

**June 28, 2026 – Order of Service**  
**Why Community is Important & Celebrating Canada Day**

**O Canada**

**Welcome**

**Lighting of the Christ Candle** Jesus came to share the good news of God. He came to share in our joy and sorrows so we may know God more fully. We light this candle for the good news in hearts, and the good news that wherever you go, God is with you.

**Scripture Reading**

*Acts 2:43-47, NIV*

Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**Call to Worship** *-based on Acts 2:43–47*

L: We are called to be the church.

**P: We come to learn from the lessons Jesus taught.**

L: Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.

**P: We come in amazement of the wondrous things God is doing in the world.**

L: All who believed were together and had all things in common.

**P: We come with our own unique stories and histories, drawn together in God's love.**

L: They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

**P: We come to learn ways we can care for God's people and creation.**

L: Day by day, as they spent much time together in the Temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

**P: We come to share in fellowship as God's people.**

L: And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**P: We come to worship God together in community.**

**Ministry of Music***He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*

**Gathering Prayer** God, you called us here to worship together in community. Each person here comes with their own unique gifts and experiences. Help us to learn from each other and to build a community based in your love and care for all our neighbours. Amen.

**Gathering Hymn** *Let Us Build a House*, MVU # 1

Let us build a house where love can  
dwell

and all can safely live,

A place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and  
visions,

rock of faith and vault of grace;

Here the love of Christ shall end  
divisions.

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where  
hands will reach

beyond the wood and stone.

To heal and strengthen, serve and  
teach,

and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger

Bear the image of God's face;

Let us bring an end to fear and  
danger:

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are  
named,

their songs and visions heard

and loved and treasured,  
taught and claimed.

As words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,

Prayers of faith and songs of grace;

Let this house proclaim from floor to  
rafter:

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
All are welcome in this place.

**Children's Ministry**

*The Good Samaritan teaches the importance of being a good neighbour to everyone. How can we be good neighbours? Brainstorm things that make being a good neighbour difficult and pray for help in being a good neighbour to everyone.*

**Children's Prayer** God, we gather today to learn more about the stories of Jesus. Help us learn how to care for all our neighbours and teach us to celebrate our differences, so we can all be together in community. Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer

*Children Leave for Sunday School*

## Prayer of Confession

L: God of all creation, we know that all people are made in your image, but at times we fail to recognize your presence in our neighbours.

**P: Forgive us for the times we have walked by someone because they seemed different. Help us to celebrate the wonderful diversity in your creation and draw us together in your love. Gracious God, hear our silent prayers, as we confess those things that separate us from you and from each other** Time for silent prayer

**Words of Assurance** Wherever we go in life we are surrounded by God's love and forgiveness inviting us into a community of care. Thanks be to God.

**Offering Prayer** Holy Creator, we offer these gifts to you. May they serve all your people and help us come together in a community of your love. Amen.

## Hymn *Deep in Our Hearts*, MVU # 154

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;	Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;	Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;	Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;	Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;	Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;	Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story, Telling Creation that we are one.	Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message, Justice and peace in harmony.	Deep in our hearts there is a common current, Flowing to freedom like a stream.	Deep in our hearts there is a common story, Telling Creation that we are one.

## Responsive Psalm

*Psalm 122*, VU # 845

L: I was glad when they said to me:

**P: Let us go to the house of God.**

L: And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem

**P: Jerusalem is built as a city bound firmly together.**

L: There, the tribes go up, the tribes of God, to give thanks to the name of God, as was decreed for Israel.

**P: There, the thrones of justice stand, the thrones of David's house.**

**With joy, we go to God's own house and enter with a song.**

L: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May those who love you prosper!

**P: May there be peace within your walls, prosperity within your palaces!**

L: For the sake of my kin and friends I say: Peace be with you!

**P: For the sake of the house of our God, I will seek your good. With joy, we go to God's own house and enter with a song.**

## Scripture Reading

*Acts 8:26–38, Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch -from The Message*

Later God's angel spoke to Philip: "At noon today I want you to walk over to that desolate road that goes from Jerusalem down to Gaza." He got up and went. He met an Ethiopian eunuch coming down the road. The eunuch had been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and was returning to Ethiopia, where he was minister in charge of all the finances of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was riding in a chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit told Philip, "Climb into the chariot." Running up alongside, Philip heard the eunuch reading Isaiah and asked, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

He answered, "How can I without some help?" and invited Philip into the chariot with him. The passage he was reading was this:

As a sheep led to slaughter, and quiet as a lamb being sheared, He was silent, saying nothing. He was mocked and put down, never got a fair trial. But who now can count his kin since he's been taken from the earth?

The eunuch said, "Tell me, who is the prophet talking about: himself or some other?" Philip grabbed his chance. Using this passage as his text, he preached Jesus to him.

As they continued down the road, they came to a stream of water. The eunuch said, "Here's water. Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the chariot to stop. They both went down to the water, and Philip baptized him on the spot. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of God suddenly took Philip off, and that was the last the eunuch saw of him. But he didn't mind. He had what he'd come for and went on down the road as happy as he could be.

**Hymn** *In Loving Partnership We Come*, VU # 603

In loving partnership we come, seeking, O God, your will to do. Our prayers and actions now receive; we freely offer them to you.	We are the hands and feet of Christ, serving by grace each other's need. We dare to risk and sacrifice with truthful word and faithful deed.	Loving community we seek; your hope and strength within us move. The poor and rich, the strong and weak are brought together in your love.	In loving partnership, O God, help us your future to proclaim. Justice and peace be our desire, we humbly pray in Jesus' name.
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**Reflection** *Together in Community*

Being drawn together in community is part of what it means to be "called to be the church."

Why is being a part of a community of faith so important? Couldn't we just read the Bible at home, on our own, and follow the examples found in the Bible, on our own? Why did the Ethiopian eunuch need Philip to explain what he was reading? Couldn't he just Google an answer to his questions?

Our faith is deepened through interactions with others. This can be seen clearly in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch. He was already reading the scroll of Isaiah, but it was not until he met Philip on the road that he learned that the passage was referring to Jesus. It was through his conversation with Philip that he learned all the amazing things Jesus had done, and it was through Philip that he began to know God and asked to be baptized.

Studying theology from books is a good place to start, but it is through our conversations we have with people that we are able to know God more fully. We are all made in God's image, but we are all made differently. It is through looking for God's Spirit in others that we are able to form a richer picture of God who is - Holy Mystery and Wholly Love.

But learning in community isn't always easy. Holding all things in common, doesn't mean the Early Church agreed about everything. When it comes to matters of faith, people don't always agree. And those disagreements can have a huge impact on our life together as the church.

Some of the students from the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University of Guelph had been meeting for lunch once a week. One student posed the question "Why are there so many different denominations?" The short answer given was that when disagreements about theology or expressions of faith occurred, and they couldn't be resolved peacefully, it often resulted in a new branch of the church being formed.

The next question naturally was "So what does the United Church believe?"

That is not always an easy question to answer. It is not easy to define our belief as a denomination. The response shared was that the United Church believes there is space for people of different understandings about Christian faith, and it is through our differences that we challenge each other to learn and grow deeper in our faith.

The students then sparked a lively discussion about how we can co-exist with people whose doctrines are so different that they can be hurtful and cause harm. Some doctrines and interpretations of faith seem to preach segregation and hate, instead of the love and inclusion we see reflected in Jesus. How can we care for neighbours who don't seem to care for us?

The call is simple, even if it may not be easy. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength..." "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:30, 31).

We are called to love our neighbours in spite of the challenges we may face. Loving your neighbour doesn't always mean that you will agree with your neighbour, but it does mean that when you disagree—because at some point you probably will disagree - you will approach the disagreement respectfully. Take the time to consider and understand, in the best way that you can, where the other person is coming from, and then be patient as you respectfully share your point of view. It won't happen instantly, but if you can open a channel of dialogue, you can create positive and lasting changes in a person's worldview. You might even learn something yourself.

As you attempt to form that dialogue, it is important to remember that being "called to be the church" means we are called to love our neighbour as ourselves. That means that you have to love yourself too! If you find yourself in a disagreement where you begin to feel unsafe, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, it is okay to walk away. Try giving the conversation to God in prayer. Then either try to engage your neighbour again another day or be at peace enough to leave the conversation for someone else to engage. Knowing proper boundaries is part of what it means to be "called to be the church" as well.

It is through our interactions with one another - talking about what we believe, sharing a meal together, contributing to causes we care about, even across our differences - that we begin to build communities of care. And it is through our communities and networks of care that God's kingdom is revealed and made known to us in very real

ways - a loving, if sometimes messy, kingdom where we are all drawn together in community and all are "called to be the church" together. Amen

**Hymn** *Walk with Me*, VU # 649

Refrain	When Moses heard	Now Peter was a	Young Mary	And when you share
Walk with me, I will	the call of God he	most unlikely man, to	Magdalene was sure	your faith with me and
walk with you	said, "Lord, don't send	lead the flock; but	her life could be much	work for life made
and build the land that	me." But God told	Jesus knew his	more, and by her faith	new, the witness of
God has planned	Moses, "You're the	holiness and he	she dared to let God	your faithfulness alls
where love shines	one to set my people	became the Rock.	's love unlock the	me to walk with you.
through.	free."	Refrain	door.	Refrain
	Refrain		Refrain	

**Prayers of the People** God, we praise you for all the wonderful things in our lives: for good friends and good health, for good food and clean water, for safe places to live and to work, for the beauty of your creation that inspires artists to create beautiful and thought-provoking works, for all the gifts you have given us that make the world a wonderful, joyous, engaging place to live.

But God, amidst the joy in life there are still places of sorrow. We pray for those suffering from mental or physical illnesses. May they know your healing. And we pray for their caregivers. May they feel supported by your presence.

We pray today for your earth. May we find new sustainable ways to care for the earth and all creation. We pray for people impacted by natural and man-made disasters. May they know your comfort.

We pray for those suffering from political violence and unrest. May they know your peace.

God, we pray for your people wherever they are gathered. Help us to learn from each other so we may come to know you more deeply and be guided by your love. Amen.

**Parting Hymn** *May the God of Hope Go with Us*, VU # 424

May the God of healing  
free the earth from fear,  
freeing us for peace,  
both treasured and pursued.  
May the God of love keep  
our commitment clear  
to a world restored,  
to human life renewed.

Praying, let us work for peace,  
Singing, share our joy with all,  
working for a world that's new,  
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

**Sending Out and Blessing** As you go out into the world, may you be guided by God's loving Spirit to build a community of care wherever you go. Be blessed by the Spirit of God to be God's church in this time and space. Amen.

**Choral Amen**

**Extinguish of the Christ Candle**