

Sunday 1 Worship: Living Thankfully Day by Day

Sunday 1 begins our giving program with the theme of considering our own call to the life of faith and generosity. It is the time to fully launch the program in announcements and in the bulletin. The service also includes a commissioning of the Giving Team.

Prelude

Welcome

Share a celebratory greeting at this time, such as “A warm welcome to each and every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ!”

Acknowledging the Traditional Territory

Long before those of us who are settlers, and those of us who are descendants of settlers, came to this land, there were people here. Many nations of people lived—and live—on the land we call Canada, given responsibility by the Creator to be stewards of this land and all that lives on it. We know these people as the First Nations. **Today, as we remember what it means to live thankfully,** let us give thanks for the First Nations of this land—and let us remember that we worship God on the historic (*and unceded*) territory of the (*name of the First Nations whose territory you are in*). As Christ’s people, let us be people of Love, of Truth, and of Reconciliation.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

A keeper of the Law walked up to Jesus and asked him,

“Teacher, what is the greatest commandment?”

Jesus replied,

“Love God with all that you are.”

As the man turned away to think about what he had heard, Jesus said,

“Wait! There is a second one

just like the first:

Love your neighbour

in the same way

you are to love yourself.”

(Lighting the candle)

This Great Commandment shines on,

and shines through,

all things:

the writings of the Law,

the words of the prophets,

every moment of our lives!

In every moment, Christ’s light shines! Alleluia!

StewardshipToolkit.ca

- PDF of this program guide to copy and paste
- Video: Sunday 1 Worship Message with Rob Fennell
- Sermon: Sunday 1—Let Thanksgiving Flow

Call to Worship

Each day is a mystery.
None of us knows exactly what is going to happen,
exactly whom we're going to meet,
or exactly what we will be called upon to do.

**Each day is a mystery.
Even the days that are filled with routine
have moments filled with “aha!”
if we open ourselves to them.**

Each day is a mystery.
How will we live?
How will we love?
Whom will we meet?

**Each day is a mystery.
But there are some things we know.
No matter what happens,
no matter which neighbours we meet,
no matter what we are called to do—**

God's love goes with us.
God's love is within us.
God's love lives between us.

Thanks be to God!

Opening Prayer

Before we enter into a moment of prayer, take a look around.
Take a look at the people sitting beside you and around you.
You may know them very well.
You may know them just a bit.
You may not know them at all!
Take a moment to smile at them!
Take a moment, for each one, to be thankful that this neighbour
is in your life today.

Now, take a moment to reflect.
Think about the people you've been in contact with this week.
The ones you've said hello to.
The ones you've noticed, even if they haven't noticed you.
The ones you've not met but who are on television, or on the screen, or in a paper.
Take a moment, and for each one, be thankful that those neighbours
have touched your life.

Let's pray.

Thank you, God-of-All!
 Thank you for the people who are in my life,
 young and old, big and small,
 happy and sad,
 here, and there, and all around your world.
 Thank you for their wisdom;
 thank you for their joy;
 thank you for their questions;
 thank you for the life they share.

Thank you, God-of-All,
 for the love that is in their lives,
 and for the love that is in me:
 a love filled with hope and possibility,
 a love ready to heal, to share, to transform,
 and to make new.

Thank you, God-of-All.
 Now. Always. Forever!
 In Christ's name we pray.

Amen!

Hymn/Song of Praise

“And on This Path” (*More Voices* 8)
 “Ev’ry Day Is a Day of Thanksgiving” (MV 185)
 “Joyful, Joyful We Adore You” (*Voices United* 232)

Learning Together or Children’s Time

I’ve been wondering something that perhaps you could help me with. When I was a kid, I was taught that it was polite to say, “Thank you” to people. Were you taught that, too?

(Hopefully, one or two people will say yes!)

I wonder—why do you think we were taught that saying thank you is important?

(Again, hopefully, you’ll get responses from folks. Don’t forget to check in with the adults, too!)

Sometimes I think that saying thank you is part of the way we say to people, “I see you. I recognize that you have done something caring. You are important.” But if we mean that, then we need to make sure our thank yous are real—right from the bottom of our hearts! We need to look at people, smile, and be really clear that we mean it!

But, you know what? Saying thank you and being thankful doesn’t just let other people know those things. Every time we say thank you (and mean it!)—every time we take a moment for gratitude—we remind ourselves how important others are in our lives.

Being thankful—or full of thanks—every moment, is a kind of prayer. It’s a celebration of the goodness of God that is in our lives!

Let’s take a moment and practise being full of thanks. I invite you to go to one or two other people in the congregation, look them in the eye, and say, “Thank you. I am glad that you’re here.”

Invitation to an Offering of Gifts

(In many congregations, the offering comes much later in the service. We’re inviting you to move it here, into the “invitation” section of the service, so the children can participate. Consider saying to the congregation that we realize not everyone places a physical financial offering on the plate each week because we’ve got other ways to do that—but that you’d like to ask everyone to take a moment to imagine placing something they are thankful for into their hands, and then placing that on the plate as it goes by. In this way, everyone has the chance to offer something to God’s ministry.)

Video Message: Living Thankfully with Rob Fennell (1:43 min.)

In his message, the Rev. Rob Fennell—United Church minister, theologian, and teacher at Atlantic School of Theology—will get our *Called to Be the Church* giving program started. Over the coming weeks we will explore our own faith journey to follow Jesus into a life of giving, generosity, and gratitude.

In just a moment, we’re going to gather up what we have to share for the work of God’s church, here in *(name of community)*, through *(name of congregation)*. Through the Mission & Service of The United Church of Canada, we are able to stretch our arms out, to help our neighbours in communities across Canada and right



Rob Fennell in the Sunday I Worship video.

around the world. It's amazing to think that what we do now—through PAR or with what we put on the plate—we can make a difference in so many different ways.

Whatever we are able to share—our time, our abilities, or the symbols of our work that we call “dollars and cents”—let us share it with hearts filled with joy and thanksgiving. Let's let these things be tokens to represent our every-day thankfulness for the gifts God has shared in our lives!

Gathering What Is Offered to God

“Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven” (VU 240)

“Take, O Take Me as I Am” (MV 85)

Prayer of Thanksgiving, Celebration, and Dedication

**God, who gives to life its goodness,
 God, creator of all joy,
 we return to you the goodness you have given us,
 the work of our hands,
 the love of our hearts.
 Help us to use all of these gifts,
 wherever they are needed,
 to bring hope and healing,
 possibility and love,
 to our neighbours near and far.
 As Jesus' people, we ask it—amen!**

Preparing to Listen for God's Word

“God of the Bible,” verse 1 (MV 28)

“God Who Gives to Life Its Goodness,” verse 1 (VU 260)

Scripture

Luke 10:25–37

Reflection/Sermon

Found online: Sunday 1—Let Thanksgiving Flow.

Time for Silence

Hymn

“Love Is the Touch” (MV 89)

“Teach Me, God, to Wonder” (VU 299)

Commissioning and Prayers of the People

This is a call and response prayer. When you hear the words “and so we pray, day by day,” I ask you to respond by saying, “with love and with thanksgiving!” Let’s pray.

God is with you!

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts!

We offer our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to God, our God.

It is right to give God thanks, and praise!

We do give you thanks, God.

For the wonders of your creation—
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
for our cousins who walk on two legs and more,
for the things that creep on the ground,
or squiggle under it.

Thank you for the blessings of life abundant,
and for that which gives all things life—

the warmth of the sun,
the breath of the air,
the quench of the water,
the nourishment of the earth.

Thank you for all life, everywhere—
and so we pray, day by day—

with love and with thanksgiving.

We do give you thanks, God.

For the neighbours that are in our lives—
the ones we understand,
and the ones who make us scratch our heads;
the ones who challenge us,
and the ones who comfort us when we are afraid.
Thank you for the blessing of each and every one.

We pray for all those who are in need,
in whatever way—body, mind, or spirit.

We remember, especially... (*add your own prayers*).

We know that your love is with them.

We ask that you help us to embody that love,
to be where you need us to be,
living the love of neighbour, wherever we go—
and so we pray, day by day—

with love and with thanksgiving.

We pray for the moments where we fall down.

The moments where our fear,

or our desire to follow the letter of the law,
 or our worry that we just don't have time—
 gets in the way of being the neighbour you call us to be.
 We are blessed by the knowledge that,
 even when we make mistakes,
 your love calls us back, again and again.
 You never let us go—
 and so we pray, day by day—

with love and with thanksgiving.

In the quiet of this place,
 hear the words of our hearts, loving God!
(a time for silent prayer)
 And so we pray, day by day—

with love and with thanksgiving!

In the words that Jesus gave to all of his disciples,
 we celebrate that you are Our Mother, and you are...

Our Father, who art in heaven...

(Use the version of the Lord's Prayer that your congregation is most comfortable with.)

Amen!

Hymn

"Your Love Is Amazing (Hallelujah)" (MV 26)
 "My Love Colours Outside the Lines" (MV 138)
 "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me" (VU 575)

Blessing and Sending Out

Let us go into God's world

to be the neighbours God calls us to be.

Let us go into God's world

loving God,

loving our neighbours,

loving ourselves.

In word and in action.

And in that love,

let us be filled with thanks-giving.

For God goes with us!

We are never, ever alone!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude