

# In Loving Partnership

by Hans van Nie

## GATHERING

### Lighting of the Christ Candle

One: The light of Christ

**All: Thanks be to God!**

**Hymn:** *Voices United* #603, “In Loving Partnership We Come”

### Call to Worship

One: The Spirit of God calls to our spirits:

**All: calling us together in worship and service.**

One: The Word of God calls us to ministry:

**All: calling us to be the church,  
calling us to love the world,  
calling us to work for peace,  
each and every day.**

### Gathering Prayer

**All: Holy Creator God, we gather in worship to give thanks and to seek inspiration for living our lives. We thank you for the world you have made, for its infinite varieties of peoples, colours, races, and cultures; for the endless opportunities to make new relationships; for the challenge of venturing across new frontiers, creating new things, and discovering new truths. We thank you for your call to participate in healing what is hurt or broken. We thank you for the work of our Mission and Service partners and the difference they are making around the world. Forgive us, good God, when we fail to see the wonder of diversity and the opportunity to love and serve others. Open us to the abundance of your grace. Give us peace and joy as we respond to your call in the Way of Christ. Amen.**

**Introit:** “God Is Calling” (see page 33)

### Sharing the Peace

#### Theme Conversation

The theme conversation could be designed to engage children in particular, or it can be an intergenerational conversation including the whole congregation. The idea is to explore the question “Who is my neighbour?” Do we have neighbours only in our own neighbourhood, or are there neighbours in other places as well? What do we expect of our neighbours? Have we ever been surprised by some help or an act of kindness from a person who is not “one of us”? Can we name some examples of contributions from far-away neighbours that have made our lives better?

Share some examples from this issue of *Mandate* about how Mission and Service partners are making a difference in people’s lives.

## WORD

**Sung Prayer for Grace:** *More Voices* #79, “Spirit, Open My Heart,” Refrain

**Scripture Readings:** Ruth 1:1–18; Psalm 36 (*Voices United* p. 762); Luke 10:25–37

**Homily:** “Christ in a Stranger’s Face” (see “Homily Notes”)

## RESPONSE

**Hymn:** *More Voices* #162, “Christ, within Us Hidden”

(If there is an offering, it may be received and presented during this hymn.)

**Prayers of the People** (sung response: refrain from Psalm 85, *Voices United* p. 802)

One: Holy One, are you the Creator God, Author of life, and Source of our lives?

And have we gathered in worship to celebrate your presence in our worship together?

**All: Yes, God, when we put our hearts and minds to the task of worship in spirit and in truth, we sense the joy of living in accord with your Spirit and your purposes. Then we are filled with thanksgiving and praise; our lives are filled with meaning and purpose.**

We thank you for the abundant life we find in your Way; for times in which your presence inspires us to believe in love and truth and goodness; times in which your spirit strengthens us to deal with turmoil and strife, disintegration and personal demons; times in which your love brings comfort and healing.

**We lift our prayer to you, O God,**

**R: God, show us your love, show us your love and mercy.**

One: Holy One, are you the Redeemer God, Lover of the world, Source of new creation? And can we ask you for direction in the mending of the world?

**All: Yes, God, the mending of the world is your project and we want to participate.**

**We pray for vision and determination to respond with justice and compassion to that which is broken in our world. Help us to see the world with your eyes and to see that conflict and war call us to peace-making; illness and disease call us to bring healing; cruelty and oppression call on our compassion.**

**We pray for those who are caught up in conflict and war. We pray for those who are caught up in conflict in their workplace, in their families, or within their own selves. We pray for an outbreak of peace on earth, goodwill for all.**

We pray for those who are struggling with illness and disease. May your presence bring comfort and healing.

We pray for all who are oppressed by forces of chaos and destruction. We pray that freedom and dignity be the hallmark of life for people everywhere.

We lift our prayer to you, O God,

**R:** God, show us your love, show us your love and mercy.

One: Holy One, are you the Sustainer God, Renewer of creation, Spirit of new life? And are we partners with you and therefore also with all who embrace your way in many places?

**All:** Yes, God, we open ourselves to our Mission and Service partners around the world today. We pray for a world that was already envisioned by prophet-partners in ancient times: a world where the abundance of creation is respected, preserved, and enjoyed by people everywhere.

We pray for a world envisioned by our partners, people of different cultures and religions: a world of right relationships; a world safe for our children; a world that cares for those who are disadvantaged.

Help us, Partner Spirit, to see with your eyes and the eyes of others, to speak with your voice and the voices of others, working for a world renewed by peace and for goodwill to break out on earth as it is in heaven.

We lift our prayer to you, O God.

**R:** God, show us your love, show us your love and mercy.

One: Tender and mighty God, in your loving purpose answer our prayers and fulfil our hopes. In all things for which we pray, give us the grace and wisdom to accept your will, as we strive to live our lives in the way of Jesus Christ, in whose name we sing together:

**Closing Affirmation:** (together in unison) A New Creed, *Voices United* p. 918

**“We are not alone, we live in God’s world...”**

**Hymn:** *More Voices* #148, “Hope of Abraham and Sarah”

**Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Let us go from this time of worship, knowing that we live in God’s world; a world full of God’s creatures, kindred spirits with many gifts to share.

Let us go in the loving embrace of the Spirit and sing a blessing to each other.

# God Is Calling

Hans van Nie



1. God is call-ing, call-ing you; God is call-ing, call-ing me.  
 2. God be-lieves in you and me; God's be-lov-ed we will be  
 3. May the Spir-it be with us as we pray for en-er-gy;



Can you hear the voice of God, call-ing us to-geth-er?  
 as we live in har-mo-ny, joy-ful-ly to-ge-ther...  
 may we hear the voice of God, call-ing us to-geth-er.



Refrain:  
 Call-ing us to be the church, call-ing us to love the world,



call-ing us to work for peace; each and ev-ry day.

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**Benediction** (together in unison) “May the blessing of God...” from *Voices United* #962

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## HOMILY NOTES

**CHRIST IS “HIDDEN” WITHIN EACH ONE OF US.** The aim of our worship today is to discover, affirm, and celebrate the presence of Christ especially within “the other.” In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus asks, “Who is the neighbour?” It turns out to be the Samaritan, a surprising and least-expected outcome! When Jesus says, “Go and do likewise,” is he asking us to go and do what the Samaritan did or to go and receive help from unexpected (and perhaps unwanted) neighbours?

Partnering with “outsiders” is an important biblical theme and one found in the story of Ruth, the Moabite. To follow Jesus is to look for the presence of Christ in “the other,” to live in respectful partnership with others, giving *and* receiving.