

**Celebration of Ministry Worship
Canadian Shield Regional Council Meeting Weekend
September 25th, 2022**

Prelude
Welcome and Announcements

***Processional Hymn:** Love Divine, all Love's Excelling VU
333

Land Acknowledgement

The lands where we gather today, across this region, have been places of gathering for First Nations people as they camped and travelled across the land for generations beyond our knowing. Before people arrived from across the seas, these Nations lived, loved, raised children and made a living. They lived in harmony with all that the Creator had made. As we meet today, we recognize those traditional sojourners in this land. We give thanks for them and for the lands on which we gather today. We acknowledge that our history has come at a great cost to the Indigenous community and we commit ourselves to be partners in healing and reconciliation.

Safe Space Statement

The Canadian Shield Regional Council, as an affirming community, is a safe place that welcomes and includes all people to gather and participate in the life and work of the regional council regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation or gender identity. In this space, all are welcome.

Call to Worship

It feels like it has been too long since we last gathered,
seeing one another face-to-face;
But here we are, together, embraced by Spirit and Love.

We give thanks to our Creator, we have weathered storms -
Pandemic, communities of faith struggling, sometimes closing.
We gather, worshipping, praying and singing.

So let us praise God, who restores and reconciles us.

Opening Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Holy One, these are indeed strange times, yet together as a Body of Christ, by your Grace, we have been brought together, in person.

Your Spirit has guided our deliberations, now bind us by your Love as we worship.

Open our minds to your wisdom,
**and fill our hearts with boldness, to listen to, and to share,
Good News in an often bad news world.**

We now pray together as we say together this modern paraphrase of the beloved prayer taught to us by Jesus:
Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother, Holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come, We pray that your good will be done, Let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, Give it to those who have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, From each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence Beyond the evil of our days — Come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: Forever your name is All in One. Amen.

Parker J. Palmer. *Peace Prayers: Meditations, Affirmations, Invocations, Poems, and Prayers for Peace* ed. Carrie Leadingham. © 1992 HarperOne

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 4:18-23 NRSVUE

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers.

And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father

Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Children's Hymn: Draw the Circle Wide MV 145 R v1 R

First of all, I'm guessing that very few of us have ever had the experience of fishing with large nets.

The photo on screen is of a fishers in Alaska who understand the importance not just of fishing salmon, but of mending to their nets when they are not fishing.

Sitting around figuring out what needs mending, what is not working well, that is not my favourite thing to do. But then you have a big hole in your net, well, you're not going to catch fish that way.

In the same way, churches have had times recently when we have had to not come together, perhaps worshiping on line or not worshipping for awhile. That has been hard. Some churches have decided that they can't go on. It is sad. Other churches have had to change the way they do things. Talking, listening, sometimes hearing people say painful things – our faith communities are in a time of tending to our nets. Asking hard questions, daring to be honest and seeing that the world has changed, can make adjustments, fix things, care for ourselves so that we can be caring, welcoming, truly open to the work of sharing God's love.

Children's Hymn: Draw the Circle Wide MV 145 R v3 R

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21
Ephesians 3:14-21

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE)
© 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon

*Affirmation of Faith – A New Creed (unison)

We are not alone,

we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating,

who has come in Jesus,

the Word made flesh,

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others

by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence,

to live with respect in Creation,

to love and serve others,

to seek justice and resist evil,

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Theme Hymn: Always In Our Boat"
by Jane Best

Sung Acclamation of Praise: "Halle, Halle, Halle" VU 958

Offering Invitation

In gratitude for the love that we have received, we offer our lives and our living to carry God's message of love into the world and our communities. Let us present our treasures, and God's greatest treasures, ourselves.

[Written by Fern Gibbard. Gathering Pentecost 2, 2022, page 48. Used with permission]

Dedication Hymn: "Grant Us, God, the Grace" VU 540
*Prayer of Dedication (unison)

Creator, Sustainer, and Spirit, we offer ourselves with our treasures towards your healing, loving, reconciling. Call us anew to this work in the far reaches of this Regional Council. Bless these gifts, first given by you, and empower us to help you usher in your new reign, your kin-dom. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Gathered at table, we give you thanks and praise with all of Creation. The journey to today, as communities of faith across this Regional Council, as your children, has been challenging, to say the least. This world has faced great adversity, but you have journeyed with us, Creator God.

We recognize brokenness in us, and around us. We offer in care your children with frayed hearts and minds from crisis, isolation, fear, uncertainty. We name the grief among us, losses of many sorts: economic, health, from broken relationships, the loss of a sense of safety. Hold them - hold us - in your love.

As we see a world often gripped by chaos, we, called by you to seek justice and resist evil, yearn for your kin-dom coming on earth as it is in heaven. We pray that your protective love will guide the most vulnerable in our neighbourhoods, our world. We pray for our leaders, of institutions, that they might gain the

wisdom to navigate through the storms of life, compassion also to understand the impact of their decisions on people, on this fragile ecosystem of earth. Hold them – hold us – in your love. We pray for all who suffer, all who are exhausted, all who face uncertainty that they will see another sunrise. Creator, in this silent moment we offer to you within our hearts the people and situations that are of concern... [silent moment]. Amen.

Communion Hym: We Gather Here VU 469

Service of Holy Communion
Invitation to the Table

May God be with you!

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is good to give thanks and praise.

Loving God we give you thanks for your presence with us as we gather around this table of abundant love and amazing grace. Help each of us to find our place at the table and help us to welcome each other to this table. May this always be a table where there is room for all, the stranger and the ones who live on the margins of our society.

Loving God you have walked with us through these long years of being apart because of COVID and you have taught us new ways of being the church. Loving God you have walked with us through these last few days that we have been together once again renewing us in being the church. Loving God you will continue to walk with us wherever our journey from here will take us as the church.

Loving God thank you for this community of faith gather here and how you continue to renew us as your church by the gift of your Holy Spirit. May our love genuine. May we hold fast to what is good. May we love one another with mutual affection and outdo one another in showing respect for all people. Let us not lag in

zeal, but be ardent in the spirit as we follow Jesus into the world walking in his footsteps by practicing radical hospitality and justice to all people. Let us rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering and persevere in pray. Let us as your church contribute to the needs of the saints and extend hospitality to strangers.

Loving God we give you thanks for your faithfulness to us and steadfast love. You call us beloved and you always welcome us home no matter how far we have wondered or how long we have been away. We are never alone and we are never outside of your love.

Loving God for all these many blessings that you have graciously bestowed upon us we give thanks and we join with all our ancestors who have gathered around this table long before us and all who will gather long after us and together we sing our praise:

Sung Response: # 206 MV

*Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might;
Heaven and earth are full, are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One, who comes,
Who comes in God's name.
Hosanna in the Highest.*

On the night that Jesus was betrayed he gathered around a simple table with his closest friends – his companions on the journey. He took some bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them saying; “Take and eat, this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

May this broken bread become for us bread for our journey.

In the same way, Jesus took the wine and having given thanks for it, he poured it out and gave the cup to his friends, saying, “Take and drink this. This cup is the cup of God's love poured out for you and for all. Do this in remembrance of me.”

May this shared cup become for us drink for our journey.

May all those we meet in this sacred circle, past, present and future become a community of support for our journey reminding us that we are not alone. The family is waiting. We have a place at the table to return to. We sing of our shared faith:

Sung Response: # 207 MV

Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

O God of Mystery and Wonder, come and find us here at this sacred table and may we hear your voice of love and feel your presence renewing us and making us whole as we share in this ancient ritual. Infuse these simple gifts of bread and grape juice and all that we do here with your Holy Spirit. Let us rise from this table renewed, refreshed and recreated into the people you have called us and gifted us to be with hearts wide open and hands ready to live out your radical welcome to our community and our world. In the name of Jesus, the centre of sacred circle we pray.

Sung Response: # 208 MV

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

Come, for all is prepared. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

The Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

Prayer after Communion: (Unison)

Christ, you have gathered us at your table to bear witness to our unity in you. Fed and nourished, may we leave from here ready to be peace-keepers, God-bearers, and kin-dom builders. Amen.

* **Closing Hymn:** We Have This Ministry VU 510

*Commissioning and Benediction

One: Creator-sent, we know that we are not at all alone;

ALL: North Star God, guide us.

One: Christ-presence, connect us as one Body, whose individual parts feel each other's pain.

ALL: Christ, friend, journey with us.

One: Spirit-flame, energize us to do justice, resist evil, whatever storms that life might present;

ALL: Holy Spirit, set your church on fire – seeking justice, resisting evil, and loving all unconditionally. Amen.

***Choral Benediction:** MV 212 Sent out in Jesus' Name

Postlude