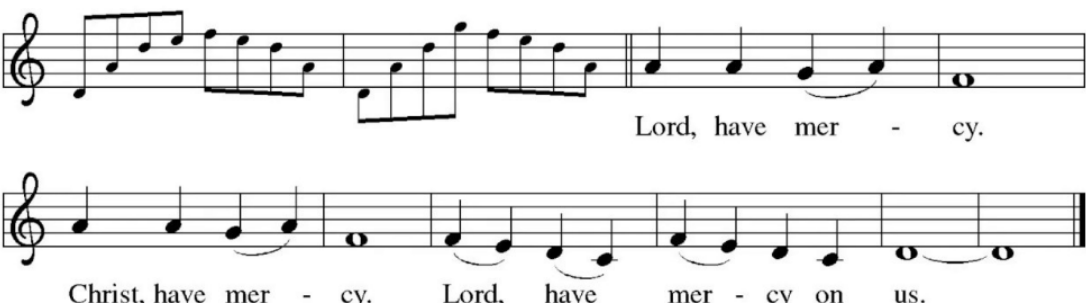
Remaining in the circle, the community sings the Kyrie that follows (the Intercessions). At the Benediction, with a faster tempo and hand drum, the circle sings out and goes into the day as a singing people.

INTERCESSIONS

With the sung Kyrie

A chime cues the Kyrie; the leader sings it once, then invites all to sing.

Kyrie



Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

Music: Swee Hong Lim
Music © 1990 General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115.
All rights reserved. Used by permission.

One: Let us pray to God, whose Spirit moves the world to reconciliation. We offer our prayers silently, or aloud, after I say “Spirit of the Living God, hear our prayers.”
For those suffering from the injustice of racism, colourism, and all other forms of discrimination, Spirit of the Living God, hear our prayers...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: For those doing the work of anti-racism, Spirit of the Living God, hear our prayers...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: For those who were taught to hate and discriminate, that they might find your love and that it might change their ways, Spirit of the Living God, hear our prayers...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: For our countries, cities, and all leaders who hold positions of power, that they might act to lead boldly to a new way, Your way, Spirit of the Living God, hear our prayers...

All: **Kyrie — sung response**

One: Holy Spirit, hear our prayers. Move our hearts. We pray in the strong name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who promised you would always be with us. And so we pray together the prayer he taught, each in the language of their heart:

Prayers written by Brian Hehn. Kyrie: Music by Swee Hong Lim, © 1990 GBGMusik. Used with permission.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

A faster, more celebratory tempo may be taken; a hand drum may be added.

Again, we go out as a singing people!

Thank You for This Day

Native American Church

dm

Thank you for this day, Lord, Thank you for this day;

Thank you for this day, oh Lord, Thank you for this day, This

heal - ling, this heal - ling this, hea - ling day, This

heal - ling, this heal - ling, this hea - ling day!

The musical notation consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a 'dm' (diminuendo) marking. The melody is simple, using mostly quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across measures. The piece ends with a double bar line on the fourth staff.

Verses:

Add your own lines such as: 'Thank you for this Life, this food, these friends, etc.' Sing it around a circle with each person adding a line.

Reprise. Source: The Native American Church.

Morning Prayer

Tuesday, 11 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

INVOCATION

Holy God of all places and all peoples,
you call us together as one human family —
diverse in tongue and tradition
yet bound by a common longing for you.

Open our eyes to your divine image
reflected in all of creation —
in faces near and far,
in wisdom ancient and new.

Open our ears and our spirits to the myriad and wondrous ways
human beings name and know the sacred:
Creator, Elohim, Sophia, Allah, Jesus, Bhagavan, Akal Purakh and so many more...

Pause — please say out loud your name for the sacred in the language of your heart.

Move us beyond tolerance
into genuine encounter —
where we embody truth-telling and reconciliation,
where hope and healing take root,
where justice and peace are the mortar of our shared life

We pray in the name of your strong and tender love,
Amen.

Adapted from an Emmanuel College (Toronto) prayer service in response to the Québec Mosque massacre, 2017.

OPENING PRAYER

Gathered here in Tkaronto—Toronto
we raise our hands in gratitude for those whose territory this is.

We are grateful, O God, for the welcome that has made this possible —
the welcome of the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Mississaugas of the Credit,
the Chippewa and the Wendat peoples,
bound together by the Dish With One Spoon —
the ancient covenant these your peoples forged through hard-won peace
to share this land and keep it whole.

Their prayers have risen from this ground since time beyond memory.
We acknowledge and join in their prayers
grateful for their enduring presence and wisdom,
and we come calling one another to be accountable
O God, to your calling on our lives in this and in all places.

**In the face of the forces that tug and pull, that push and unsettle,
we hear your voice calling us —
not to the erasure of our histories and our identities,
what we have believed, what we have done, where we have fallen short —
but to the courage to be so deeply rooted
in our history and future with you
that we can reach beyond fear toward one another**

Most High, deepen our roots and widen our reach.
Lead us to trust your Holy Spirit's already-ongoing work
in the ones coming toward us,
already present in the wisdom we have not yet heard,
already at work in healing the wounds we have caused — wounds still open —
when instead of listening for you in one another
we have weaponized you against the very ones you love.

**Receive us and guide us, Holy One —
our questioning, our certainties,
our wounds and wounding,
our folly and our wisdom,
our reaching and our rootedness.**

Bless us, we pray, that we may be a blessing —
in our generation, here for such a time as this.

We look to you. We wait for you. Amen.

Maureen J. A. Okundi (May 2026, for NATI-RETI).

PSALMODY

PSALM 139:1–18

Read antiphonally: one group reads the normal type; the other responds in bold.

O Lord, you have searched me and known me. **You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.** You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. **Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.** You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.**

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? **If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.** If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, **even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.** If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,” **even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. **I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.** My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. **Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.**

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! **I try to count them — they are more than the sand; I come to the end — I am still with you.**

SONG

162

Creation, like a prism

$\text{♩} = 138$



1 Cre - a - tion, like a pri - sm, shines,
 2 Each age and gen - der, race and creed,
 ♦ 3 How can we of - fer fit - ting thanks
 4 Let beams from glo - rious sun be joined,
 5 We, chil - dren all of A - bra - ham,

its source, E - ter - nal Light,
 each na - tion large or small,
 ♦ for life re - ceived, un - earned?
 a sym - pho - ny of rays.
 are Mus - lim, Chris - tian, Jew.

Each co - lour, ev - ery shimm - 'ring ray
 re - veals the ra - diant Ho - ly One,
 ♦ By shin - ing forth and pass - ing on
 Let chil - dren born of Light u - nite
 Sha - lom, sa - laam, with you be peace,

re - flects a glo - ry bright.
 the God who made us all.
 ♦ the love that we have learned.
 in rain - bow splen - did praise.
 and al - so, friend, with you.

** Verse 5 is an optional verse and may be sung in canon. Singers may repeat the last two lines of the verse while turning to a neighbour to exchange a handshake of peace.*

Words: Delores Dufner, OSB, 2019

Music: Deborah Park and Tom Reynolds, 2021

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SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 10:25–37 · FIRST NATIONS VERSION

A scroll keeper, one who was skilled in his knowledge of tribal law, came to Creator Sets Free (Jesus) to test him and trap him in his words. “Wisdomkeeper,” he said. “What path must I walk to have the life of the world to come that never fades away, full of beauty and harmony?”

He answered him, “What is written in our tribal law about this? Tell me, how do you see it?”

The scroll keeper spoke from the words of the law, “You must love the Great Spirit from deep within, with the strength of your arms, the thoughts of your mind, and the courage of your heart, and you must love your fellow human beings in the same way you love yourselves.”

“You have answered well,” Creator Sets Free (Jesus) said back to him. “If you walk this path you will live.”

But the scroll keeper, wanting to look good to others, asked him, “Who are my fellow human beings?”

Creator Sets Free (Jesus) answered him with a story. “There was a man walking the road from Village of Peace (Jerusalem) to Moon Village (Jericho). On the way he was attacked by thieves, who beat him, stripped him of his clothes, and left him bleeding to death. Now it happened that a holy man was on the same road, not far behind. When he saw the man, he went around him on the other side of the road. Not far behind him was another man, also from the tribe holy men are chosen from. When he saw the wounded man, he did the same thing as the holy man. Then a man from High Place (Samaria), who was also walking the road, saw the wounded man. Even though he was not a Tribal Member but a mixed blood despised by the tribal people, he felt pity for the man.

He helped him by pouring good medicine on his wounds and wrapping them in a cloth. He put the man on his own animal and took him to a lodging house to care for him. The next day, when the man of High Place (Samaria) was leaving, he gave from his own money pouch to the keeper of the lodging house. ‘Use this to care for him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will give you anything more that is needed.’”

Creator Sets Free (Jesus) then looked at the scroll keeper and said, “Which one of these three acted as a fellow human being to the man who was attacked by the thieves?” The scroll keeper

answered, “The one who had pity on him.” “Go,” Creator Sets Free (Jesus) said, “and walk in the same way.”

First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament, IVP, 2021.

REFLECTION

The First Nations Version meets us here and it slows us down, making the familiar strange again, and strangely, more true.

Creator Sets Free. The Great Spirit. Scroll Keeper. These may not be words we grew up with. Or, perhaps, they are, yet somewhere along the way we may have been told they were not sacred enough. This translation itself is an act of what we are here to practise — visible justice: the willingness to hear what we thought we knew spoken in a voice we did not expect — and to find it more true, not less.

The scroll keeper asks which instruction stands first. And the answer comes not as doctrine but as embodiment. We are invited, indeed commanded, to love with our whole being — the strength of our arms, the thoughts of our mind, the courage of our heart. The instruction that stands first is not a belief to hold but a life to live.

And then comes the harder question — the one each of us is still living: Who are my fellow human beings?

The one who answered that question with his life was not the holy man. It was not the one from the right tribe or the right tradition. It was the one from High Place — the mixed blood, the despised outsider, the one the tribal people had decided was not quite neighbour enough to deserve the name. Three things he did:

He saw the wounded man.

He stopped what he was doing.

He poured medicine on the wounds.

We gather here from many traditions, many namings of the sacred.

Some of us carry wounds from those whose God-talk was a weapon. Some of us have been the ones who did not stop — confident that our theology was sound even as we passed by someone left for dead, bleeding on the road along which we ourselves were walking.

Most of us have been both.

The text does not ask us to resolve this. It asks us only one question:
Who among those who saw the wounded man acted as a fellow human being?
And then — Go. Walk in the same way.

We are gathering daily here.

Learning, not arriving.

Not having solved the question of the neighbour.

But learning to stop.

Learning to look and in looking to see.

Learning to trust that the Spirit who is already at work wherever we go draws us to encounter
the other as a fellow human being:

To be seen.

To be stopped for.

To be engaged with — even when that other names the sacred differently than we do.

And, perhaps, especially then.

Having said this, we do not gather here only for ourselves.

We are leaders.

People are learning whether to see

by watching whether we see.

People are watching how we stop —

and learning from us whether to stop and whether stopping is worth it.

The medicine we pour — or withhold —

teaches those in our spheres of influence, those in our care, what love costs.

We will go from here not only changed but charged:

to hold space in our communities

for the discomfort of genuine encounter,

to speak from our platforms

when the sacred is weaponized against the neighbour,

to form in those we lead

the courage to look,

to stop,
to pour medicine on wounds still open.

We must be so anchored that we can reach — courageously and freely —
beyond fear, toward our neighbour.

And we must be leaders who help others
find their anchor
and trust their reach.

Guiding questions for silent meditation:

Who has been the one from High Place in our story, the one whose wisdom we almost missed because of where they came from, or how they named the sacred?

Who in our community is watching to see whether we stop, and what are they learning from us?

Maureen J. A. Okundi (May 2026, for NATI-RETI).

SYMBOLIC ACT

Anchor of Hope

Anchors are threaded in advance. A basket with the heart-anchor pendants rests at the centre. A leader steps forward to bless them.

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul reminds us that hope is as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. Jesus commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves and to love one another as he has loved us.

Loving and compassionate God, bless these anchors, in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. May they be a reminder that we belong to God. May they remind us to trust God's love to hold us, to keep us steady, and to strengthen us in turn to love our neighbours as ourselves. May we see God's image in one another and experience the spark of divinity in all people and all expressions of the sacred.

Participants move forward and receive the anchors. They turn to their neighbour and place the pendant around each other's necks. The song "Open My Heart" may be sung during the ritual.

Open my heart

Ouvre mon cœur/Abre mi corazón

Part I



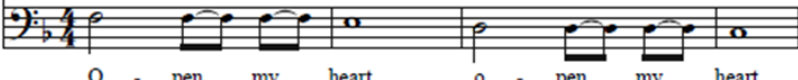
English: O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
 French: Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
 Spanish: A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part II



O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
 Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
 A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part III



O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
 Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
 A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Second system of musical notation and lyrics, identical in structure to the first system.

"Open My Heart" — Words and music: Ana Hernández, © 2007. All rights reserved.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray to God, saying, “Holy One, have mercy.”

One: Let us ask God for a day of fulfilment and peace.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Let us ask God to teach us to love others as God has loved us.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Let us ask God to strengthen us for the holy work of interfaith dialogue, understanding, and solidarity.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Let us ask God for peace and justice in the world.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Let us ask God to strengthen and relieve those who are in need.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Let us ask God to renew us through the power of God’s life-giving Spirit.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Holy One, we pray especially this day for... (names of places or peoples who need prayer). May all those we name experience your holy love in acts of generosity, hope, and solidarity.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

One: Let us ask for healing in the land and for all creation.

All: **Holy One, have mercy.**

Becca Whitla (May 2026, for NATI-RETI), based on Anglican morning prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

We have spoken what we could. We have named our wounding. We have heard the call. Now, Gracious God, go before us into the conversations this day will bring, into the encounters we cannot yet imagine, into the discomfort and the grace of real engagement with one another. What we have offered here, receive. What we have withheld, forgive. What we have not yet

learned, teach us — in one another, through one another, for one another. Thank you for making us yours. Amen.

Maureen J. A. Okundi (May 2026, for NATI-RETI).

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

May the Creator God who dances in creation, who embraces us with human love, who shakes our lives like thunder, who lives, breathes, and works through humans of all cultures and religions, bless us and drive us out with power, to fill the world with her justice, compassion, and peace.

Adapted from “Celebrate God’s Presence” (United Church of Canada), p. 71.

Morning Prayer

Wednesday, 12 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

INVOCATION

The Sacred Circle

One: Today we have gathered, and when we look upon the faces around us, we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living beings. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give our greetings and our thanks to each other as People.

All: Now our minds are one.

From the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, "Braiding Sweetgrass," Robin Wall Kimmerer.

OPENING PRAYER

Prayer to the Four Directions

If possible, this is done in an outdoor space. The community turns to face each direction in turn.

Facing North: O spirits and angels of the North, where fierce storms come from. Come to us and give us strength and courage. Teach us to be strong like the buffalo who turns and faces the fierce winds and storms head on. Come, spirits and angels of the North.

Facing East: O spirits and angels of the East, where the sun rises every day. Bring light into our hearts and minds so we may also resurrect every morning, acknowledge new life and creativity and renewed hope every day. Come, spirits and angels of the East.

Facing South: O spirits and angels of the South, where the sun shines the hottest. Bring warmth into our hearts and friendships and all our relations. Come, spirits and angels of the South.

Facing West: O spirits and angels of the West, where the sun sets every night. Teach us to be at home in the dark and in the silence of the night, and teach us to let go and to trust as we sink into the unknown and await the sun rising tomorrow. Come, spirits and angels of the West.

Looking up to Father Sky: Come, spirits and angels from above. Teach us to fly high with the eagle and so seek wisdom and perspective in life. Come, spirits and angels from above.

Looking down to the Earth: Come, spirits and angels from below, where all plants find their roots in Mother Earth. Teach us to remain grounded and thankful for the Earth, our Mother, and to treat her with respect. Come, spirits and angels from below.

Crossing hands on the heart: Come, spirits and angels from all six directions, into our hearts. Gather in our hearts and make them full with blood that is red, full of energy and flowing with love, gratitude and generosity. Ah Ho. Amen.

Seneca elder, Sister José Hobday.

PSALMODY

PSALM 78:1–8

An Honour Song of Gathers the People

Normal type read by the leader; bold type read by the congregation.

All my relatives, listen closely as I teach you.
Turn your ear to hear the sacred instructions of my mouth.
I will tell wise stories and mysterious tales of the ancient ways,

Stories that we have heard before and learned from, stories told by our ancestors.

We will not hide these stories from our children. We will sing songs of honour about Grandfather and tell the generation to come the stories of his power and the beautiful things he has done.

The Great Spirit spoke these instructions to guide the tribes of ‘Wrestles with Creator’ (Israel), the descendants of ‘Heel Grabber’ (Jacob), who was the first to receive these instructions,

So that the children yet to be born will arise and teach their children for seven generations.

That way, each generation will come to trust Creator. They will not forget his good deeds and follow all his wise instructions,

So they will not follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, for they were a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not make their hearts firm or remain faithful in their spirits to their Maker.

"Psalms and Proverbs," First Nations Version, InterVarsity Press.

SONG

"Draw the Circle Wide"

Draw the circle wide

Words and Music: Gordon Light Arr.: M. Koebsch

Chorus

$E\flat$ $A\flat$ $B\flat$ $E\flat$ $A\flat$ $B\flat$

1 Draw the cir-cle wide, draw it wi-der still. —

2 Draw the cir-cle wide, draw it wi-der still.

5 $E\flat$ $A\flat$ $B\flat$ $G7$ Cm Fm $B\flat$ $B\flat$ $E\flat$

1 Let this be our song: no one stands a - lone stand-ing side by side. Draw the cir-cle wide. —

2 — Let this be our song: no one stands a - lone stand-ing side by side. Draw the cir-cle wide. —

Sung in unison. Music and words: Mark Miller / Gordon Light. Voices Together #802 · Worship & Song #3154.

Words and music: Gordon Light. © 1994 Common Cup Company; arr. M. Koebsch. Used with permission.

SCRIPTURE READING

MATTHEW 5:1–11 · FIRST NATIONS VERSION

When Creator Sets Free (Jesus) saw this great crowd, he went back up into the mountainside and sat down to teach the people. His followers came to him there, so he took a deep breath, opened his mouth, and began to share his wisdom with them and teach them how to see Creator's good road.

“Creator's blessing rests on the poor, the ones with broken spirits. The good road from above is theirs to walk.

“Creator's blessing rests on the ones who walk a trail of tears, for he will wipe the tears from their eyes and comfort them.

“Creator's blessing rests on the ones who walk softly and in a humble manner. The earth, land, and sky will welcome them and always be their home.

“Creator's blessing rests on the ones who hunger and thirst for wrongs to be made right again. They will eat and drink until they are full.

“Creator's blessing rests on the ones who are merciful and kind to others. Their kindness will find its way back to them — full circle.

“Creator's blessing rests on the pure of heart. They are the ones who will see the Great Spirit.

“Creator's blessing rests on the ones who make peace. It will be said of them, ‘They are the children of the Great Spirit!’

“Creator's blessing rests on the ones who are hunted down and mistreated for doing what is right, for they are walking the good road from above.

“Others will lie about you, speak against you, and look down on you with scorn and contempt, all because you walk the road with me. This is a sign that Creator's blessing is resting on you.

So let your hearts be glad and jump for joy, for you will be honoured in the spirit-world above. You are like the prophets of old, who were treated in the same way by your ancestors.

First Nations Version of the New Testament, Terry Wildman, IVP, 2021.

REFLECTION

The Circle

One model of understanding our relationship to everything is a simple symbol used among Native Americans: the circle. The harmony way of living is often referred to symbolically as a circle or a hoop. Among Native Americans, the harmony way is less like a philosophy and more like a whole way of being and doing life.

The harmony way is a way of living and being, with very tangible expressions. Living out the harmony way requires not just a belief but also actions that align with and participate in the local ecosystem and the whole universe. The circle is the tangible symbol that represents this understanding.

A circle seems like the natural way to gather together, each person able to see the eyes of everyone else. Each hand clasped to the person next to themselves. Each body, creating an impenetrable ring of protection. A circle is a very natural and comfortable way to come together.

The circle has no beginning and no end, so one can enter at any place or stage. The circle can explain stages of life, values, and different people groups. Circles can explain the seasons, how they all continue on to create harmony and balance.

Life is a sacred circle. When we gather in a circle, the praying has already begun. When we gather in a circle, we communicate with each other and with Great Mystery, even without a word being spoken.

Randy Woodley, "The Circle," in "Becoming Rooted," Broadleaf Books, pp. 63–64.

SYMBOLIC ACT

Mending the Circle

All stand in a circle facing one another. Each person has a small candle. The leader lights their small candle from the central Christ candle.

In turn around the circle, starting in the East, each person names a place of brokenness in the circle of life, a violation of the harmony way, and ends with the words "We have forgotten who we are."

All: We have forgotten who we are.

Then the same person offers a prayer or intention of repairing the circle as they light their candle. They end with the words “I join with the earth and with all beings.”

All: We join with the earth and with each other.

Proceed around the circle until all candles are lit.

Created by Kara Markell. Responses adapted from the UN Environmental Sabbath / Earth Rest Day, 1990.

INTERCESSIONS

Creator, whose many names are spoken in many tongues: you made this world in beauty and balance, teaching us to live in harmony with the Earth and in right relationship with all creation. You placed the First Peoples on this land and gave them language, ceremony, kinship, and wisdom.

We come before you, recognizing the harm of settlers, colonizers, churches, and governments. We name the truth that Christian empire tried to erase Indigenous cultures; that your church participated in boarding schools, land theft, and forced assimilation.

We grieve the trauma that still echoes through generations.

Pause.

We repent of our complicity, past and present; things done and things left undone.

Pause.

We pray for the Indigenous people of this place — Anishinaabewaki, Anishinaabe, and Michif — who have held fast to language, ceremony, and culture. We give thanks for the wisdom they continue to share and for their ongoing witness of resilience, healing, and strength.

Adapted from the Episcopal Office of Government Relations, Weekly Prayers, August 2025.

CLOSING PRAYER

Creator, teach us to walk with humility. Help us to listen more than we speak, to follow more than we lead, and to repair what has been broken — not just with words, but with our lives. Teach us to be good relatives, allies in the work of justice, co-labourers in the work of healing,

and faithful stewards of the land we all share. We ask this in the name of your child Jesus, who came not to dominate but to liberate. Amen.

The Episcopal Church, Office of Indigenous Ministries, "A Disciple's Prayer Book."

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

Chinook Blessing

One: We call upon the earth, our planet home, with its beautiful depths and soaring heights, its vitality and abundance of life, and together we ask that it

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: We call upon the mountains, the Cascades and the Olympics, the high green valleys and meadows filled with wild flowers, the snows that never melt, the summits of intense silence, and we ask that they

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: We call upon the waters that rim the earth, horizon to horizon, that flow in our rivers and streams, that fall upon our gardens and fields, and we ask that they

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: We call upon the land which grows our food, the nurturing soil, the fertile fields, the abundant gardens and orchards, and we ask that they

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: We call upon the forests, the great trees reaching strongly to the sky with the earth in their roots and the heavens in their branches, the fir and the pine and the cedar, and we ask them to

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: We call upon the creatures of the fields and forests and the seas, our brothers and sisters the wolves and deer, the eagle and dove, the great whales and dolphin, the beautiful Orca and salmon who share our Northwest home, and we ask them to

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: We call upon all those who have lived on this earth, our ancestors and our friends, who dreamed the best for future generations, and upon whose lives our lives are built, and with thanksgiving, we call upon them to

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

One: And lastly, we call upon all that we hold most sacred, the presence and power of the Great Spirit of love and truth which flows through all the Universe, to be with us to

All: **Teach us, and show us the Way.**

Dianne Neu, "Return Blessings: Ecofeminist Liturgies Renewing the Earth," Pilgrim Press, 2002.

Morning Prayer

Friday, 14 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

INVOCATION

We gather on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Chippewa and the Wendat — peoples whose relationship with this land was disrupted by the very systems we name together this morning.

We come from many nations, many churches, many economic realities.

Some of us know poverty from the inside.

Some of us carry wealth we did not earn.

Some of us carry wealth we have earned — and are still learning what that earning cost.

Most of us carry all three, in ways we have not yet fully reckoned with.

One: Yet we are here — inside the contradiction we have come here to name.

All: **Have mercy on us, and make us useful.**

One: The One who made heaven and earth keeps faith with the oppressed forever.

All: **We come to worship — and to be made accountable.**

One: The One who calls the whole church to Jubilee calls us here, now.

All: **We come to listen — and to be moved.**

One: We open this space as a place of honest reckoning and honest hope.

All: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI). The responsive exchange draws on the Jubilee tradition (Leviticus 25; Luke 4:16–21).

OPENING PRAYER

O God of all Creation —

We gather this morning as Your people,

Summoned not by our comfort but by Your call.

We confess that as your church we have too often blessed the wealthy
And counselled patience to the poor.
We confess that “charity” has served as substitute for justice,
That we have more readily opened our hearts to generosity
Than our minds to the structural changes that generosity alone cannot accomplish.

We confess that we have inherited and maintained economies that impoverish some so that
others may accumulate without limit — and that we have neither been honest nor accountable
concerning the cost.

Renew in us today Your vision of the common good —
Where enough is available to all because no one is permitted to accumulate at another’s
expense,
Where Jubilee is not a metaphor but a mandate,
Where the earth’s abundance is held in trust for all its peoples,
Where the table we set for one another is as wide as Your love.

We make this prayer in Your many names,
Trusting that You are already at work —
Here, among us, in the very act of gathering us.
Thank You that You have not left us to ourselves.
Amen.

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI). The address “O God of all Creation” is taken from the first line of the national anthem of Kenya.

PSALMODY

PSALMS 82 & 146

A composite arrangement of Psalm 82 and Psalm 146

Read responsively.

One: God has taken their place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods God
holds judgment:

All: **“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?”**

One: “Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the
destitute.

All: **Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”**

One: They have neither knowledge nor understanding; they walk around in darkness;

All: **All the foundations of the earth are shaken.**

Selah.

One: Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

All: **When their breath departs, their plans perish.**

One: But happy are those whose hope is in the Lord their God —

All: **Who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.**

One: The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

All: **The Lord watches over the stranger; the Lord upholds the orphan and the widow.**

One: Rise up, O God, judge the earth; for all the nations belong to You.

All: **The Lord will reign forever. Praise the Lord!**

Psalm 82:1–5, 8; Psalm 146:3–5, 7–10 (NRSVue). Composite arrangement for NATI-RETI 2026.

SONG

"A place at the table"

3149 A Place at the Table

WORDS: Shirley Erena Murray, © 1998 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by Permission.

MUSIC (PLACE AT THE TABLE 11 10.11 10 with Refrain): Lori True, © 2001 GIA Publications, Inc.



For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

*Refrain: and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!*

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair, (Refrain)

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,

the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong, (Refrain)

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live, (Refrain)

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free, (Refrain)

For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,
a rainbow of race and gender and colour,
for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace, (Refrain)

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 4:16–21

When Jesus came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was His custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
because He has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

And He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Jesus. Then He began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

One: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Luke 4:16–21 (NRSVue).

REFLECTION

The text Jesus read was not a new text. It had been read in that synagogue before. The Jubilee passages of Isaiah and Leviticus were ancient by the time He stood up. What was new was not the word. It was His claim of its fulfillment in the present time. Not eventually. Not in the world to come. Not once the political situation permits. Today.

The Year of Jubilee — God’s people’s radical economic reset — was not sentiment. It addressed systems and structures of oppression, calling for the cancellation of debt, the restoration of land to its forebears, the freeing of enslaved persons, the undoing of the accumulations of exploitation so the community — creditor and debtor, slave and free, everyone — could begin again from a place of sufficiency for all. Jubilee was instituted not as charity but as law.

We live in cities where the distance between the wealthiest and the most impoverished is measured not in miles but in the length of one person’s arm to another’s. We live in churches that sponsor food banks with one hand and hold investments in extractive industries with the other.

Jesus did not say, the systems that crush the poor will one day be reformed. He said: Today. This scripture — with all its structural, economic, political weight — is fulfilled now.

What of us in our “today”? What is fulfilled?

Silence — one to two minutes.

Guiding questions for silent meditation:

Where does this “today” feel most urgent — and most impossible — in our own communities? What would it cost us and our congregations to take it seriously as policy rather than metaphor?

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI).

SYMBOLIC ACT

Materials: one small cup of water per participant, distributed before the service begins; one large communal basin at the front, placed on a simple cloth or table.

Participants have been holding their cups throughout the service. The leader speaks:

One: You have been holding a cup of water since you arrived this morning.

One: What we hold, we hold in trust.

All: **What we hold, we hold in trust. Amen.**

Consider what you are holding.

It fell as rain before any nation drew its borders.

It ran in rivers that belonged to no one.

It was drunk by the hungry and the full alike.

No economy made it.

No market created it.

It is the Creator's gift to all creation —

and it has always been meant to be shared.

This is what Jubilee looks like:

returning to the commons what was never ours alone to hold.

I invite you to come forward now, and pour.

Participants come forward and pour their water into the basin. The leader prays quietly during the pouring:

O God of all Creation — receive what we return. What the earth has given, let it flow freely.

Make us faithful stewards of what belongs to all.

When all have poured:

One: What we hold, we hold in trust.

All: **What we hold, we hold in trust. Amen.**

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI).

INTERCESSIONS

The leader transitions from the Symbolic Act:

We have poured what we hold into the common.
Now let us bring before God what the world still holds back.

The leader speaks each petition; all respond.

For those who woke this morning with nothing —
without shelter, without enough, without access;
that the Jubilee proclaimed this morning
may take root in the policies that govern their lives,
and that Your church may be found beside them
in the long work of making it so:

All: God of all Creation, hear our prayer.

For this city — Toronto —
held together by abundance and divided by its distribution;
for those who make this city work
but cannot afford to live in it;
that the communities of faith in this place
may be known as those who build the table wider:

All: God of all Creation, hear our prayer.

For Indigenous communities on Turtle Island —
carrying the weight of dispossession across generations;
that the ecumenical church may walk
the long road from acknowledgment to action
and find in that walking a more honest faithfulness:

All: God of all Creation, hear our prayer.

For our sisters and brothers in the global South —
whose communities send leaders to gatherings like this one
while the structural conditions that impoverish them remain unchanged;
that the ecumenical body may find the will and the way
toward the solidarity the gospel requires:

All: God of all Creation, hear our prayer.

For ourselves —
returning to our communities with what we have received here;
that the words we have spoken, the water we have poured,
the silence we have kept
may bear fruit in the decisions we make
and the communities we build;
that Jubilee may travel with us
as more than memory:

All: God of all Creation, hear our prayer.

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI).

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy One,
You have set before us today a hard and hopeful word.
We go now to study it, to argue with it, to be measured by it.
Send us into this day's work with clear eyes and willing hands.

Where we are comfortable, disturb us.
Where we are ready to act, direct us.
Where we are overwhelmed, sustain us.

May every word spoken, every silence kept, every question asked be an act of worship. Amen.

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI).

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

We go from this place
As people entrusted with a good word —
Not yet fully understood,
Not yet fully lived,
But real, and ours, and worth the work.

May the God of all Creation
Go before us and behind us,
Hold what we cannot carry,
And make fruitful what we offer.

We go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

Maureen J. A. Okundi (2026, for NATI-RETI).

Morning Prayer

Saturday, 15 August 2026 - 08:30 – 09:00

The service is held in Queen's Park, which is across the street from the Toronto School of Theology building. Meet in the centre, at the statue. Take an umbrella, if raining.

INVOCATION

Leader: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:2 (NRSV^{ue})

OPENING PRAYER

God of all places and all people,
as we come together on this land
that is now home to the Ontario Legislative building,
surrounded by the University of Toronto,
and a public space for poor and rich to gather,
we acknowledge and respect the ancestral stewardship of this land
by the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We lament that we have not always followed our commitments
to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant,
an agreement to peaceably share
and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

God of all times and all peoples,
Continue to be with us as we gather in this place
that was once an important gathering place for First Nations communities.
Help us strengthen our relationships
with this land and all living beings who share it.
Amen.

Adapted from the land acknowledgement of Emmanuel College, Toronto.

The Magnificat — with “Come Out!” reprise

As on Day 5: led as a call and response — one reader and one song leader, the congregation joining the “Come Out!” reprise.

Come Out!



1. Come out! Come out of your comfor-ta - ble spac - es.



Come, meet Je - sus in the dif - fi - cult plac - es.



2. Have you not heard? Ev - 'ry val-ley's ex - alt - ed;



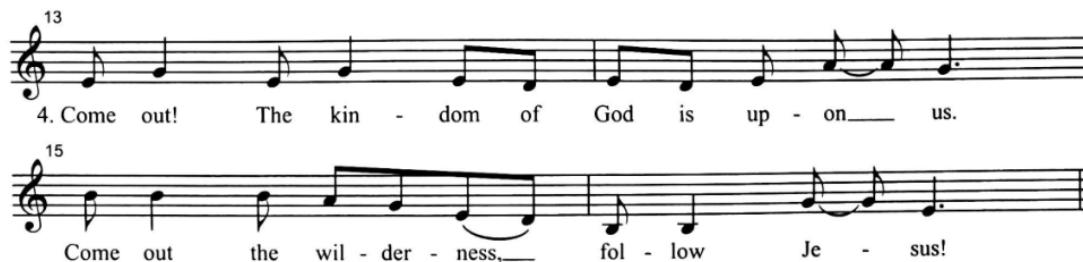
moun-tains made low — but the low - ly are lift - ed.



3. Come out! Come out of your well-to - do plac - es.



Come, meet Je - sus in the strug - gl - ing spac - es.



Reader: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

All: “Come Out!” — sing a verse (printed above)

Reader: Indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;

All: “Come Out!” — sing a verse (printed above)

Reader: he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

Luke 1:46–55 (NRSVue). “Come Out!” — Words: Tanya Linn Bennett & Mark A. Miller; Music: Mark A. Miller. © 2015 Choristers Guild. Reprinted by permission.

SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 61

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines, but you shall be called priests of the Lord; you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. Because their shame was double and dishonour was proclaimed as their lot, therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

One: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 61 (NRSV^{ue}).

REFLECTION AND SYMBOLIC ACT

Here in Queen's Park, we are at the heart of a city where there is much power and wealth, but also much poverty and suffering. Power and wealth are found in the government buildings to the south and with the University of Toronto that surrounds the park. Distress and lack of power are found close by as well: there are often tents set up in this and neighbouring parks, there are hospitals and soup kitchens nearby. Below us is the subway, which has become one of the safest places for people who are homeless to sleep. Overshadowing all of this is often an aura of indifference, as people are caught up in their own lives, frequently distracted and often overwhelmed.

You are now invited to go into the park and notice the presence of God around us, paying attention to the people, the structures, and nature. You will have ten minutes to spend quietly paying attention. Feel free to walk or sit. You will be called back with a bell.

As you watch and pray, the following questions provide guidelines to direct your thoughts. Try to use all your senses to answer the questions.

What do you notice about the people in the park?

Where do you notice power and/or riches?

Where do you notice poverty and/or lack of power?

Where do you notice joy? Sadness? Indifference?

How are nature and the land connected to everything else?

Adapted from the practice of Terra Divina.

INTERCESSIONS

God of all times and places,

Having noticed your presence in the people and world around us,

We now bring before you our prayers for this place:

We pray for those in power.

For our elected leaders:

That they will be attentive to the needs and cares of the poor.

For all others who have power,

be it through position, wealth, race, land, education, gender, sexuality, age, or religion.

In whatever way and place that power is used,

May it be done with wisdom and for the benefit of all.

God of all creation,

All: Hear our prayer.

We pray for hospitals, public transit, and public spaces,

where we are sometimes confronted by people

and situations which make us uncomfortable.

Give wisdom, strength, and hope to all

who are present in and manage these spaces.

Provide grace when situations are complicated.

Help us recognize your presence in others and have compassion for all.

God of all creation,

All: Hear our prayer.

We pray for land and nature.

We give you thanks for this gift for all.

Help us to care well for it and to repair what we have harmed,

Recognizing that the most vulnerable
are often hurt most by harm done to creation.

May we be part of the work you are doing

“To repair the ruined cities, and the devastations of many generations.”

God of all creation,

All: Hear our prayer.

May we exult in you, God,

You, who invite us to be part of how you cause righteousness and praise

to spring up before all the nations

as the earth brings forth its shoots

and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up.

Amen.

Closing section adapted from Isaiah 61:10–11 (NRSVue).

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

BENEDICTION

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the
 Holy Spirit be with all of you.

2 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSVue)

Closing Celebration

Sunday, 16 August 2026 - 09:30 – 10:30

GATHERING MUSIC / PRELUDE

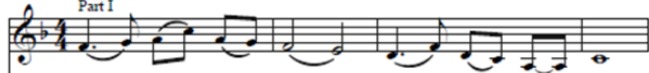
FURTHER PRAYERS

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Open my heart

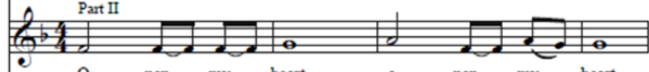
Ouvre mon cœur/Abre mi corazón

Part I



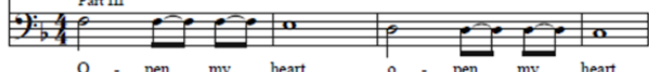
English: O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
French: Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
Spanish: A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part II



O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part III



O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part IV



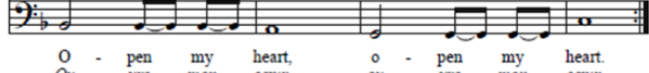
O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part V



O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Part VI



O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart.
Ou - vre mon cœur, ou - vre mon cœur.
A - bre mi co - ra - zón, a - bre mi co - ra - zón.

Open My Heart” from *Harv* by Ruth Cunningham & Ana Hernandez; Released: 2004.

PROCESSION AND GREETING

INTERFAITH OCCASSIONS
163

One God, many names!

Unison
♩ = 126

The musical score is written for a unison voice and piano accompaniment in 4/4 time. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 126. The score consists of three systems of music. The first system starts with a D major chord, followed by an A7 chord. The lyrics are 'One God, man - y names!'. The second system starts with an A7 chord, followed by D, D, and D7/F# chords. The lyrics are 'One God, man - y peo - ples! One God of'. The third system starts with G, D/F#, Em, A, and D chords, ending with a 'Last time' box. The lyrics are 'sky and sea and earth has called us here!'. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

One God, man - y names!

One God, man - y peo - ples! One God of

sky and sea and earth has called us here!

Last time

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A procession that gathers symbols collected across the two weeks (e.g., from each thematic pillar) and brings them forward.

PROCESSION OF THE SIX PILLARS

A communal song accompanies the procession from the entrance to the placement of the six fabrics.

Bearers: Twelve persons process in pairs (one facilitator and one student, side by side), bearing the work of the two weeks.

Order of procession:

1. Climate Justice
2. Secularism and Laicity
3. Racism and Anti-Racism
4. Interfaith Dialogue
5. Solidarity with Indigenous Communities
6. Wealth Disparity and Poverty

***Movement:** The twelve encircle the table. The singing stops. Each pair turns to face the assembly, and one of the bearers names the pillar aloud. The piece of fabric is then laid on the table:*

“We bring our commitment to climate justice.”

“We bring our commitment to a just and equitable society.”

“We bring our commitment to anti-racism.”

“We bring our commitment to interfaith dialogue.”

“We bring our commitment to relationship and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.”

“We bring our commitment to seek economic justice and love mercy.”

Greeting:

One: We came asking, Where now for visible justice?

All: **We return bearing the question into our home contexts.**

One: Grace to you and peace, from God who calls us, from Christ who accompanies us, and from the Spirit who sends us.

All: **And also with you.**

OPENING PRAYER

I. Thanksgiving

- One:** God of the journey, who gathered us from many places onto Turtle Island, who walked with us from Detroit to Toronto, from the first day to this last:
- All:** **We give you thanks.**
- One:** For two weeks of learning and sharing, of lament and celebration, of song and silence, of breaking bread with strangers who became companions:
- All:** **We give you thanks.**
- One:** For the six pillars we have named and the wounds they have opened, for the teachers who carried wisdom from their contexts, for the friendships that will outlast this place:
- All:** **We give you thanks.**

II. Invocation

- One:** Holy One, you have called us, each from a different shore, into one hope.
- All:** **There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God of all.**
- One:** Make us worthy of the calling to which we have been called: with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.
- All:** **Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
- One:** Send us back to our home contexts not as we came, but as members of this community — that the visible justice we have sought together may take root in the places we return to.
- All:** **One body. One Spirit. One hope of our calling. Amen.**

Adapted from Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026 (Ephesians 4:1–6), jointly published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches, © 2025.

COMMUNAL SONG

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En la lucha hay vida (La Lucha)

Spanish: En la lu - cha hay vi - da, en la lu - cha
es - pe - ran - za. En la lu - cha hay vi - da;
¡siem - pre hay, siem - pre hay es - pe - ran - za! En la
¡Can - ta - mos en la lu - cha!
¡Can - ta - mos por la jus - ti - cia!
Can - ta - mos por nues - tras vi - das;
¡siem - pre hay, siem - pre hay es - pe - ran - za!

A literal English translation (not for singing):

In the struggle there is life,
in the struggle there is hope.
In the struggle there is life;
there is always hope!
We sing in the struggle!
We sing for justice!
We sing for our lives;
there is always hope!

Une traduction littérale en français (pas pour chanter):

Dans la lutte il y a la vie,
Dans la lutte il y a de l'espoir.
Dans la lutte il y a la vie;
Toujours, il y a toujours de l'espoir!
Nous chantons dans la lutte!
Nous chantons pour la justice!
Nous chantons pour nos vies;
Toujours, il y a toujours de l'espoir!

Words and music: Mark A. Miller, 2017.

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SCRIPTURE READINGS

To be read by four or five readers, each introduced with "A reading from..."

PROVERBS 8:1–4, 10–11

Does not wisdom call and understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: “To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all who live. Take my instruction instead of silver and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.”

PSALM 139:13–16

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

AMOS 5:24 But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

MICAH 6:8 God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

MARK 12:28–31 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

REFLECTION / ADDRESS

For two weeks we have prayed our way through the hardest realities of our world. We sat with them long enough to let them look back at us. We named them one by one: climate change, secularism, racism, interfaith, the long struggle of Indigenous peoples for recognition and justice, the chasm between those who have far too much and those who have almost nothing.

Under each of the six pillars, the same question was waiting: who are we, as the church of Jesus Christ, when we stand here?

The honest answer humbled us. We saw the good the church has done and the harm it has carried, often in the very same hands. That is a hard thing to say aloud, and it is where freedom begins. God has never asked us to be innocent, only to be honest, and then to let the honesty change us.

These weeks gave us something we did not expect: each other. We arrived speaking different languages, carrying our own liturgies and our own memories, and somewhere along the way we became friends. Our differences are still with us; they have stopped frightening us. We learned how much we cannot see on our own, and how much we need one another to see it. A more just world was never going to be built by one tradition, or by any of us, alone.

Justice taught us something plainer than we expected. It begins the moment I know that you matter as much as I do. The woman who prays in another faith belongs to the same human family I belong to. The land under our feet shares in our salvation; we were made with the earth and with one another, all the way down. Take away our neighbours, the other traditions, the rivers and the soil, and there is no “we” left to send anywhere.

Life is built together. That may be the plainest thing these two weeks have taught us, and the hardest to live with. Justice is the balance that holds life in place, so that no one is crushed for another to flourish. Our call to be one is to keep that tension and to act, acknowledging it. We confess the times we have comforted the powerful and kept the poor waiting. And we carry a light we did not light ourselves, a freedom that belongs to everyone still longing for it.

We have woven the six pillars into one cloth and crowned it with the sign of NATI-RETI. May we go home woven together in the same way: still found by God and by one another, unfinished, and ready to become in our own streets the justice we have tasted here.

Dévit Montealegre (2026, for NATI-RETI).

SYMBOLIC ACT OF SENDING

Anyone who wishes is invited to come forward and sew the six pillar pieces together; four people lead the sewing with large needles and thread, and the logo is sewn on top.

Leader: God who weaves our lives on your loom, bless these sewing kits, that we may carry them forth to our communities to mend your world, knit together your body, and display your fabric of many hues for all to witness and celebrate. In the name of God the weaver, Jesus the mender, and the Holy Spirit, the thread of life. *(The kits are distributed and shared, one to another)*

Let us now weave together our learning and our lives, our commitments, and our communities. As we sing, please come forward and sew a few stitches, knitting these six panels into one fabric, a shared commitment to visible justice, borne out of love and learning.

Since we are surrounded

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Canon at one bar
♩ = 120

The musical score is written for two voices in 4/4 time. The first voice (treble clef) has a tempo marking of 120 beats per minute. It begins with a first ending bracket over the first four measures, followed by a second ending bracket over the next four measures. The lyrics are: 'Since we are sur - round - ed by a great cloud of wit - ness - es, we will not lose heart!'. The second voice (treble clef) enters in the second measure and continues the melody. The lyrics are: 'wit - ness - es, we will not lose heart!'. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

1 Since we are sur - round - ed by a great cloud of
wit - ness - es, we will not lose heart!

Words: William S. Kervin, after Hebrews 12:1, 3

Music: William S. Kervin; arr. Alan Wiseman, adapted Deborah Park

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Arrangement © 2018 Alan Wiseman. All rights reserved.

LITANY OF COMMISSIONING

A responsive litany sending the community forward into specific commitments, echoing the Opening Celebration's litany of commitment — completing the arc from question to commitment.

One: Let us renew our commitments.

One: Creator God, mother earth is hurting. We yearn for climate justice.

All: **We renew our commitment to love and care for the earth.**

One: God of love and action, we continue to struggle to live and work together with respect and humility.

All: **We renew our commitment to building a just and equitable society.**

One: God of the rainbow, your peoples suffer hatred and discrimination.

All: **We renew our commitment to work towards anti-racism.**

One: God of many names, we witness global violence and murder in the name of religion.

All: **We renew our commitment to love God and neighbour.**

One: God of the earth, we continue to squander Indigenous gifts of generosity and wisdom.

All: **We renew our commitment to relationship and reconciliation.**

One: God who sides with the poor and marginalized even as wealth disparity and poverty worsen,

All: **We renew our commitment to seek justice, love mercy, and move humbly with our God.**

One: May our commitments be signs of visible justice and the inbreaking of your beloved community.

All: **Amen.**

Written by Becca Whitla and Deivit Montealegre.

INTERCESSIONS

Responsive petitions for the participants returning to their contexts, for the host churches, for the wider ecumenical and interfaith movements, and for the world — led by two people.

One: We pray for all those who will be born today, and who, even in the womb, may fear the world... and we pray for all those who will die today, who wonder who will hold them when human hands are left behind...

All: **God in your mercy, receive our prayer.**

One: We pray for those who must make a decision today, which may affect their lives or the lives of others... and we pray for those who must leave today — leave home, leave work, leave a relationship, an addiction, or a hard place...

All: **God in your mercy, receive our prayer.**

One: We pray for all those who face discrimination, or fear for their safety; for those who will not have enough food to eat or clean water to drink; for the people and places, known and unknown to us, where your people cry out for mercy and justice.

All: **God in your mercy, receive our prayer.**

One: We pray for those who are sick, and for those who care for the sick; for all those who are troubled and anxious, all who are fearful and in distress; and we pray also for all those who need our compassion, our prayers, and your presence...

Silence

All: **God in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: We give thanks for all of the blessings we know and cherish, in families and friends, both near and far, in neighbours and leaders, and in teachers and students. Praise God.

All: **Alleluia.**

One: We give thanks for our host churches and for our wider ecumenical and interfaith movements. Guide us in the ways of wisdom and compassion, that we may nourish each other to be stewards of your creation and seekers of your justice. Praise God.

All: **Alleluia.**

One: We give thanks for this community. May we carry forward the gifts and challenges of this time that we, in turn, may nourish and challenge our own communities with new ideas, old ideas made new, and with the creative energy of the Holy Spirit's stirrings in and through our ministries in acts of visible justice for the benefit of the whole world. Praise God.

All: Alleluia.

Intercessions adapted from the Iona Community by William S. Kervin and Becca Whitla; thanksgivings by Becca Whitla.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, each in the language of their heart.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE AND BLESSINGS

Representatives of the convening councils and our host offer words of gratitude and blessing as the community is sent forth.

The Canadian Council of Churches
National Council of Churches USA
World Council of Churches
Toronto School of Theology

SENDING HYMN

A communal song that sends the assembly home, into the work of visible justice in their own contexts.

Let Streams of Living Justice

Living Justice

William Whitla, 1989
Thaxted (Gustav Holst, 1921)



Let streams of liv - ing jus - tice flow down up - on the earth; give
The dread - ed dis - ap - pear - ance of fam - i - ly and friend; the
* You hal - low our vo - ca - tions, you call us to your way; you
For heal - ing of the na - tions, for peace that will not end, for
Your ci - ty's built to mu - sic; we are the stones you seek; your

free - dom's light to cap - tives, let all the poor have worth. The hun - gry's hands are
tor - ture and the si - lence; the fear that knows no end; the moth - er with her
* shape us for your ser - vice you the Pot - ter, we the clay. Share with us Cre - a - tion's
love that makes us lov - ers, God grant us grace to mend. Weave our va - ried gifts to
har - mo - ny is lan - guage; we are the words you speak. Our faith we find in

free - dom's light to cap - tives, let all the poor have worth. The hun - gry's hands are
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 * shape that for your ser - vice you the Pot - ter, we the clay. Share with us Cre - a - tion's
 love that makes us lov - ers, God grant us grace to mend. Weave our va - ried gifts to -
 har - mo - ny is lan - guage; we are the words you speak. Our faith we find in

plead - ing, the work - ers claim their rights, the mourn - ers long for laugh - ter, the
 can - dle, the child who holds a gun, the old one nurs - ing ha - tred: all
 * mould - ing; form our minds to your de - light; Mi - ghty Craf - ter of our ves - sels, fire our
 geth - er; knit our lives as they are spun; on your loom of time en - roll us 'til our
 ser - vice, our hope in oth - er's dreams; our love in hand of neigh - bour, our

blind - ed seek for sight. Make lib - er - ty a bea - con, strike down the ir - on
 seek re - lease to come. Each can - dle burns for free - dom; each lights a ty - rant's
 * vi - sions with your light - con - se - crate your priest and peo - ple; warm the steps your saints have
 thread of life is run. O great Weav - er of our fab - ric, bind the Church and world in
 home - land bright - ly gleams. In - scribe our hearts with jus - tice, your way, the path un -

pow'r, a - bol - ish an - cient ven - geance; pro - claim your peo - ple's hour.
 fall; each flow - er placed for mar - tyrs gives tongue to si - lenced call.
 * trod: bless the bread of our en - dea - yours, bless the wine of our re - solve.
 onc; dye our truth, the heart of ra - dian - ce, light our col - ours with your sun.
 tried; your truth, the heart of strang - er; your life, the Cru - ci - fied.

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BLESSING AND SENDING

The Holy One bless you and keep you.

The Holy One shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Holy One look upon you with favour and give you peace.

Now and forevermore. **Amen.**

Adapted from the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24–26), with inclusive language for NATI-RETI 2026.

APPENDIX

Prayer Schedule

USA PHASE — DETROIT, MICHIGAN

- Day 1 · Mon 3 Aug — Opening Celebration — *Where Now for Visible Justice?*
- Day 2 · Tue 4 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Climate Justice*
- Day 3 · Wed 5 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Climate Justice*
- Day 4 · Thu 6 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Secularism and Laicity*
- Day 5 · Fri 7 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Racism and Anti-Racism*
- Day 6 · Sat 8 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Racism and Anti-Racism*
- Day 7 · Sun 9 Aug — Transition · travel — *Detroit to Toronto*

CANADA PHASE — TORONTO, ONTARIO

- Day 8 · Mon 10 Aug — Arrival · community prayer — *Canada Phase begins*
- Day 9 · Tue 11 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Interfaith Dialogue*
- Day 10 · Wed 12 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Solidarity with Indigenous Communities*
- Day 11 · Thu 13 Aug — Contextual Immersion — *Indigenous Solidarity*
- Day 12 · Fri 14 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Wealth Disparity and Poverty*
- Day 13 · Sat 15 Aug — Morning Prayer — *Wealth Disparity and Poverty*
- Day 14 · Sun 16 Aug — Closing Celebration — *Sending Forth in Justice*

Morning Prayer 08:30 – 09:00 · Evening Prayer led by participants from their own traditions.

NATI-RETI 2026, titled *"Where Now for Visible Justice?"*, is the North America–Turtle Island Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute — a regional expression of the global ecumenical movement, rooted in the peoples, waters, and traditions of North America–Turtle Island.

Convened by The Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches USA, with the accompaniment of the World Council of Churches, NATI-RETI gathers emerging Christian leaders from across the United States and Canada. Across two weeks and two cities — Detroit and Toronto — participants engage the intersections of faith and public life, nurturing the visible unity of the church and its witness across confessional and national lines.

This **Prayer Book** accompanies the institute's daily rhythm of common worship. It gathers **Morning Prayer** for each day of the gathering, structured around its six thematic pillars — **Climate Justice, Interfaith Dialogue, Racism and Anti-Racism, Secularism and Laicity, Solidarity with Indigenous Communities, and Wealth Disparity and Poverty**. With psalms, scripture, song, and intercession drawn from the many traditions of Turtle Island, it invites all who gather to seek justice together in prayer.

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