A Rainbow Journey

Worship Service for PIE Day

PIE = Public. Intentional. Explicit. These are the standards we hold ourselves and our welcome to when we become affirming, welcoming, or inclusive communities. March 14 is a chance to serve some pie and roll out the PIE by celebrating the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people in faith communities and beyond across Canada. PIE Day (National Affirming Day) is an initiative of Affirm United and Affirming Connections. For more information, visit [National Affirming Day](https://pieday.ca/).

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Acknowledgement of the Territory

For more information, visit the [Worship Theme: Indigenous](https://www.united-church.ca/worship-theme/indigenous) page and download the resource *Acknowledging the Territory in Worship* found under “Extras.”

Call to Gather

We come together to worship to celebrate publicly, to intentionally lift up all gathered, to be explicit in our acceptance and kindness for all!

We come together as the rainbow people of God!

Hymn

“My Love Colours Outside the Lines” (MV 138)

“I Cannot Dance, O Love” (VU 534)

Scripture

Matthew 5:14–16

*(Note: It is recommended that* The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language *be used for this scripture reading. It is available for free online through* [*Bible Study Tools*](https://www.biblestudytools.com/msg/matthew/5.html)*.)*

Rainbow Reflection

*(Note: This reflection can be accompanied by a slideshow that shows one striking image or photo for each colour in the Pride flag, as well as one pink image.)*

Today we affirm the place of the rainbow in our world. As we worship, I invite each of us into the rainbow: to **publicly** declare inclusion of all, to be **intentiona**l in our inclusion, and to be **explicit** in our support of one another as we affirm that all belong under the rainbow.

The beautiful thing about the rainbow is that the colours of the rainbow have different meanings to different people.

I remember as if it was yesterday—the day the Montreal Massacre happened. I was working at the Globe and Mail and we had CBC News World on all the time. All of a sudden, we became acutely aware that something horrible had happened in Montreal. Fourteen women had been killed simply because of their gender. That feeling of horror has never left me. In the Pride rainbow flag, **RED** means ***life***. Our blood unites us—we are one people, one family.

September 30 is Orange Shirt Day, a day recognizing that the self-esteem of all children matters. It is the day that we remember Phyllis Webstad at a residential school in her orange shirt that was immediately taken off her. All children matter, all children should be able to wear whatever colour they choose. In the Pride flag, **ORANGE** means ***healing***.

For many years, I tried to live a straight life, to the point of making myself ill—I developed a stress-related bowel disorder. Then, a few years ago, I just couldn’t do it anymore; I could no longer live half a life, and I came out. It was the best thing that I ever did—my illness went away, and I am happier and more myself than I have ever been! In the Pride flag, **YELLOW** means ***not hiding in the shadows.***

In the Pride flag **BLUE** means ***serenity***. It is the colour of imagination, open spaces, sea and sky. What better way to celebrate imagination than with an image of *(describe your chosen blue image here).*

Each of us is called to care for creation. Kermit the Frog tells us that it is not easy being green. Being green means that we get lost in a forest of trees, and yet we can also become part of the forest, a part of Creation. In the Pride flag, **GREEN** means ***nature*** for all communities. We are all a part of Creation, we are all children of God.

It is good to be together today, and to be able to celebrate who we are as a community. This is a special, sacred place because of each of you. In the Pride flag, **PURPLE** is the colour of ***reflection and spirituality***. Each time we gather is a time of reflection and celebrating our spirituality. Let us remember to nurture our spirits so our hearts will sing!

Pink has been part of the pride flag in the past. It represents the pink triangle symbol that queer people were forced to wear in Nazi Germany before being sent to concentration camps. About 15,000 queer people were sent to the camps, while 50,000 more were imprisoned; the majority of them died in the camps from horrible experiments or from being used as target practice. Today we have taken the pink triangle and reclaimed it as a positive symbol. When I first learned about [Affirm United](http://affirmunited.ause.ca/), the symbol that many Affirm United folks wore was a pink triangle surrounded by the shape of the crest.

We are the rainbow people of God; we are loved and valued as one big family.

Prayer

Ever-present God, we come together in prayer this day. We come with our hearts filled with joy and with sorrow. Our journey is often filled with moments of thanks and moments of grief.

Each day we hear more and more about lives lost, lives that have inspired many, lives that had just begun, lives ended too early, and we try to make sense of it, and so we turn to you with sighs too heavy for words.

We are also blessed to be in a place where we can publicly share who we are without fear of discrimination. There are many in this city, this country, and around the world who are not able to do that. We lift up affirming ministries that extend a hand beyond welcome—a hand of understanding and acceptance.

Gracious God, as we continue on our journey, let us be mindful of those in the shadows, those hiding themselves, those who grieve in silence for what cannot be. May our journey be an intentional exploration of ourselves, and may it open us up to new possibilities.

Amen.

Hymn

“Draw the Circle Wide” (MV 145)

“Sing Your Joy” (VU 253)

Sung Blessing

“Don’t Be Afraid (N’ayez pas peur)” (MV 90)

“Grant to Us Your Peace (Dona nobis pacem)” (VU 955)

Postlude

*—This short worship service was created by Rev. Ruth Noble to celebrate the first-ever PIE Day (National Affirming Day) on March 14, 2019 at the United Church’s General Council Office. Ruth is the Mission & Service Engagement Coordinator at the General Council Office.*