

Worship Service Template for PIE Day

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So often we as trans, non-binary, gender queer, queer, Two Spirit, intersex people, and many more, are made invisible in worship. We become part of generic welcome to everyone, or are cast as being welcome “regardless” or “despite” our diversity, not because of it. This is especially true for many racialized and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ people, and LGBTQIA2S+ people with disabilities.

So be creative in how you interpret and contextualize these resources! Customize them for an online service or event - make it your own! Take the time to name us and celebrate us in all our diversity. May these resources and many others challenge us to embrace and en flesh the radical, prophetic, deeply inclusive call of the Good News.

- Affirming Connections and Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble

Preservice Music (Consider a mix from LGBTQ2IA+ artists)

Welcome & Announcements

Territory Acknowledgement

When we come together we gather in a time and place. This place is [*name of traditional territory / the territory of local Indigenous community(ies)*]. This land has been a source of life and wisdom for this community(ies) long before settler’s arrived here.

With an intention of truthfulness, we also acknowledge the ways settlers have erased the unique gender identities and sexualities of Indigenous nations on Turtle Island. As we seek to decolonize our life and worship we acknowledge that white-settler culture has done significant harm to both Indigenous and white-settler communities, by imposing rigid ideas gender norms and sexual identities.

It is after acknowledging these two truths we enter into worship this morning.

Affirming Statement

Take the time to intentionally read aloud your community of faith's Affirming Statement, or a statement expressing how you welcome and include all people in the life and work of your community. Perhaps considering reading your Region's statement if your faith community does not yet have one.

Call to Worship

One: Look to your left, and look to your right...
these are your companions on the journey.
In unity, let us pray:

**All: A path has been set before us
and we look to our Guide, Spirit.
Help us walk this path of justice and peace
this road of celebration and authenticity.**

One: Hear the words of our Teacher, Jesus:
"If any one of you wants to follow Me,
you will have to give yourself up to God's plan,
take up your cross, and do as I do." (Mark 8:34 The VOICE)

All: We are here, ready and willing, God.

Lighting the Christ Light & Setting Our Intentions

As we light the Christ Light this morning, let's take a moment to set an *intention* for this time together.

R&B artist, Sza, a follower of Islam, says "I don't have any control over what actually happens except for that I have full control over my will for myself, my *intention*, and why I'm there."

An intention is not the same as a goal, it is your reason for being here—an attitude, or orientation. Let's take a moment in the warm glow of the Christ Light to think about our reason for being here, about what we're turning ourselves towards. It might be openness, connection, vulnerability, joy.... It doesn't need to be some great sweeping intention, baby steps are still steps on the road. You can even set of an intention of figuring out what you need today!

(Moment of silence)

Song Suggestion: We Are A Rainbow (David Kai)

Prayer of Transformation (A Confession & Assurance for the Downtrodden)

**All: Living God, it can be hard
to walk the path ahead of us.
There are potholes and barriers,
storms and sweltering heat,
even hecklers throwing stones.**

**Standing firm and walking tall
can be a scary thing.
It's all too easy to hunch our backs,
to hide our faces
and shuffle our feet.**

**But you gave us one another.
Companions, to wrap arms around weary shoulders,
to walk in solidarity with one another.**

One: Be assured, friends, that we are not alone;
never alone in this family of God.
Jesus tells us to come,
all who are tired and overwhelmed,
and we will find rest and
companionship together.
For that we say:

All: Amen.

Theme Time (An All-Ages Story Time)

This script was written in 2021 for use with a felt board but could also be enhanced with images on a slideshow or by holding up the Progressive Pride Flag. Suggested visual: Promise, dove and rainbow mural.

The Pride flag we use at church has lots of colours in it. We have black and brown for siblings who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. We have white, pink and blue for our transgender siblings too.

But, did you know all of the colours in the rainbow flag have a special meaning? When we think of rainbows we think of rainstorms and the story of Noah's Ark, but the person who designed this flag had some ideas too. I want to share them with you, and talk a little bit about how we can use this flag to think about our faith story.



Red is for Life – we believe life is given by God, and that God gives it in abundance

Orange is for Healing – many LGBTQ+ folks have been hurt, by family who don't understand their sexuality or gender, by a world that often rejects folks who are different, and by the church who has a history of rejecting these children of God – BUT we also believe that God offers healing

Yellow is for Sunlight – we believe that God intended for all of her children to live out in the open, to not need to hide away who they are

Green is for Nature – we believe God does not make mistakes, that she formed each of us with care, that she shaped our different sexualities and genders and loves us as she made us

Blue is Serenity – we believe that peace can be found in God, in knowing that we are children of God, in knowing God made us and loves us just as we are

Purple is for Spirit – a spirit that connects all of us, a spirit that helps us survive and thrive, a spirit that binds the human family together in love

We give thanks for this beautiful rainbow, We give for God's love and care in creating each of us. We give thanks that humanity is as diverse as there are colours in this world. We give thanks knowing, when God made us, she said, "Wow! This is good!"

Song Suggestion: *True Colours* (Cyndi Lauper)

Scripture(s):

Psalm 16 (The VOICE, adapted for gender neutral language)

Protect me, God, for the only safety I know is found in the moments I seek You.
I told You, Eternal One, “You are my Lord,
for the only good I know in this world is found in You alone.”
The beauty of faith-filled people encompasses me.
They are true, and my heart is thrilled beyond measure.
All the while the despair of many,
who abandoned Your goodness for the empty promises of false gods,
increases day by day.
I refuse to pour out blood offerings,
to utter their names from my lips.
You, Eternal One, are my sustenance and my life-giving cup.
In that cup, You hold my future and my eternal riches.
My home is surrounded in beauty;
You have gifted me with abundance and a rich legacy.
I will bless the Eternal, whose wise teaching orchestrates my days
and centers my mind at night.
The Eternal is ever present with me;
at all times They go before me.
I will not live in fear or abandon my calling
because They stand at my right hand.
This is a good life—my heart is glad, my soul is full of joy,
and my body is at rest.
Who could want for more?
You will not abandon me to experience death and the grave
or leave me to rot alone.
Instead, You direct me on the path that leads to a beautiful life.
As I walk with You, the pleasures are never-ending,
and I know true joy and contentment.

Philippians 1:27-28 (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing.

Sermon/Reflection

This year is the Year of Intention, but being intentional is hard work. It invites us to deep self reflection, to hear criticism from our friends and neighbours, and to stand firm when

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others might challenge our commitment to God's justice. Intention is not something we can turn on and off, instead it is a spiritual practice to cultivate in our lives. Can you name some intentional practices in your community of faith, or home, that have become second-nature to you? What are some new cultures, habits or behaviours you want to see become ingrained in your community/personal life? Are there practices you openly reject, those "blood offerings" and names of false gods you refuse to utter from your lips? (Suggested visual: Intentional practices, pronouns.)

Song: We Are Marching / Siyahamba (Voices United #646)

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory Prayer

Song: My Love Colours Outside the Lines (More Voices #138)

Prayers of the People

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

Parent, Teacher and Spirit...

We pray for those harmed by bad theology, carelessly spouted from pulpits, pews and dinner tables. We know that these ideas hurt and kill. Protect your children, God, surround them with a phalanx of strength and compassion. Raise up a community around them, our community, who will shield them under our wing.

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

We pray for those turned away from their homes because of who they are, who they love, or the ways they express their authentic selves. Open up new homes and communities for them where they are fully accepted. Draw them to you with the warm glow of your loving hearth. Raise up a new dwelling place for them, our community, who will welcome and embrace them as one of our own.

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

We pray for those searching for their true self and purpose in a confusing world. Allow the person you created them to be to break through the noise and competition, allowing them to live fully into their intended self. Manifest in them your Spirit of confidence and creation. Raise up a mirror for them, our community, where they can see their wondrous self reflected.

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of love.

Transform us, Creating and Recreating Spirit, in your ever-divine image. An image expressed in the diversity of the created world. Allow us not to be held back by past versions of ourselves, but to find liberation in the unfolding of our lives. While growing in us compassion and understanding for who we once were. Help us to honour our past, present and future selves.

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

Reveal your radical Kin-dom, not just a little more each day, but in great sweeps of justice and mercy. Opening up new paths in front of us, strengthening our weary limbs when we feel rundown. We want to see your dream for our world revealed in our life time, kKn-dom come and will be done. We want to be a part of your Great Working of Love.

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

We also name specific concerns and joys from our community now... [take time to name, silently or aloud, prayers from your community of faith and local context].

Call: Living and Loving God,

Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

Consider ending your time of prayer with Jim Cotter's paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer from Voices United page 916.

Song: *Go From This Place* by Pat Mayberry

Sending Blessing

Suggested visual: Rainbow Shabbat. "Chicago wanted an image of hope, a vision for a future in which people are joined together across differences in age, gender, race, faith and culture to live in harmony with one another and the natural world.")

Go now, Child of God, a few steps further on this path.
Ready, willing, equipped,
and never alone.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Post-service Music