

Epiphany 3

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

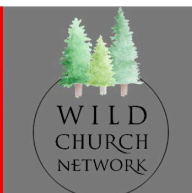


Image: CW Pix / Shutterstock

January 21, 2024 + 4pm



**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



Welcome to the AbbeyChurch

*No matter who you are or what you are carrying today,
know you are beloved and so very welcome here.*

At the AbbeyChurch, we tell stories of faith, encourage hope, share meals, care for each other and for God's creation, and strive to practice the teachings of Jesus.

We're at different places in our faith journey but we share a guiding sacred story as found in scripture (The Bible) and summarized in our Christian creeds.

We share a willingness to honestly wrestle with God—with our questions and doubts, our disillusionment with our institutions and our concern for our world.

We invite diversity in our community and our leadership; old, young, rich, poor, conservative, liberal, radical, single, married, LGBTQ2IA+, straight, evangelical, progressive, overeducated, undereducated, overhoused, underhoused, certain, doubting, hurting, thriving (to name a few).

As a witness to unity in diversity, the AbbeyChurch is an affirming shared ministry of the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada.

We draw on those spiritual traditions, as well as others across the Christian spectrum.

We're also connected to Emmaus, an intentional community that makes commitments to one another for prayer, presence and simplicity.

We believe that Christ's love binds our differences together and renews our hope as we gather each week at Jesus' table of radical welcome.

The materials for the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso facilitated by the local Chemin Neuf Community (CCN). The theme chosen is “You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself” (Lk 10:27). Brothers and sisters from the Catholic Archdiocese of Ouagadougou, Protestant Churches, ecumenical bodies and the CCN in Burkina Faso collaborated generously in drafting the prayers and reflections and experienced their work together as a real path of ecumenical conversion.

We Gather

Opening loop

Welcome and announcements

Tolling of the bells

Opening Words

In this time and place we gather with gratitude on the lands of the ɫəkʷəŋən people; known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

From many places and peoples, we come to this house of prayer.

The God of all creation makes us one in the flesh.

Let us join our hearts and voices in praise.

In Jesus Christ, we are made one in the Spirit.

Let us be united in truth through the same one Spirit.

We practice our faith in many different and diverse ways.

Yet we confess the name of Jesus Christ.

We give ourselves to different forms of ministry.

Yet our calling is one because Christ is undivided.

Rejoice, people of God: The Risen Christ calls us together!

Praise the Lord!

Life in Liturgy, 2018.

Please rise in body or in spirit as we set our common table

Opening Song: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation;
O my soul, praise God, at all times your health and salvation.
Come, all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near,
joining in glad adoration; joining in glad adoration..

Praise to the Lord, above all things so mightily reigning,
keeping us safe at God's side, and so gently sustaining.
Have you not seen, how all you needed has been
met by God's gracious ordaining; met by God's gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend us;
surely God's goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:
ponder anew what the Almighty can do
who out of love will befriend us; who out of love will befriend us.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath come now with praises before him!
Let the Amen sound from God's people again:
gladly with praise we adore him; gladly with praise we adore him.

Tune: Public domain, Joachim Neander (1650-1680); /OneLicense

Litany of Praise and Thanksgiving

Let us turn our hearts to God in praise: Praise to you God, for you have poured out your love into our hearts so that we never lose hope. **You free our lives from fear because of your love, and dress our wounded and injured hearts.**

Praise to you for all the women and men who sow seeds of love and hope for their neighbours around the world. **Praise to you for the faith we received from the apostles, for Jesus' prayer for unity, and for the gift of the Good News.**

God of love, we adore you for the generosity of your love for all people – a love beyond our understanding; a love in which there is no distinction on grounds of race, gender or social status. **We adore you, who out of love sent your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world and continue to dwell with us by the Spirit. Amen.**

Gloria

①
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!

②
Dm Gm C F Dm Gm C F

③
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

④
Dm Gm C F Dm Gm C F

Keyboard

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Poem: Selected and read by poet-in-residence, Rebecca Yeo

We Proclaim

Psalm 62: For God Alone

For God alone my soul in silence waits (2X)

God alone is my rock and my salvation, I will not be shaken
My hope is in God. All my hope is in God

Hymns From The Porter's Gate; Paul Zach Publishing; Remaining portion is unaffiliated

The Hebrew Scripture

A reading from the prophet Jonah

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Humans and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish." When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

The word of the lord
Thanks be to God.

You are invited to rise in body or in spirit as we prepare our hearts to hear the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'fiddle' and includes the lyrics: [A] Lord, to whom shall we go? [C] Lord, to whom shall we go?_. Below the staff are guitar chords: D, G, D, A. The second staff includes the lyrics: [A] You are gra-cious and merc - i - ful. [C] Lord, to whom shall we go?_. Chords: D, G, D, A. The third staff includes the lyrics: [A] Slow to an - ger and a-bound-ing in love. [C] Lord, to whom shall we go?_. Chords: D, G, D, A. The fourth staff includes the lyrics: [A] Lord, to whom shall we go? [C] Let us trust in your word. Chords: D, G, D, A.

Kent Gustavson / Mountain Vespers / Used with permission

The Gospel

Let us proclaim the gospel from the rooftops!
With our words and with our lives!

A reading from the +Gospel according to Mark.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news.” As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And

Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” And

immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James, son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.

Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Let us proclaim the gospel from the rooftops!

With our words and with our lives



Sermon

Katherine Brittain

bell / brief silence for meditation / bell

You are invited to rise in body or in spirit as we affirm the ancient story of faith.

Credo (Iona community)

We believe that God is present
in the darkness before dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty
where fear and courage join hands,
conflict and caring link arms,
and the sun rises over barbed wire.

We believe in a with-us God
Jesus, who sits down in our midst
to share our humanity.

We affirm a faith that takes us beyond
a safe place—into action, into
vulnerability and onto the streets.

We commit ourselves to work for change
and put ourselves on the line;
to bear responsibility, take risks,
live powerfully and face humiliation;
to stand with those on the edge;
to choose life
and be used by the Holy Spirit
for God’s new community of hope.
Amen

Our Prayers

We have been invited to live the divine call to love God and our neighbour as ourselves. As we renew our commitment to this call, may love strengthen our unity as Christians.

Silence

With all our hearts, we desire to dwell in God's love and to have the grace to love our neighbours as ourselves. God of boundless love, we pray that all people may come to know your unlimited mercy and believe in your desire to fill us with your infinite love.

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

We join our prayers to that of Jesus, who prayed for the unity of all who follow him. God of communion, we pray that we may work together for your greater glory and spread the Good News of salvation for all.

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

Our hearts are broken because of the confusion and division in our world. God, our healer, we who are scattered like sheep without a shepherd, ask you to gather us into one fold. Enliven us by your Spirit and send us again, two by two, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

Our world is scarred by terror and violence. Millions are forced to leave their homes in search of refuge and safety. God of welcome, grant us the grace to risk embracing the stranger, tending their wounds and standing in solidarity with them. Strengthen our resolve to be kind and merciful and to act towards our sisters and brothers at all times as you do towards us.

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

In our weakness and fear we know that we often pass by on the other side, turning away from those who need our help. God of power, despite our lack of charity, open our hearts to experience the length, width, height and depth of your love, so that we may love you more and love our neighbour as ourselves.

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

For the prayers we offer now silently or aloud; for our community, our neighbourhoods and for any struggling at this time...

Fill us with your love! Make us one in you. Amen

Confession

Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in mercy and infinite in goodness, let us turn to the light and confess our sins...

Silence

Before God, **with the people of God, we confess to our brokenness: to the ways we wound our lives, the lives of others and the life of the world.**

Siblings in Christ - know that God forgives you, Christ renews you, and the Spirit enables you to grow in love! Amen.

The Peace

Beloved community, the peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you!**

We acknowledge the peace of Christ in each other.

During the 'offertory' song, the communion table is set.

Contributions to our common life can be made at the back of the space (now or later).

As we prepare for this holy feast we are reminded that all are welcome to receive wherever they find themselves in their spiritual journey. All are welcome to Jesus' table - as you feel ready.

Offertory: Here I Am Lord

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin, my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

I the lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

I the lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide, till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

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We Celebrate

Prayer Over The Gifts

Loving God, before the world began you called us. Make holy all we offer you this day, and strengthen us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen**

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right that we should praise you, beautiful God whose promise brings life, and whose breath animates our dust and enables us to sing! We give thanks that we have been gathered by you, caught in your net, and summoned to your table. As we open ourselves to your generous hospitality, let your Spirit move among us as it moved over your earth at creation. Let it inspire our hearts as You spoke through prophets and rested on Mary. And may we have faith to respond to your call and join our voices to Creation's song, singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

On the night of his arrest, Jesus took the bread, blessed you and gave thanks, giving it to his companions saying, this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

After supper, Jesus took wine, blessed and gave thanks and gave it to his companions saying “This cup is the new relationship with God. Take this and share it. I shall drink wine with you next in the coming kingdom of God.”

Come now, O Christ, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, forever bound to us in promise and mystery; send your holy spirit on us and on this bread and wine. Let them become, for us, the sign, seal and sacrament of your healing love with the power to make us whole. And through these gifts make us again your body for this world, offering ourselves to your loving service until that day when all creation is made whole. **Amen.**

The Prayer of Jesus

As beloved children of a loving parent, we pray as Jesus taught:

(said in a language, translation or paraphrase of your choice)

**Our *Father (*or Parent, or Source) in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Silence.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God given for the life of the world.

Thanks be to God!

All are welcome to receive at Jesus' table! The bread is gluten-free but contains almond flour and dairy. Please ask the server if you would like a non-dairy / almond option. The juice is in the small cups. Wine is in the larger common cup. Please refrain from dipping the bread.

Communion Song: The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace

The kingdom of God is justice and peace
and joy in the Holy Spirit
Come, Lord, and open in us
the gates of your kingdom.

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Communion Song: One Bread, One Body

One bread, one body, one Lord of all
One cup of blessing which we bless
And we, though many, throughout the Earth
We are one body in this one Lord

Gentile or Jew
Servant or free
Woman or man
No more *Refrain*

Many the gifts
many the works
One in the lord of all *Refrain*

Grain for the fields
scattered and grown
gathered to one, for all *Refrain*

1978, John B. Foley, S.J., and OCP. OneLicense

Prayer after Communion

You call us, wanderer of seashores and sidewalks, inviting us to sail out of our smug harbours into the uncharted waters of faith, to wander off from our predictable paths to follow you into the unpredictable footsteps of the kingdom; to leave the comfort of our homes and accompany you into the uncomfortable neighbourhoods we usually avoid. As we wait, in our simple, sometimes crazy, constantly uncertain lives, speak to us, Spirit of Grace: of that hope which is our anchor; of that peace which is our rock; of that grace which is our refuge. **Amen.**

Blessing

We Are Sent

Closing Song: Just a Closer Walk With Thee

I am weak, but thou art strong
Jesus, keep me from all wrong
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk, close to thee

Refrain

Just a closer walk with thee
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea
Daily walking close to thee
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be

Through this word of toil and snares
When I falter you are there
Who with me my burden shares
None but thee, dear Lord, not but thee *Refrain*

When my feeble life is o'er,
Time for me will be no more;
Guide me gently, safely o'er
To thy kingdom shore, to thy shore.

Text and music: Public domain

Sending

Go forth to love God and your neighbour!

Thanks be to God. Amen!

admin@abbeychurch.ca + www.abbeychurch.ca

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