



Call to Purpose: A message from the church to the church

What purpose lies at the heart of The United Church of Canada in the beginning of its third generation? Spirit has moved in our time, and with a new restlessness we have heard a call to step forward. We have been together in deep conversations, surprised and gratified at the depth of connections. We have recommitted ourselves to seek right relationships and to withstand that which denies life. Our discernment has persuaded us that as followers of Jesus and in the movement of the Spirit, we must attend to these things:

We long for a deeper relationship with God.

We remember that we are created in love, by God, for God. We are called to devote time and energy listening for God's voice, reflecting on our life in Christ. We want to learn and lean in to spiritual practices of discernment, silence, and theological reflection.

We long for deeper connections with one another.

We remember that we encounter Christ in each other. Listening deeply, we are in search of genuine conversations and understanding—within the church and with international, ecumenical, and interfaith partners. In our conversations and decision making we will be mindful of our commitment to interculturalism. We want to honour children and youth as a vital part of the church's present, as well as the promise of the future. All these connections strengthen us to live in our faith and to work for justice and peace as the Body of Christ.

We acknowledge the brokenness, pain, and fear we carry.

There is pain in our congregations and communities. There is pain in our wounded relationships with all those who have been marginalized and isolated, in our past and present. We recognize in our lives the pain and the power of what is not of God, and we want to claim the courage to resist its domination. We are sustained with awareness of the healing presence of God in Christ.

We believe that our spirituality and our prophetic voice spring from one source and are lived in one Body.

We are restless with a renewed call. We are seeking to live faithfully as a united people in a divided world. We seek to be authentic. We seek relationships that are truthful and just. We long to embody what we say we believe, to be The United Church of Canada, for our communities, for the world, and for Creation.

In this spirit we pray:

God of all creation,
we offer you our thanksgiving for a time rich with connections,
among each other and with you.
We thank you for moments when we have experienced what it is to be united
even in our differences.
Help us to grow as a listening, discerning, learning people.
Help us to give up patterns and structures that enslave us and others.
Help us to acknowledge our fear
and lean into your hope and your courage.
Help us to grow in our trust in each other and in your Spirit.
Fill us with your grace and with your wisdom,
with your patience and with your love.
Propel us into your future,
rooted in the richness of our past.
In Christ we pray.
Amen.

"Call to Purpose: A message from the church to the church" was affirmed by the United Church's 39th General Council meeting in Thunder Bay August 13–19, 2006. The Council directed it to the Executive of the General Council to inform the Executive as it gives leadership to the church in its expression of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

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