

# LIVING RADICAL WELCOME

Camping Sunday Service ~ April 28, 2013

*Written and imagined by Megan Graham*

## GATHERING

**Hymn:** Let Us Build a House (All Are Welcome), *More Voices* 1

### Call to Worship

East section: We greet the sunrise

West section: We greet the day

**All: We greet each other**

Leader: The very same way

East: With grace

West: Appreciation

**All: Respect**

Leader: And welcome.

Does the Earth care of our creed? Do the trees withhold shade based on our gender?

Does the sun refuse to shine for those who are gay? No.

**All: Nature has no eyes for our differences, and nor does God. We too, will learn to welcome all – no matter what our difference.**

### Opening Prayer

**All: Your love, God, is to be shared with all of your people.**

**Our challenge today and forward, is to find ways to Live Radical Welcome.**

**You see no difference if we are straight or gay, White or Black, male or female, young or old.**

**Why must we? Teach us, Living Spirit, to welcome strangers and others different from ourselves as easily as you have taught us to laugh and cry.**

**We crave your peace and seek belonging.**

**In your name we pray for forgiveness,**

**healing and a radical path towards change.**

**Amen**

*Invite those interested in Theme Conversation (Children's Time) forward to experience (or assist in) the lighting of the candle up close; they can stay for the conversation following.*

**Lighting the Christ Candle:** As we light this candle we are reminded of the flame in each of us; a fire of passion to be shared with the world. Through Christ, the physical reminder of God on Earth, we feel the power and love inside ourselves. With this invitation we are welcome; safe and ready to shine.

**Camp song:** Fire's Burning (optional)

## WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

### THEME CONVERSATION (CHILDREN'S TIME): 2 OPTIONS

#### Option 1: Darkness and Light

*Show many pieces of paper—all different colours. Discuss the beauty of many different colours. What if everything was the same shade of blue? What would we lose?*

Colour brings clarity and differentiation – it shows us the difference between the green grass, the purple flowers, and blue sky.

Colours represent God's presence and Christ's light of life.

When light waves are split, they become *many* different colours. As God's light shines in this world, it is transformed into many beautiful differences. We are each a spectacular reflection of God's light. Without the diversity and welcome of all our differences, the rainbow is incomplete.

*Explore the colours we are able to see. Discuss rainbows and the colours that come from it. If you have access to a crystal or prism; use a flashlight to create a rainbow. If you are unable to create a rainbow, explain why rainbows appear in the sky after rain and sometimes on the lawn when using a sprinkler. You can also use coloured markers to create a rainbow on paper.*

*For instructions on how to create a rainbow and information on how they are formed, see <http://opticalillusion.wordpress.com/2008/07/21/how-to-make-a-rainbow-at-home>, or <http://explorable.com/making-a-rainbow-experiment.html>.*

See how the light transforms into many different, distinct colours? How beautiful and mystical is a rainbow! It is a unique representation of colour. What would the world be like without colours of the rainbow? No blues, greens, or reds?

Imagine each person here as a different colour of the rainbow. How would our world change without all these differences, all these different people? What if there were no women? No babies? No grandparents? What if there were no differences in hair colour, eye colour, or skin colour? No differences in size or ability? No difference in how we love and live? What would the world be like if we were all the same?

Instead, we are all special; all different colours and part of a much bigger rainbow. Without each of us and our differences, we would not be able to come together to create a rainbow and show the pureness of God's love. God loves each of us equally. We must embrace our differences, celebrate each other, and learn to welcome everyone.

**Option 2: Puzzler**

Each one of us makes up an important part of the world. We are pieces in a puzzle, and each piece is needed in order to see the whole picture! If we welcome everyone like a piece of the bigger puzzle – welcoming them with joy and appreciation – we will be sharing the love God has for us all, and we can then see the picture the puzzle pieces make together.

*Bring a small puzzle. Before worship starts, hand out a few key puzzle pieces to various congregation members (people of different ages, ethnicities, abilities, etc.). These folks will be called to participate partway through the conversation.*

*Begin by giving each child a piece or two of the puzzle and invite the children to start putting the puzzle together. Eventually, they will notice that there are a few pieces missing. Ask some questions. Has everyone added their piece of the puzzle? Have we completed the puzzle? Why is it important to finish the puzzle? What is missing? Why do we need the missing pieces? What about the folks out there? (point to the congregation)*

*Invite the congregation members who have the missing pieces to come forward. Welcome them graciously as they approach and ask them to stay to help complete the puzzle.*

Show everyone the completed puzzle. It turns out that we needed many people to help put the whole picture together! Not only did we each bring a piece of the puzzle, but we each bring differences like age, colour, and ability, to make a very special church!

What would our world look like if we kept people who were different separate from one another? Would the puzzle be complete? Would we be able to see the big picture that God wants to show us?

Each person in our lives is important and we need to learn how to welcome and love everyone. If we don't learn how to do that, we will never see the entire picture God has created for us in our lives. When we welcome others with love and respect, we become more whole.

**Hymn:** It Only Takes a Spark, *Voices United* 289

**Camp Reflections:** *Show a video from YouTube (see list of possibilities with links, in “Ideas for Camping Sunday” at the end of this document) – or, show your own camp video or PowerPoint.*

**Scriptures:** Luke 10:25–37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan)  
1 Corinthians 12:12–31 (Unity and Diversity in the Body)

**Read “Old Turtle and the Broken Truth” by Douglas Wood**

[www.goldrootherbs.com/2010/11/14/old-turtle-and-the-broken-truth-by-douglas-wood](http://www.goldrootherbs.com/2010/11/14/old-turtle-and-the-broken-truth-by-douglas-wood) (scroll down to find story) *Feel free to shorten or summarize...the essence of these scriptures is to remind us that although we are different, each of us is equally deserving of love and respect – just as God would give it. You may also prefer to read a different story book. I recommend this one because it is a great story to reinforce the idea of equity among all people.*

*End with Prayer:* With your help, O God, allow us the courage to Live in Radical Welcome to all.

**Hymn:** Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary, *More Voices* 18

**MESSAGE: LIVING \*RADICAL\* WELCOME**

*Instead of listening to another sermon or presentation on how camp and other outdoor experiences change lives; create a time and space for the congregation to engage in, share, and discover stories for themselves.*

Camp is about many things. Camp is a place where individuals experience a new world with new perspectives – away from electronics, fast food, gadgets, prejudice, and various societal expectations. Camp is a place where silence finds new expression in rocks, birds, wind, water, and spirit. Camp is for both reflection and exploration, new discoveries and ancient artifacts.

While campers and staff enjoy their summers' wide range of activities and personal experiences, the strongest element at camp is truly community. Sharing thoughts, feelings, adventures, and more with new friends and mentors, and eventually mom or dad, is what turns simple experiences into lifelong memories and lessons.

Today we are going to build our own community by exploring three key words with our neighbours. I encourage you to converse with someone you don't know or talk to very often.

- **1. Living**      *Change – Growth – Existence – Thrive – Alive*  
Share a story of your past when you were truly living.
- **2. Radical**    *New – Creative – Difficult – Amazing – Different – Extreme – Fundamental*  
Share a part of your present life that is radical and stands out from the everyday blur.
- **3. Welcome**   *Inviting – Comfort – Belonging – Friendly – Joining – Acceptance*  
Share your vision of a future where all are welcomed equally and with love. How is it different from today and what can we do to make it reality?

*Give the congregation as much time as you would normally take for a sermon. I recommend at least 5 minutes per word. Once people get comfortable talking, it is hard to bring them back. Remind them there is time after service to continue the sharing conversations, and they are more than welcome to do so!*

What a wonderful opportunity to share and grow as a community. As we cut short our conversations, keep the stories and memories in your heart and continue to share after the service. Camping and community bring out the best in people, if we can allow new possibilities and adventurous hearts.

## WE RESPOND IN JOY AND FAITH

**Hymn:** *Leader's choice! favourite camp song, hymn, choir showcase, etc.*

**Offering:** What do you have to give?

- Many United Church Camps rely on donations to keep the doors open. Consider sending this Sunday's offering (or a portion of it) to support a local United Church Camp. You could also set aside the offering as a campership for children who could not otherwise afford to attend camp.
- Although money is always welcome, many times we overlook the importance and necessity of presence. Do you have time? Talent? Tools? All you need to do is offer and ask "what can I do?" There will surely be a grateful answer.

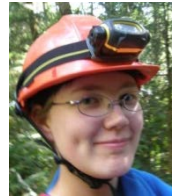
**Offertory Music:** What Can I Do? *More Voices* 191

**Prayers of the People** *ending with A New Creed.*

**Closing Hymn:** Draw the Circle Wide, *More Voices* 145  
(*feel free to end holding hands in a large circle*)

**Benediction:** As we go out this day, may God teach us to be welcoming in radical ways, reminding us of the joys of community at camp, towering trees, lapping lakeshores, and Spirit in silence. May we learn to live our lives to new extremes, experiencing growth and understanding, and above all, loving and welcoming everyone as our neighbour – Living Radical Welcome. Amen!

*Megan Graham has called the United Church home for over 25 years. She fell into camping as an adult in 2007 and was instantly hooked. She has helped campers and staff grow in faith at Surprise Lake Camp in Alberta as well as George Pringle Memorial Camp in B.C. Megan is a strong advocate for United Church camps; most notably for their freedom of expression and spiritual approach to the natural world. See you all at Connections 2013 for more community and world wonders!*



## IDEAS FOR CAMPING SUNDAY

If weather allows it, I strongly encourage your congregation, to experience fully the wonder of God's Earth—worship outside! Under a tent, deep in the woods, on the front lawn, in front of a wood-burning campfire, wherever you are called. Do not be afraid, for you are not alone.

Camping Sunday is a time for the whole congregation to join hands with camp staff and volunteers, and campers, to strengthen their vital partnership in God's mission. It is a time to promote involvement in, and support and improvement of, present camp programs and facilities and to recruit campers and leaders for the summer. Camping Sunday is also a time to plant some seeds about congregational use of camp facilities for special events – retreat, workshops, picnics, etc.

### YOUTUBE CAMPING VIDEOS:

- *Camping Counts* (2012): <http://youtu.be/TuuqW-14J2I>
- *We Are Camp* (2010): <http://youtu.be/IPXFnlW6gNs>
- *United Church Camps* (2008): <http://youtu.be/ik3avjREm6g>

*There are other YouTube videos from individual camps, but the above provide a national focus.*

### INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT UNITED CHURCH CAMPING:

- United Church Camping is the largest denominationally based camping ministry in Canada, with over 60 camps! Some of our camps are over 100 years young!
- Over 4,000 people volunteer as staff (over half of them under the age of 18). Over 2,000 serve as paid staff (over half under 18).
- Over 6,000 people work at our camps each year. This does not include the 100s of volunteers who repair/build facilities, take part in spring clean-ups, organize/attend fundraising events, and more!
- Each summer between 20,000 and 24,000 campers attend a United Church camp.
- According to the 2009 "I Am Camp" postcard campaign, the number one reason that campers come back to a camp again and again is friendship. "Memories and friends that last a lifetime!"

### ACTIVITIES:

- Recruit former/current camp staff, board members, campers (senior) to assist with Camping Sunday.
- Present the Camping Sunday Service at your local congregations. Be sure to call your local church first and volunteer to do the service for them on the last Sunday of April.
  - Ask church to make an announcement for two or three weekends before Camping Sunday, encouraging folks to "dress down" – or invite former campers to wear their camp T-shirts.
  - Introduce and teach camp songs and/or camp traditions to the congregation.
  - Interview former or current campers during the service.
- Help decorate your local churches with outdoor materials for Camping Sunday. If weather permits, meet outside for the whole service.
- Host a potluck or luncheon in cooperation with your local congregations.
- Host a Mug-up after church with s'mores, etc.
- Ask your local camp if they have a sponsorship program for children who want to go to camp but cannot afford it. Offer to contribute to it!
- Contact your local camp and offer to sponsor a youth leader for a day at camp. The funds you contribute will be used to pay the youth leader's salary.
- Buy a copy of the *We Are Camp* kit and share it with others!  
[www.ucrdstore.ca/we-are-camp-camping-awareness-kit.html](http://www.ucrdstore.ca/we-are-camp-camping-awareness-kit.html)
- Ask your local church if you can post the *We Are Camp* posters in the church, and place brochures on a table: [www.ucrdstore.ca](http://www.ucrdstore.ca)

# CONNECTIONS 2013



The United Church of Canada's National Camping Conference

## Living Radical Welcome!



Thursday, September 26–Sunday, September 29, 2013  
Camp Pringle, Vancouver Island, British Columbia



**Keynote Speaker**  
Rodger Nishioka



**Sunday Worship**  
The Right Rev. Gary Paterson



### Worship and Music

Jeff Poynter • Curt Allison • Eric Hamlyn

### Workshop Leadership

Chloe Wyman • Emily Clark • Megumi Matsuo Saunders • Yoko Kihara • Janet Ross • Alcris Limongi • Gordon Lambie •  
Doug Nutting • Kerri Mesner • Anna White • Betsy Exley • Robin McGauley • Tressa Brotsky • Doris Kizinna • Alex McGilvery  
• Cheryl Curtis • Susan Graham Walker • Nancy Walker • Bev Oag • Jeff Willis • Jane Harding

#### More info and online registration:

[www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/events/connections-2013](http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/events/connections-2013)

#### Registration

Early Bird: \$325 per person (ends July 15, 2013)  
Regular: \$375 per person  
Deadline: September 9, 2013