

A Worship Service for Faith Communities

June 11, 2023

(Provided by the Annual Meeting Planning Committee of Region 15)

Prelude

Welcome

Welcome to church on this Regional Annual Meeting Sunday. Today's service has been prepared by the Region 15 Annual Meeting Planning Committee to provide communities of faith in the region with a service of worship to use when their ministry personnel are away at the regional annual meetings. Today's service is modeled on the Service of Celebration of Ministry that takes place at the Region 15 meeting. The theme of this year's meeting is The Story of our Discipleship. You will see that theme reflected in the prayers, music, readings and reflections.

Land Acknowledgment ** (Written by Sandra Tomson outgoing President of Region 15)

Jesus said: Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.”

Christians created Canada atop Turtle Island. Christians, from Great Britain, made treaties with Indigenous Peoples. In Nova Scotia, they signed Peace and Friendship treaties with the Mi'kmaq.

Before long, sacred treaties were being broken.

Christians; 1) settled on lands treaties didn't allow them to use;

2) turned into private property, land the Mi'kmaq were sharing;

3) extended their way of living, their laws beyond treaty borders;

4) exercised sovereignty beyond treaty defined borders;

5) abused the Mi'kmaq and Creation the treaties protected.

Jesus said: Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.”

Loving the Mi'kmaq means living according to Peace and Friendship Treaties. Let us make it so. Let's live as Jesus commanded disciples to live.

Call to worship (Written by Sandra Tomson outgoing President of Region 15)

One: Jesus said: “In the same way I loved you, love one another. This is how everyone will know you follow me. Seeing your love for one another, they will know you are my disciples.

All: They will know we are Disciples by our love!

One: Living love, Jesus shone God’s light brightly wherever he was. Jesus calls us to shine our light brightly wherever we are

All: This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine!

One: God-who-lives-in us and in Creation, we are gathered to worship you in this place. God-who-lives-in-us and in Creation is asking: “Whom shall I send?”

All: “Here I am Lord. I have heard your call.”

Opening Prayer (Written by Sandra Tomson outgoing President of Region 15)

One: Creator, who greets us every day in the light of dawn. Holy Spirit we can see in whatever direction we turn, any place we are.

All: Creation’s Lord, we give thee thanks!

One: God of Earth and Sky, because we are Christian, we call you Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Love, Truth, The Way, The Road, Friend, Master, Teacher, Co-worker; -our Lord, in whom we move and have our being.

All: That your will be done, we will draw the circle wide!

One: Beloved one, who fuels the spirited-energy we receive from one another when we gather together in this place,

All: Help us build “a house” where love can dwell and all can safely live.

In your many names we pray. Amen

Hymn

A Covenant Prayer (Region 15 Faith Stories and Community Covenants Committee)

Christ’s body is composed of many parts. Christ has many ministries. Some are easy, others are difficult. Some bring honour, others bring reproach. Some are suitable to our natural inclinations and temporal interests, others are contrary to both. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us.

To be said in the Communities of Faith (in unison):

We the people of X Pastoral Charge / Incorporated Ministry / Community of Faith renew our covenant of mutual responsibility with Region 15 of the United Church of Canada

We will seek after God in all we say and think and do and live in communion with God and each other.

We will search for what God wants through Prayer, in Scripture and by fellowshiping with each other as we listen to God through many media.

We will celebrate God's Presence in worship, music, life passages, and Sacraments.

We will invite others to join us in our journey with God.

We will do all things for the glory of God and the good of God's World.

We give ourselves to God and rededicate ourselves to live in covenant as the people of God and the Living Body of Christ.

To God be all glory, praise, honour and thanksgiving, now and forever, Amen.

Suggested Scripture Readings

Genesis 12:1-5a Matthew 28:16-20

Hymn (see options below)

Reflection "GO" (See "Worship Resources" below for options)

Hymn (see options below)

Minute for Mission (see below for suggested reading if you don't have one)

Invitation to the Offering

Part of our call to discipleship is the call to share with others. We do this through the financial support we offer our church, but we also do this in the giving of our time, our talents and our prayers. So whatever it is that we have to offer today, let us present it now with our praise and gratitude.

Offertory Response

MV 196 We Will Take What You Offer

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

Divine One, you have called us not only to give, but to live the gratitude that these gifts express. And so we ask your blessing as we dedicate, not only the gift but the giver, so that together we can do the work to which you call us. Amen

Pastoral Prayers (Written by Shauna MacDonald incoming President of Region 15)

Let Us Pray:

Gracious God, we acknowledge the lands on which we live, work and gather as the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmag people. We gather in peace, friendship, and respect for all peoples of his Region.

Lord of all, as we come together today, Sunday, June 10, 2023 - this is a very special day in the United Church of Canada as today we celebrate our 98th Anniversary. We are reminded of those who have come before us, those who paved the way for us to be who we are today, as we are all followers of Christ. The Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists, each one demonstrated their faith through courage, determination and strength as they embarked on this new journey together.

What challenges they must have faced, what anxieties each one must have experienced, not knowing what lay before them as this new United Church of Canada. The unknown must have been a fearful time for some, sheer joy and exhilaration for others; yet through these experiences of joy and fulfillment, with each new day Lord, you were there. You were always walking beside each one of them as you are with each one of us today. What faith our forefathers had, what sacrifices they must have experienced, not once but on numerous occasions; yet your peoples kept moving forward into the unknown.

Ever gracious God, you call your people from near and far into the fellowship of our church, upon the foundation which was laid before us; by the apostles and prophets, upon all the saints and upon Jesus, our companion and Lord.

We give thanks for 98 years of church life, which for you Lord, is a blink of an eye. We give praise and thanks for past and present Ministries. We praise you for all those in our Communities of Faith; continue to watch over each one of our Pastoral Charges within Bermuda and Nova Scotia; all Regions across this

great country of ours and give guidance, clarity and purpose to those involved with General Council so we are able to seek true reconciliation towards the pathway before us as Christians, disciples of Christ.

Let us begin each day walking in Christ's footsteps, living each day knowing that this is "The Story of our Discipleship" as we continue along our faith journey together with our Lord and Saviour and may God's richest blessings be upon each one of us. Amen.

Hymn (see options below)

Commissioning and Benediction

God has gathered us here in this place where we have been renewed, nurtured and fed. God has been revealed to us in this place through song, scripture, word and fellowship. God has challenged us in our time together in this place to grow in our faith and to put that faith into action. God sends us out from this place to share all that we have received as disciples of our Lord.

As so as we go, we remember that we do not go alone. God's blessing is with us, Christ's example leads us, and the Spirit walks with and within us, each step of the way. We go with God.

Choral Blessing Send Me, Lord #572

Postlude

** Land Acknowledgement is specific to the Canadian context and is optional for those from Bermuda.

Hymn Suggestions

Provided by Kevin Parks and Dana Pardy

VU 569 You Call Us Out

VU 658 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

MV10 Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

MV 161 I have Called You By Your Name

VU 209 Go Make a Difference

Other options – VU 578 As A Fire Is Meant For Burning

VU 567 Will You Come and Follow Me

Scriptures

Genesis 12:1-5a

Contemporary English Version

The LORD said to Abram:

Leave your country, your family, and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you. I will bless you and make your descendants into a great nation. You will become famous and be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you, but I will put a curse on anyone who puts a curse on you. Everyone on earth will be blessed because of you.

Abram was 75 years old when the LORD told him to leave the city of Haran. He obeyed and left with his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions and slaves they had acquired while in Haran.

Matthew 28:16-20

Contemporary English Version

Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to meet him. They saw him and worshiped him, but some of them doubted.

Jesus came to them and said:

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.

Children's Time

Written by Catherine Stuart

Materials needed. Three circles of cardboard or paper approximately 4 inches in diameter, one red, one yellow and one green to represent the colours of a traffic light.

Ask what each colour means. Tell them the story of Jesus sending out his disciples (Matthew 28:16-20) After telling them the story, ask what colour they think Jesus is asking us to use. Red? Does Jesus ask us to stop telling the story? Maybe there are situations where we need to use Yellow: Caution ... or maybe Jesus is calling us to use Green: Go—go and tell the story of Jesus always being with us in the things that we say and do. How do we act as disciples when we love? What does love look like? We need to be green lights for the world, knowing that Jesus is with us when we show love to others, when we help others who need it, when we are kind and stand up to things that we know go against the love that Jesus teaches.

Worship Resources prepared by Sharon Lohnes

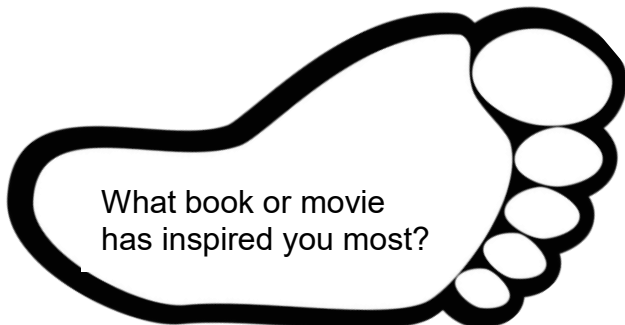
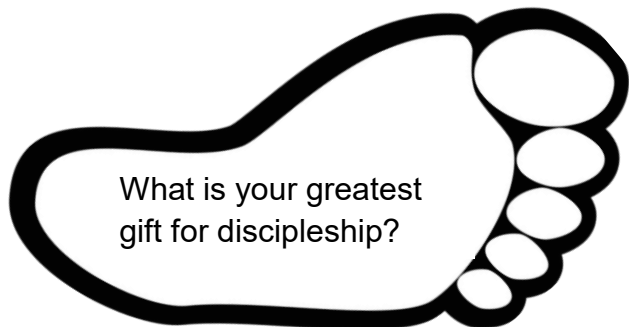
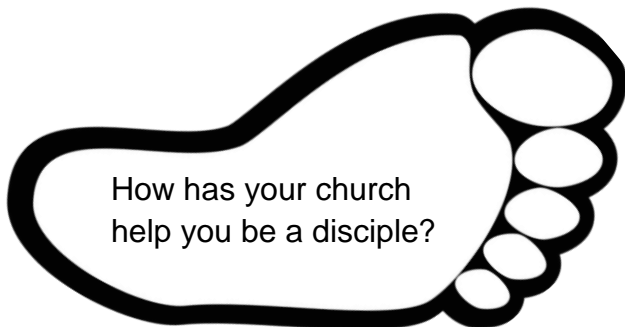
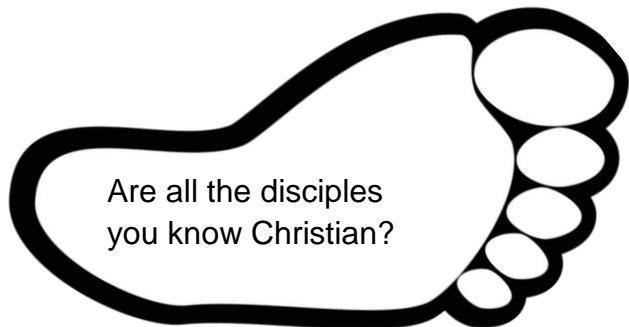
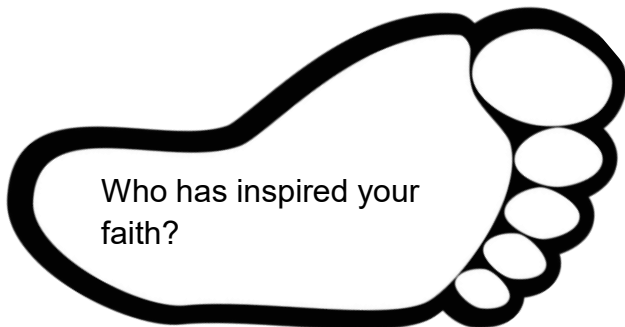
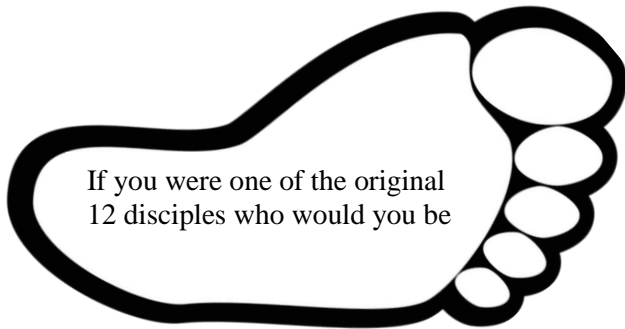
Option #1 – What does it mean to hear the voice of God say “Go”?

What does it mean to say “Yes”?

Share one or more stories of someone who responded to God's call

1. Calls to ministry within the United Church can be found at
<https://united-church.ca/leadership/entering-ministry/call-stories>
2. Choose someone you respect or admire and research their story
3. Nancy Reeves book I'd Say Yes, God If I knew What You Wanted
has a number of stories of personal calls

Option #2 – Copy and cut out these “Steps in our discipleship” footprints.
Ask people to choose one and share their answers.



Preserving Language through the Mohawk Bible

A much-anticipated project will be on bookshelves this fall.

After recognizing the need to preserve the Mohawk language, the idea to produce a Mohawk translation of the Bible was proposed. Preserving language enables future generations to engage in their rich culture in a rounded and essential way. Without understanding dialect-specific phrases and expressions, the vital wisdom of a culture can be lost.

Those partnering on the Mohawk Language Bible have taken great care and effort in ensuring proper language interpretation and translation. Working in agreement with the Mohawk Nation, collaborators have taken the time to listen to each other and learn in order to move the project forward.

A dedication of the Bible is set to take place on September 9, 2023, in Kanesatake, QC. The translation is expected to be available in hardcopy, digital copy, and audiobook formats.

Your gifts to Mission & Service allow projects to preserve language and culture to flourish.