



Camrose United Church Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

January 24, 2021

“Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”
(cf. Jn 15:5-9)

Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

Candle Lighting

We light the Christ Candle, aware of God around, among, & within us. In a moment of silence, we prepare ourselves to celebrate God's presence in our community.

Invitation.

This is the Sunday concluding the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We have seen much trouble in the past two weeks of the world. We have seen riots, we have seen people refusing to learn or compromise or change even though their stance hurts others. We have seen words of misery, of defiance, of sorrow. While many have focused on the unrest in the United States, the rest of the world has been hurting too. Unity has seemed scarce and yet is so sorely needed.

As Christians, we dedicate ourselves to being God's love in the world. We may not travel the same path to meet our God, but we commit ourselves to traveling. We cross paths on the way and in those crossings, we meet believers who want to love and be loved as God loves us.

In sharing this celebration service, may we be reminded that we share the earth, may we stop to listen to the love of God, the words of Jesus, the power of the Spirit that shepherd us to be together for the good of all.

This service of word, prayer and meditation reminds us that, living in God's love brings out the best that we are. May Unity be seen and heard in our words and prayers.

♪By the waking of our hearts. Ricky Manaio, CSP

**By the waking of our hearts, by the stirring of our souls,
may the Spirit of God abide and bring us together in
Christ.**

Words of Welcome

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

And also with you.

Siblings in Christ, this year the theme of the Week of
Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by the sisters of the
Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, is:

“Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”.

It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we
might come to and abide in God. God waits for us tirelessly,
hoping that, united in love, we will bear fruit that will bring life
to all. Faced with the difference of ‘the other’, we risk
withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which
separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide
in love, and so bear much fruit.

In the three moments of prayer that follow, we remember the
call of Christ, we turn to love which is to be the centre of our
life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate relationship
with God. Abiding in God’s love strengthens the desire to
seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to
those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a
gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in
the world.

In peace let us pray
God, you are the vinedresser who cares for us with love.
You call on us to see the beauty
of each branch united to the vine,
the beauty of each person.
And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.
We withdraw into ourselves.
Our trust in you is forsaken.
Enmity develops between us.
Come and direct our hearts toward you once again.
Grant us to live from your grace
so that we may be together and praise your name.

Litany of praise

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all
peoples, We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among
all creatures.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

We sing your praise among suffering and tears,
We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

We sing your praise
in the places of conflict and misunderstanding;
We sing your praise
in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,
We sing your praise in the midst of life and death,
the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

Music: 🎵 *Choir:* Build up the Common Life

***First Vigil: Abiding in Christ:
The unity of the whole person***

Reading: John 15:1-17 Inclusive Bible

The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and my Abba is the gardener who cuts off every branch in me that doesn’t bear fruit, but prunes the fruitful ones to increase their yield.

3 You’ve been pruned already,
thanks to the word that I have spoken to you.

4 Live on in me, as I do in you.
Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself
apart from the vine,
neither can you bear fruit apart from me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches.
Those who live in me and I in them will bear abundant fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing.

6 Those who don’t live in me are like withered, rejected
branches

to be picked up and thrown on the fire and burned.

7 If you live on in me, and my words live on in you,
ask whatever you want and it will be done for you.

8 My Abba will be glorified if you bear much fruit
and prove to be my disciples.

9 “As my Abba has loved me, so have I loved you.
Live on in my love.

10 And you will live on in my love
if you keep my commandments,
just as I live on in Abba God’s love
and have kept God’s commandments.

11 I tell you this so that my joy may be yours,
and your joy may be complete.

12 This is my commandment:
Love one another as I have loved you.

13 There is no greater love
than to lay down one's life for one's friends.
14 And you are my friends if you do what I command you.

15 I no longer speak of you as subordinates,
because a subordinate does not know a superior's business.
Instead, I have call you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learned from Abba God.

16 It was not you who chose me,
it was I who to go forth and bear fruit.
Your fruit must endure,
so that whatever you ask of Abba God in my name
God will give you.

17 This command I give you: that you love one another.

Response: ♪Ubi caritas (Taize)

Short silence (pictures of vines/grapes) 1 minute

Intercessions

God of love, through Christ you said to us: "You did not choose me but I chose you". You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

♪The joy of our heart is in God.

God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of your grace. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

♪The joy of our heart is in God.

God who gathers, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at church meetings and local ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we might celebrate you with joy.

♪The joy of our heart is in God.

God of the one vineyard, you call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes and workplaces. May we pave the way for bridging rivalries and overcoming tensions.

♪**The joy of our heart is in God.**

Very often we think of prayer as something we do, an activity of our own. We are invited to an interior silence, to turn aside from all the noise and concerns of our lives and thoughts. In this silence we are simply called to abide in God's love, to rest in God.

Silence (video flickering candle) *1 minute*

♪**Light of the world.** Words and Music: Daniel Charles Damon, 2005.

**Light of the World, illumine our darkness;
Light of the world, illumine our path.**

Second Vigil: The visible unity of Christians

Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13a New International Version.

A Church Divided Over Leaders

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that all of you agree with one another in what you say
and that there be no divisions among you,
but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

¹¹ My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas^[b]"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

♪ **VU691 *Though Ancient Walls*** Vs. 1 & 5

**1.Though Ancient walls may still stand proud
and racial strife be fact,
though boundaries may be lines of hate,
proclaim God's saving act!**

**Refrain: Walls that divide are broken down;
Christ is our unity!
Chains that enslave are thrown aside;
Christ is our liberty!**

**5. This broken world seeks lasting health
and vital unity.
God's people by God's Word renewed,
cast off all slavery!**

Short silence: pictures of caring (*approximately 1 minute*)

Intercessions

Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the church in all places.
Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus
addressed on the eve of his passion: "that they may all be
one ... so that the world may believe".

♪ **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy).**

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us
so that suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in
the church. May the walls that separate us fall.

♪ **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy).**

Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness
and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

♪ **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy).**

Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of
spirit so that we may welcome the unexpectedness of your
grace.

♪ **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy).**

Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their fidelity to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

♪ **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy).**

♪ **Light of the world.** Words and Music: Daniel Charles Damon, 2005.

**Light of the World, illumine our darkness;
Light of the world, illumine our path.**

Third Vigil: The unity of all peoples and all creation

Reading: Revelation 7:9-12 Common English Bible

⁹ After this I looked, and there was a great crowd that no one could number. They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice: “Victory belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

¹¹ All the angels stood in a circle around the throne, and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell facedown before the throne and worshipped God, ¹² saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and always. Amen.”

Response: ♪ *Glory and Gratitude and Praise*

Short silence: window with candles. (1 minute)

Intercessions

God of life, you have created every human being in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, expressions of faith, traditions and ethnicities. Grant us the courage always to stand against injustice and hatred based on race, class, gender, religion, and fear of those not like ourselves.

♪God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

♪God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, life and goods with all those in need.

♪God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new behaviours. May we learn to live in harmony as part of your creation.

♪God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

Action: Moving to the centre ... and out to the world
inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza

We are called to be ministers of God's healing and reconciling love. This work can only be fruitful when we abide in God, as branches of the true vine which is Jesus Christ. As we come closer to God we draw closer to one another.

Imagine a circle.

Imagine that this circle is the world.

Roll out ribbons to the center

The center represents God, and the paths to the center are different ways people live. People living in this world, desiring to draw closer to God, walk toward the center of the circle ...

Place a circle of friends in the center (or a spiral to join all the paths together)

... as they move closer to the center, to God,
they move closer to one another.

And the closer they come to one another ...

Light the candle in the center

... the closer they come to God.

Short Silence (approximately 1 minute)

The Lord's Prayer

With the words that Jesus taught us,
let us now pray together:

♫ **VU960...** Adapt. From a chant by R. Langdon.

**Our Father, who are in heaven,
hallow'ed be thy name.**

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And deliver us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

**For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Join me in these words recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community.

Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together.

When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression.

We say together:

Pray and work that God may reign.

Throughout your day

let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.

Maintain inner silence in all things

so as to dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes:

joy, simplicity, mercy.

♪ ***Light of the world.*** Words and Music: Daniel Charles Damon, 2005.

Light of the World, illumine our darkness;

Light of the world, illumine our path.

Reflection questions...

As we move from this time of prayer with

our Siblings in Christ,

Let us hold in our hearts

the questions of how we live in unity with God's word.

How do we meet God ourselves?

How do we meet God in other believers?

How do we meet God in

all those creatures around us that share God's earth?

How do we come together with all of God's people?

Blessing

Be one, so that the world may believe!
Abide in God's love,
go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

**May the God of hope fill us with
all joy and all peace in faith,
so that we may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

**♪MV#222 *May the Peace of God Be Your Peace*
May the peace of God be your peace.
May the love of God be the love you show.
May the joy of God be the joy you know,
and may the world that God would see be found in you.**

Acknowledgements

*Week of prayer for Christian Unity 2021. The Canadian
Council of Churches. <https://www.weekofprayer.ca>*

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