# Who Are We? Worship Resources to Celebrate Canadian Multiculturalism Day

In 2002, then-Governor General Adrienne Clarkson proclaimed June 27 each year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day to celebrate the contributions that Canadians of all cultural backgrounds have made to Canadian society. These worship suggestions could be used on the Sunday closest to June 27—Multiculturalism Sunday—or at another time.

*To prepare:*

* learn the Indigenous name of the land your church is on
* review the suggestions for Children’s Time below and plan resources as needed

## Welcome or Call to Worship

Who are we in Canada?

We are First Peoples who have walked these lands for thousands of years; Inuit, Mohawk, Cree, Haida, Mi’kmaq, and over 600 more peoples. We are French, Black, British, and Chinese peoples who have been here for a few hundred years. We are multitudes from all corners of God’s world: Pakistan, Korea, Ghana, Chile, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*your location*).

Where are we in Canada?

We are in the streets, in our neighbourhoods, in workplaces, schools, and community centres, and in temples, mosques and churches together. We are here, at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*your church’s name*) together. We are here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(*the Indigenous name of the land you are on*).

Why have we gathered here?

We are here to celebrate and give thanks for our cultural differences.   
We are here to praise God for the gifts of intercultural relationship and the desire to live joyfully and equitably with one another.  
We are here to worship.

Thanks be to God.

## Opening Hymn Suggestions

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing (VU 326)

The Church’s One Foundation (VU 331)

Come In, Come In and Sit Down (VU 395)

Come All You People (MV 2)

## Opening Prayer

God, Creator of variety and difference,   
Creator of hearts, minds, and bodies,   
you have called us into relationship with each other   
so we can know you more fully.

Help us see you in our neighbours,   
in those who are familiar   
and in those who are not yet familiar.

Creator of wholeness,   
help us learn to do more than celebrate difference.   
Help us be transformed by the gifts of diversity   
to become the blessed community.

Amen.

## Children’s Time

Recommended reading: *Sandwich Swap* by Queen Rania of Jordan and Kelly DiPucchio (Hyperion, 2010). The book is based on Queen Rania’s experiences as a child, and is available through United Church Resource Distribution. Animated English version on YouTube: http://youtu.be/MvEr6FsVoBI. Animated Arabic version on YouTube: http://youtu.be/2JL6QSWgg8Y.

Lily and Salma discover difference in each other, which leads to an awareness of the value of diversity. This new awareness sparks a desire to share the vast diverseness of the world with others and to try new things and ideas.

### Suggested Children’s Hymns

Let Us Build a House (MV 1)

The Church Is Wherever God’s People (VU 579)

The Servant Song (VU 595)

Let There Be Light (VU 679)

## Suggested Scripture

### Hebrew Scripture

1 Kings 19:1–4, (5–7), 8–15*a*: Elijah meets God at Horeb

Isaiah 65:1–9: The righteousness of God

### Responsive Psalm

Psalm 22, part two (VU 745)

Psalm 42–43 (VU 768)

### Epistle

Galatians 3:23–29: The purpose of the law

### Gospel

Luke 8:26–39: Jesus heals the Gerasene

## Sermon Starters

The United Church of Canada has committed itself to becoming an intercultural church. The United Church intentionally chose “intercultural” instead of “multicultural” to describe our vision of beloved community. Multiculturalism can be a simple celebration of food, fun, and festivals of different cultures while being relatively unchanged. Interculturalism, however, is a deep commitment to dialogue and shifting power among and between cultural groups, interactions, engagement, and transformation of all God’s peoples. On Multiculturalism Sunday, and throughout the year, we can remember our commitment to becoming an intercultural church community with God’s grace.

How do our expectations limit our ability for relationship with others and with God? What can we do to expand our vision and our hearts? How can we learn to put aside our assumptions and bring to life intercultural relationships? How can we challenge norms of behaviour and become co-creators of the beloved community?

**1 Kings 19:1–4, (5–7), 8–15*a*:** When we think we are alone, where is God? We can experience God in ways we do not expect. How do we create time and space to experience God in the silence?

**Isaiah 65:1–9:** How do our actions, rituals, and practices keep others away? Whose name do we not call? Whom do we now need to seek?

**Psalm 22:19–28:** Help comes; there is rescue from danger. The poor eat and are satisfied. All remember how to live in community with one another.

**Psalm 42 and 43:** How do we long for the presence of God? Where do we find the “living God,” the “face of God”? How do we recognize the face of God in those around us? How do intercultural relationships deepen our engagements with one another and with God? What do we do in times of conflict?

**Galatians 3:23–29:** We are all heirs of the promise, without hierarchy. Intercultural justice changes the systems of power.

**Luke 8:26–39:** Why do we fear transformation and healing? How can we return home witnessing to the transformation we have experienced?

### Suggested Hymns after the Sermon

We Meet You, O Christ (VU 183)

Bring Many Names (VU 268)

In Christ There Is No East or West (VU 606)

Now There Is No Male or Female (VU 627)

O God of Every Nation (VU 677)

Let There Be Light (VU 679)

There Is Room for All (MV 62)

My Love Colours Outside the Lines (MV 138)

Deep in Our Hearts (MV 154)

## Pastoral Prayers

## Litany of Thanksgiving

One: We are grateful for uniqueness.

**All: Help us to suspend judgment when things are not the same.**

One: We are grateful for individuality.

**All: Help us to engage change with grace.**

One: We are grateful for relationship.

**All: Help us learn to let go and learn to embrace.**

One: We are grateful for community.

**All: Help us learn from one another and create new ways of being together.**

## Suggested Closing Hymns

O God of Every Nation (VU 677)

O for a World (VU 697)

I see a New Heaven (VU 713)

## Commissioning

One: We are different parts of God’s beautiful, diverse creation.

**All: May we come to know God more deeply through God’s beautiful, diverse creation in our daily lives.**

One:Beloved, realize who we are called to be.

**All: We are called by God to live in peace, love and with full participation in community together.**

One: We are commissioned to live in community with one another.