

Building Our House

A Mission and Service Worship Outline

Use this outline any time during the year.

GATHERING WITH GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

One person is not enough.
 Together we are powerful.
 The world's problems are many and great.
 Together we can change the world.
 So many people in our land are in need!
 Together we can help them!
 So come let us worship in God,
 and grow with God's loving strength.

OPENING PRAYER (in unison)

Loving and Holy One,
 we gather with you as individuals,
 each of us with unique gifts and abilities.
 By your grace, we are one people.
 Through your grace, we can do great things.
 Help us to worship you now
 So that we might bring hope to all the world. Amen.

LISTENING FOR GOD

FAMILY TIME

The following is a skit for four voices. It begins with Voice One holding a hammer and nails, poised to begin hammering a nail into an imaginary wall.

Voice One: This looks like a lovely place to build my house. I have a pile of wood over here, nails there, and my trusty hammer. It's a good thing too, because I am the best person around with a hammer and nails. I can build this house myself. *(Begins to move the hammer back to make a first swing.)*

Voice Two: *(interrupting before the first nail is hit)* Whoa! Whoa! What are you doing?

Voice One: I am building my house right here.

Voice Two: Well it's a lovely spot. And I know you are the best with a hammer, *(Voice One flexes his or her muscles)* but something's missing.

Voice One: What's missing? I have a hammer, lumber, and nails.

Voice Two: Your house needs a foundation to keep your floor dry and your house strong against a storm. Luckily, I am the best foundation person in the business!

Voice One: Great! My house will have a great foundation and great carpentry. We're all set.

Voice Three: Not quite.

Voice Two: What do you mean?

Voice Three: Well, to have a good house you need windows, doors, and insulation. I can do all that for you.

Voice One: I never thought of that. You're right. I can use your help.

Voice Four: I couldn't help but overhear your conversation. A home needs good carpentry, a firm foundation, windows, doors, and insulation. But your house also needs plumbing. Who in the 21st century doesn't have indoor plumbing? I'm happy to put that in for you.

Voice One: You're right. And I was just realizing, I haven't thought about electricity or a furnace. And what about cupboards? a roof? painting? landscaping? How silly to think I could do it all myself.

Voice Two: It's the same with the world's problems. They're so big, one person can't solve them alone.

Voice Three: You can say that again!

Voice Four: Even our whole congregation can't solve all the problems in our community, let alone the whole world!

Voice Two: Yes, let's go one step further. What if the whole of The United Church of Canada worked together?

Voice One: Can The United Church of Canada solve the world's problems?

Voice Two: Of course not! But through Mission and Service, we work with many global partners to make our world a better place!

All Voices: That's right! But for now, let's build one house—together!

HYMN

More Voices #1, "Let Us Build a House"

SERMON

See "Scripture and Sermon Suggestions," next page.

RESPONDING TO GOD

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God,
 Giver of every gift and Creator of all,
 accept these, our gifts, and those for the Mission and Service Fund,

symbols of our gratitude to you.
 And bless our gifts that we may use them faithfully
 to bring your hope and love to all.
 We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Creator God, we give you thanks for the wonders of the earth: the blue sky, shining lakes, singing robins, and swaying willow trees. All of creation sings your praise.

We thank you, Holy God.

We give you thanks for your ample gifts: love of family, friendships, challenges that help us grow, our abundant land, our thirst for justice and peace.

We thank you, Holy God.

We thank you for the richness of your grace within our denomination: You inspire our storytellers and justice seekers, teachers and learners, people who pray and others who preach, our caretakers and church board, our seekers and vision keepers, children and elders, and everyone in between.

We thank you, Holy God.

We thank you for your call to share with others. You give us ears to listen, hearts to be moved by compassion, and a hunger for better ways. We thank you because we are not alone.

We thank you, Holy God.

We pray for all who work generously to end suffering and for those who care for us when we are poor or sick.

May your love abound through us.

We pray for children and elderly people who face injustice or oppression. We pray for those facing war or crime, floods or droughts. We pray for the child or grandparent who is troubled and needs someone to listen.

May your love abound through us.

We pray for your wisdom as we dare to name and confront the deep reasons for poverty, unemployment, and abuse in

our town or city and in our nation.
May your love abound through us.

We pray for ourselves, for our families and friends: touch our loneliness, embrace our suffering, ease our uncertainties. Help us allow you to lead each one of us into ever greater Christian faith. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

(tune: Voices United #289 "It Only Takes a Spark")

Jesus Started Sharing

A long, long time ago, when Jesus started sharing,
 The people learned from him that they could go on caring.
 That's how Christ's church began, then—
 With his self-giving.
 Christ gave himself, for everyone,
 And life and love to all.

We carry on for Christ by living in his Spirit.
 Through M&S we give; we're blessed to be a blessing.
 So many lives are changed by gifts,
 We've given freely.
 Like Jesus Christ, we sacrifice,
 To keep his love alive.

Friends in Christ recall, why we came together.
 We're not here for ourselves, but sharing Jesus' vision.
 Through M&S we have a
 clear path in mission,
 To give our help to those in need,
 To get his word around.

(lyrics by the Rev. Dan Yourkevich, Courtice, Ontario, and used with his permission)

COMMISSIONING

Let us leave this worship time knowing we are not alone:
 With God's love, we are a people of faith and courage.
 Partnering with others, through Mission and Service, we
 offer God's hope and love.
 Let all we do be done with the Spirit of Christ Jesus.

SCRIPTURE AND SERMON SUGGESTIONS

- Share some examples from creation of parts working together for some goal or need.
- Recall a time when you or someone you know felt overwhelmed by a task until others came to help. Allude to the Family Time skit if you used it.
- Select Old Testament and New Testament stories of people overwhelmed by a task or situation. Examples include Moses needing help as he settled disputes (Exodus 18:13-23), Ruth and Naomi (Book of Ruth), Jeremiah enabled to speak with God's help (Jeremiah 1:4-10), or the first community in Acts pooling their resources so there would be no need (Acts 4:32-37).
- Recall that Christ calls us to community, not to individualism.
- Give some basic facts/examples about Mission and Service, inserting examples from your Conference where you can. (See pages 46-48.) Include some of the statistics from page 26.
- By working together, we enjoy many rich blessings. Mission and Service is not just another fund appeal. It is a call to go deep into how we think of others, of ourselves, and of God.