

**Bermuda Nova Scotia Regional Council  
Congregation Service  
Sunday, May 31, 2026**

**“Into the Deep”**

**Prepared by the Worship Planning Team  
Mary Taylor, Donna Tourneur and Mary-Beth Moriarity**

**We Gather as God’s People**

**Gathering Music**

**Welcome & Announcements**

On this Sunday morning, members of our regional council gather at Acadia University for the annual meeting of our region and have been exploring the theme of *Into the Deep*.

**Land Acknowledgement**

This land on which we gather is traditional land of the Mi’kmaq peoples. We worship the Creator on this land and acknowledge with respect the thousands of years of ceremony and relationship that are etched in footprint, fire and faithfulness on the soil, rock and water that surround us.

**Lighting of the Christ Candle (Option 1)**

As we light this Christ candle, we remember that Christ goes with us into the deep. This flame reminds us that even when the future feels uncertain, God’s presence does not waver. We light this candle, trusting that the One who calls us forward accompanies us on the way.

*(Light the candle)*

**Sung Centering Prayer** -- Where Two or Three are Gathered (*More Voices 14*)

**Lighting of the Christ Candle (Option 2)**

As we prepare to light this candle, we are reminded that:

Lighting a candle is a prayer-

**Inviting us to pause and be here: now.**

Lighting a candle is a parable-

**Burning itself out, it gives light to others.**

Lighting a candle is a protest-

**Saying to fear and hatred, ‘I beg to differ’.**

Lighting a candle is a symbol-

**of love and hope.**

Sacred presence. Divine spark.

**Around and within.**

**Sung Centering Prayer** -- Soil of God, you and I (*More Voices 174 - verse 2*)

### **Call to Worship**

Leader: Do not be afraid, for God is with us.

**All: We trust the One who goes with us into the deep.**

Leader: Jesus calls us to put out into the deep.

**All: We go forward in faith and hope.**

Leader: Nothing can separate us from God's love.

**All: With grateful hearts, we worship God.**

### **Opening Prayer (Option 1)**

**All: Holy God, we gather in your presence, trusting that you are with us through every deep and uncertain place. As we worship today, open our hearts to your Spirit, steady us in hope, and guide us as we listen for your call. May we be shaped by your love and led forward in faith. Amen.**

### **Hymn Suggestions**

Bless the Lord, O My Soul (TLUS! 35)

We Wait for God (TLUS! 57)

God of the Bible (More Voices 28)

Jesus Calls Us o'er the Tumult (VU 562)

### **Opening Prayer (Option 2)**

*'Listen to the silence,  
It has so much to say.'*

*-Rumi*

*We Prayerfully Pause ...Listening to the silence...*

***Be still and know that I am God.***

***Be still and know that I am God.***

*based on Psalm 46 ~ More Voices 77*

**Living God, may we open our hearts to you,  
moving beyond all that clutters our lives  
and all that is waiting for our attention.**

**May your Spirit calm us amid the chaos,  
and tune our ears to hear your voice above all else;  
calling us to find our centre in you.**

**May your Spirit guide us in our busyness –  
the expectations of community;  
the needs of our world;  
the necessary demands of ministry –**

**help us to let them be for a while.  
Move us deeper into your presence  
where we can be fully attentive  
to the wisdom of our faith tradition,  
the stirrings of your Spirit,  
the insights of others,  
the gifts of this time and of each day.**

*We Prayerfully Pause ...Moving into God's Presence...*

***Be still and know that I am God.  
Be still and know that I am God.  
based on Psalm 46 ~ More Voices 77***

### **Story for All Ages**

Object: A life jacket or a picture of a life jacket. (You can probably even describe it if you can't get either of these)

I brought something with me today. Does anyone know what this is?

Yes, it is a life jacket. We use it when we are on the water, especially when the water is deep, or when the weather is not quite sure what it plans to do.

A life jacket does not keep the water from getting rough. It does not stop the wind. It does not make the waves smaller. What it does is help keep us afloat when the water gets deep. Have you ever worn one of these? How did it feel to put it on?

Most people do not wear a life jacket when the water is shallow. We wear it when we cannot touch the bottom, when we are not completely sure what will happen next, when we know we might need help staying steady.

Jesus once said to his friends, "Put out into the deep water." Not the shallow water. The deep water.

I wonder what the disciples felt when they heard that. I wonder if they felt excited, or nervous, or unsure.

Being a church is sometimes like being on the water. Sometimes it feels calm and familiar. Sometimes it feels deep and a little scary. Sometimes it feels like a storm might be coming. But here is the important part. Jesus did not send the disciples into the deep alone. Jesus was already there. God promises us the same thing. When we go into deep waters, God goes with us.

Just like a life jacket helps us stay afloat, God's love holds us steady. God's presence does not disappear when things get hard. God is with us in the deep, in the storm, and

in the future we have not yet seen. So as we think about going into the deep, we remember this. We are not alone. We are held. And we are loved

**Dear God, thank you for being with us when the water feels deep and the future feels uncertain. Help us trust you, listen for your call, and care for one another as we journey together. Amen.**

**Hymn Suggestions**

Sing! Like a Rock (*More Voices* 92)

Jump for Joy (*More Voices* 48)

Simon, Simon, a Fisherman (*VU* 597)

**We Listen for God's Word**

**Scripture Reading** (*suggested readings for the day, with Luke being the focus*)

***Isaiah 43:1–3***

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

**Psalm 42 - As the Deer Pants for the Water (*VU* 766)**

**Romans 8:38–39**

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Luke 5:1–11**

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For he and

all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

**Music Ministry** *(if you have special music this day)*

**Hymn Suggestions**

Will You Come and Follow Me? (VU 567)

Jesus Saw Them Fishing (More Voices 113)

Be Not Afraid (Bob Dunford) (*found via One License*)

Cast Your Boat Out (TLUS! 143)

**Sermon: "Into the Deep"**

**Reader 1:** Have you ever noticed that when a storm hits, a real storm, everyone suddenly has a story? Like a hurricane or a big snowfall, in the days and weeks that follow, we hear people's stories, stories of struggle, but also stories of community. The power goes out and neighbours wander outside with flashlights, calling across driveways, "You alright over there?" Trees bend, windows rattle, and somehow, people who haven't spoken in months check on each other like family.

**Reader 2:** Storms have a way of reminding us that we are not in control. They also remind us we are not alone. We know something about deep waters here living on the Atlantic Ocean, about uncertainty, about leaning on each other, about hauling buckets, lighting candles, starting generators, about looking at the sky and muttering, "I don't love the look of that."

**Reader 1:** Today, Jesus invites us into deep waters again. Not the calm shallows we prefer. The deep. The unknown. The future. The year 2035. The church we do not yet fully know. The changes we cannot quite imagine.

**Reader 2:** But here is the promise. The promise for yesterday, for today and for tomorrow. God does not meet us after we have figured it out. God meets us in the deep.

**Reader 1:** Luke tells us that the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They were tired. Discouraged. Washing their nets. And it is at that moment, when they are worn down and out of ideas, that Jesus says, "Put out into the deep water."

**Reader 2:** Anyone who has ever been on a boat in rough water knows this is not comforting advice. You do not choose to go deeper unless you have to. Deeper usually means colder, riskier, harder. Deeper is the place we avoid when we are already tired.

**Reader 1:** The disciples could have said no. They had every practical reason to. They were the experts. They had already tried. But somehow, faith nudges them past their exhaustion, past their fear, past their logic.

**Reader 2:** And they go.

**Reader 1:** And that is where the miracle happens. Not before. Not from the safety of the shoreline. The abundance comes only after they trust enough to push off.

**Reader 2:** This is our moment as a church. We stand at the edge of deep water. Demographics shifting. Communities changing. Budgets tightening. Expectations rising. People are longing for meaning but connecting in new ways. Everything familiar is washing up on the shore behind us.

**Reader 1:** And 2035 is not just a date or a deadline. It is a horizon we are rowing toward together. Some days with hope. Some days with hesitation. Some days, with the feeling that we would much rather stay where the water is shallow.

**Reader 2:** But here is the heart of it. Our calling has never been to stay in the shallows. The deep places, the places we fear, are the places where God does God's best work. Isaiah says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." Not if. When. God does not promise to keep us out of deep waters. God promises to join us in them.

**Reader 1:** Psalm 42 says, "Deep calls to deep." This is another way of saying that God calls to us from the place where our courage meets God's strength. Deep calls to deep, not to undo us, but to draw us into something larger, something truer, something filled with possibility.

**Reader 2:** And Romans declares that neither height nor depth, nothing in all creation, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. The deep is not a sign of danger. The deep is a sign that God is already ahead of us, preparing the way.

**Reader 1:** So yes, the future of the church will stretch us. Yes, transformation is uncomfortable. Yes, 2035 will ask something of us, our creativity, our resilience, our courage, our trust.

**Reader 2:** But challenge is not a sign that we are failing. Challenge is a sign that we are following. Being a Christian does not mean avoiding difficult waters. It means trusting the One who steps into the boat with us.

**Reader 1:** So today, as we gather as a Region, as congregations, as followers of Christ, hear this invitation again. Put out into the deep water. Lean into bold discipleship. Lean into daring justice. Lean into the deep spirituality that holds us steady when the wind picks up.

**Reader 2:** And hear this promise again. Do not be afraid. The God who called you is the God who goes with you. The God who sends you into the deep is the God who anchors you there.

**Reader 1:** Deep waters ahead.

**Reader 2:** God is already in the boat. Are we?

(contemplative silence)

## **We Respond to God**

### **Offering Invitation**

As we offer our gifts today, we do so in gratitude for the ways God continues to work through each of us and through us and through our ministries. These offerings support ministry, care, and witness across our region. Let us give generously and faithfully as we share in God's work together. Amen.

**Offertory Hymn**     Christ Has No Body Now But Yours (*More Voices 171*)  
Grateful (*More Voices 182*)

### **Presentation of the Offering**

Generous and Loving God, we ask you to receive these gifts, and the gifts offered by PAR and e-transfer, gifts of our hearts and hands. May these gifts be used for ministry in your name. Amen.

### **Prayers of the Community**

Loving and faithful God, we give you thanks for gathering us together today. We thank you for your presence among us, for the faith that has shaped us, and for the call that continues to draw us forward. We trust that you are with us in calm waters and in deep waters alike.

We pray for your church, in this place and across our region. As we face change, uncertainty, and new possibilities, may we embody your wisdom, patience, and courage. May we listen carefully to one another and to your Spirit, and feel your guidance as we discern the way ahead.

We pray for those who lead and serve in the life of the church, ministers, lay leaders, staff, volunteers, and all who give of their time and energy. May they be strengthened when work feels heavy, renewed when they are weary, and reminded that they do not serve alone.

We pray for our communities and the world you love. We remember those who are struggling, those who are ill or awaiting diagnosis, those who are grieving, those who feel isolated or overwhelmed. May they be surrounded by your comfort, your healing, and your peace.

We give thanks for those who work for the good of others each day, first responders, health care workers, caregivers, educators, and all who serve quietly and faithfully. May they feel your blessing in their work.

God of hope, we place before you the longings of our hearts and the prayers we hold in silence.

(silence)

Trusting in your deep and abiding love, we offer all these prayers to you. Amen.

((OR))

Trusting in your deep and abiding love, we pray together as we were taught, saying, **(or singing) Our Father...**

### An "Affirmation" as an alternative to the Prayers or in addition to...

We believe in a sacred power within and around us – A divine spirit that we call by many names and experience in many ways, that empowers and heals, that calls us forth.

We believe in our creativity – Making and transforming beauty out of words and notes, images and colours, lines and pictures ... and silence.

We believe in doing justice – Justice that compels and empowers us to risk whatever we must risk to create a climate in which all people can be who they are.

We believe in our dreams – We experience the world as it is, in both its ugliness and beauty, and we see what it can become.

We believe in making peace – A peace that is based on openness, honesty and compassion.

We believe in hope – We expect change to continue to occur in our world. We rely on our courage to continue to bring about these changes.

We believe in love – A passionate love within and around us that laughs and cries, challenges and comforts, a healing love that perseveres.

We believe in potential – We know who we are, painful as that can be at times, yet we continue to call each other to become more of who we are.

We believe in celebrating – We remember and we commemorate. We create rituals. We play and dance, and sing and love well.

We believe in our diversity – We affirm our many shapes and sizes, colours and traditions, emotions and thoughts, differences and similarities.

We believe in life – Life that wells up within and flows out of us like a streaming fountain.

We believe we are good and holy, a sacred part of all creation.

*"We Believe in a Sacred Power" by Susan Kramer  
– Courage To Love*

## **Hymn Suggestions**

We Have Been Called (TLUS! 148)  
I Know That Ev'ry Time I Pray (TLUS! 54)

## **We Go Forth to be God's People**

### **Commissioning (Option 1)**

Go into the world knowing that you are not alone.  
In calm waters and in deep waters, God is with you.  
Go with trust, with compassion, and with courage for the journey ahead. Amen.

### **Commissioning (Option 2)**

Travelling with God  
is never dull,  
but always filled with surprises.

So we mourn not the past  
nor dread the future,  
but open ourselves  
to the possibilities  
of compassion,  
of kindness,  
of humility,  
of gentleness,  
of patience,  
opening ourselves to  
the possibility  
of God bringing life  
in all its fullness.

Hand in hand with God  
we step into a brave new future.  
*(adapted from words by Roddy Hamilton (New Kilpatrick Church -Scotland))*

**Sung Blessing:** May you be held (TLUS! 105)  
Christ Has No Body Now but Yours (More Voices 171)  
There is a Time (More Voices 165)

## **Sending Out Music**