
Liturgical Day: Church Union Sunday

The United Church was inaugurated on June 10, 1925 in Toronto, Ontario, when the Methodist Church in Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada, and 70 per cent of the Presbyterian Church of Canada entered into a union. Also joining was the small General Council of Union Churches, centred largely in Western Canada. It was the first union of churches in the world to cross historical denominational lines and received international acclaim. Each of the founding churches had a long history in Canada prior to 1925.

The movement for church union began with the desire to coordinate ministry in the vast Canadian northwest and for collaboration in overseas missions.

Congregations in Indigenous communities from each of the original denominations were an important factor in the effort toward church union.

The United Church continues to be a "uniting" church, and has been enriched by several additional unions since 1925. In 1930, the Synod of The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda became part of The United Church of Canada's Maritime Conference. The Evangelical United Brethren Church became part of The United Church of Canada in 1968. In addition, various individual congregations from other Christian communions have become part of the United Church over the years.

On the Sunday closest to June 10, we celebrate Church Union Sunday.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection

You may remove your mask once seated and distanced in the sanctuary, but we respectfully ask that you put on your masks for the singing of hymns and when moving around the church building. Thank you.

Prelude

Call to Worship

Processional Hymn "The Church's One Foundation" *Voices United 331*

We rise in body or in spirit as one community as we begin our worship by praising God with song

Welcome

Opening Prayer:

The opening prayer captures the theme of the service or season of the church year. It summarizes the attributes of God as revealed in the scriptures we will read today.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray . . . *(based on the invocation from the founding service of the UCC)*

**O God, who gave the gift of the Holy Spirit
to an expectant and united church 98 years ago,
and brough into one-fold that day**

**Methodist, Congregationalist,
Presbyterian, and Union churches.**

**Having been fed at this table that unites us all,
grant us the hope of that same Pentecostal spirit
in all of our life and worship,**

that we might aspire to great things for you.

**Unite us in your love, so we might seek justice,
love mercy, and walk humbly with you for all of our days.**

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Theme Conversation

We invite the children, the young, and the young-at-heart in the congregation to come forward

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 12:1-9

Hollie Green

*The first reading is typically from the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures)
which Jesus knew and from which he often referred or quoted.*

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalms

Psalms 33

Voices United 760

*Next we proclaim one of the Psalms, the earliest hymns of the church, which the Jewish people,
Jesus, the disciples, and the early church used to give praise to God*

New Testament Reading

Romans 4:13-25

Hollie Green

*This reading, taken from the New Testament, is typically from a letter (epistle) to the early Church,
the Acts of the Apostles, or the Revelation to John.*

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn “Your Hand, O God, Has Guided” (vs. 1-4) *Voices United 274*

We rise in body or in spirit as one community as we sing together

The gradual hymn moves us toward the high-point of the Liturgy of the Word—the reading of the Gospel.

The word ‘Gospel’ means “good news”—specifically the “good news of Jesus.”

Gospel Reading

John 17:6-21

Gary Wells

This reading is taken from one of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), which depict the life, teachings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. We stand for the Gospel reading to show the particular importance placed on Jesus' words and actions

The Gospel of Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Gradual Hymn “Your Hand, O God, Has Guided” (vs. 5) *Voices United 274*

Hymn Sing

Response

The Creed

The word “creed” comes from the Latin “credo” for “I believe.”

In response to God's word, we stand and proclaim together the faith which we share

**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.**

Confession

We confessing the things for which we are sorry (sins)

**Loving God,
we come before you bringing the wrong we have done
things we have done knowingly,
things we have done in ignorance,
things we should have done, but did not.
We have kept these transgressions to ourselves.
In your mercy, pour out your forgiveness upon us,
so that we might experience the goodness of your grace. Amen.**

Forgiveness

We receive God's unconditional love and forgiveness

This is the Good News that Jesus Christ came to share:
Our God is a God of forgiveness.
Let us be assured that God does not hold our sin against us.
God is our rock and our salvation. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

Peace

*During this time of physical-distancing, we greet one another with signs of Christ's peace
from a distance with a wave, a smize (a smile with your eyes), or a kind word.*

May the Peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

Response

Offering

There are many ways that you can offer your financial gifts to Cowan Heights United Church. As you enter the sanctuary there is an offering plate where you may lay your offerings. You can also continue to drop off offerings in the secure mailbox outside the church, which is checked multiple times a day. Or you can donate via eTransfer, using the email address treasurer@cowanheightsunited.ca, or via Pre-Authorized Remittance. For more information, please see the announcements insert.

Presentation Hymn “In Christ There Is No East or West” *Voices United 606*

We rise in body or in spirit as one community as we sing together

During the presentation hymn, we gratefully offer back to God some of what God has given to us.

Prayer over the Gifts

*We pray God's blessings upon the gifts that we have offered,
this not only includes our financial offerings, but our gifts of time and talent*

**Holy God,
Accept the gifts we bring before you this day,
and bless the entire offering of The United Church of Canada.
Through these gifts, may we always be faithful to your call:
being bold and generous in showing gospel hope,**

**and by walking in the ways of peace, healing, and justice.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

We pray for ourselves and for the needs of the whole world. We pray for the Church Universal, for those who are in need or who suffer, for what is happening in the world, and the concerns of our own lives. We are reminded in prayer that we are part of God's world and we share in all its joys and sorrows

The Lord's Prayer:

We pray together the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Announcements

Hymn

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Voices United 288

We rise in body or in spirit as one community as we sing together

Blessing and Sending Forth

*We are sent forth into the world to begin anew our work in the world,
spreading God's unconditional love, grace, and welcome to everyone that we meet*

Choral Benediction "God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again"

The Choir

Postlude

All worship services at Cowan Heights United Church are Live Streamed via video for our online congregation. By participating in this service you acknowledge that you may be visible on live broadcast or archived video. If you are uncomfortable about the possibility of appearing on video, please speak to an usher who can seat you in an area not visible on camera. You may also speak to Rev. Oliver after the service if you have concerns.

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