## 43rd General Council Opening Worship

# Risking Faith, Daring Hope: We Are Not Alone

*For congregations/individuals watching via livestream*

## 9:45 a.m.

(*We begin our worship with the Oneida Edge of the Woods Ceremony, led by Elder/Rev. Grafton Antone, Wolf Clan, Oneida of the Thames First Nations.*)

## Call to Worship

In a spirit of openness,

In a spirit of humility,

In a spirit of wonder,

**We bear witness.**

We bear witness in four ways:

 mental, spiritual, physical, emotional.

**We have come from four directions.**

**We bear witness.**

The circle widens,

**and we are present**

 **in prayer,**

 **in mind,**

 **in heart.**

(*Edge of the Woods Ceremony is livestreamed.*)

## 10:45 a.m.

(*Ceremony processes from the “woods” to the “village/plenary,” welcomed with singing.*)

*Voices United* 402, “We Are One”

VU 299, “Teach Me, God, to Wonder” (*alternate English/French verses*)

VU 646, “Siyahamba” (*verse 2, plus French translation:*)

 *Nous marchons dans la lumière de Dieu*

(*Depending on numbers arriving from ceremony, an additional hymn may be added.*)

## Acknowledgement of Hospitality

(*Moderator*)

With gratitude, we give thanks for the hospitality of the Indigenous peoples of this territory, who welcome us graciously.

We thank you for journeying with us, for challenging us, and for inviting us to Ceremony. We give thanks for the leadership of Elder Grafton Antone, and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ singers for opening this General Council worship and setting us on a good path.

As our time together here at this General Council begins, we offer you our respect and our desire to deepen relationship. **All my relations**.

## Call to Worship

(*Min Goo Kang, in Korean; English translation on screen*)

From the Conference where the sun first rises

To the Conference of northern lights

To the Conference where the sun last sets,

**From sea to sea to sea**

 **we have gathered here.**

**Speaking French and Oji-cree,**

 **Japanese and Lingala,**

 **Salish and English,**

 **and more.**

(*Min Goo in Korean; English words on screen*)

We gather here,

To listen deeply.

To speak our truth,

confident:

**We are not alone.**

**Hymn**

“We Are a Rainbow” (*David Kai*)

## Declaration

(*Moderator declares the 43rd General Council open.*)

### Scripture

(*Read by General Secretary Nora Sanders in French.*)

 Mark 6:6*b*‒13

**Prayer**

(*Moderator*)

## Storytellers

Indigenous: Cathy Cunningham, All Native Circle Conference

Intercultural: Adele Halliday, national staff

Women: UCW President Nancy Sutherland, Bay of Quinte

Conservative: Nick Phillips, Maritime Conference

“Risking Faith, Daring Hope” theme song

Peace: David Giuliano, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

LGBTTQ+: Aaron Miechkota, Iridesce

Youth: Matthew Drabble, Saskatchewan Conference

**Hymn**

“This Is a Winding, Beautiful Road” (*Linnea Good*)

## Prayer

 O God, we live in the already/not yet of your kingdom,

**Rejoicing in the signs of the already,**

**While struggling with the not-yet.**

**We leave behind the familiar,**

**Remitting our way into an uncertain future.**

**We mourn the congregations that have closed…**

**Our hearts are heavy with the ministries that have closed…**

**We miss colleagues and friends who have moved on…**

**We struggle to do more with less…**

**We struggle with feelings of failure and futility…**

**Even as we risk faith, dare hope,**

**We know the road ahead is hard.**

**God of our journey,**

**We count on you to walk with us.**

**Spirit, give us the courage**

**To risk faith and dare hope. Amen.**

**Scripture**

Mark 6:3—44

**Sermon**

(*The Rev. Miriam Spies, Hamilton Conference*)

**Passing of the Peace**

(*As we sing:*)

 The Jesus in me loves the Jesus in you.

## Offering

## Procession of the Gifts

**Communion Prayer**

(*Moderator Jordan and Elder Grafton*)

We saw them in the boat, Jesus and his friends.

We saw them in the boat,

 **lifted the skirts of our rags and ran,**

 **ran ahead,**

 **ran to that deserted place where his boat would come.**

**He had compassion for**

 **us.**

Compassion for us,

 his parish of pariahs—

 for we, who once had land have had the land stolen from us

 for we, who once had plenty now have nothing,

 for we, who had once had work now have nothing

 for we, who once were free now sell our selves.

**And he has compassion**

 **for us—and so we run here,**

 **risking faith, daring hope.**

It grows late.

Our hunger grows in this deserted place.

**His inner circle would send us away like children,**

 **send us, with our empty pockets**

 **to buy something to eat.**

But!

But he says, “You give them.”

 He says, “How many loaves have you?”

 He says, “Go and see.”

We who are empty know

 **miracles need hope.**

We who have nothing

 **turn to the one who turns to us.**

We who are nothing

 **turn to the one who has compassion for us.**

And, in this deserted place,

 he finds green grass.

In the hunger of this wilderness,

 **we ate**

 **and were filled**

 **and more!**

 **There was more!**

There was more:

 he broke bread with us

 and the deserted place

 became the Kingdom of Plenty.

He ate with us,

 we nuisances and nobodies,

And there was bread—

 **let there be bread!**

And there was fish—

 **let there be fish!**

And there was plenty.

Where he is,

 there is plenty.

Pour out your Spirit, O God!

Pour out your Spirit on this gathered people!

Pour out your Spirit upon all Creation,

And upon this bread, this wine.

May justice and mercy kiss, we pray.

May we share this feast with good hearts.

And so, we remember Jesus,

How, on the night he was betrayed,

He sat with friends, even the betrayer,

And took bread, gave thanks, broke bread, and said,

“This is my body. Do this to remember me.”

In the same way, he took the cup and said,

“This is my life, poured out for you.

Whenever you drink, remember me.”

**And there was plenty.**

**Where he is, there is plenty.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God! Amen!**

(*Communion is served.*)

## Music

*More Voices* 57, “I’ll Praise Eternal God” (*both French and English words*)

Wind song: instrumental

MV 42, “Praise God for This Holy Ground” (verses 1‒5)

(*If needed, MV 14, “Where Two or Three Are Gathered”*)

### Prayer after Communion

(*General Secretary Nora Sanders*)

Emboldened by this feast,

We who saw the deserted place

 become a pasture of plenty,

We whose empty bellies

 tasted bread and fish

**Now dare hope!**

**Now risk faith!**

**Now reach for the fringe,**

 **for at the fringe, we shall be healed.**

**Hallelujah!**

**Blessing**

(*Moderator*)

**Hymn**

MV 150, “Spirit God, Be Our Breath”