



SHE FLIES ON: A Liturgy Inspired by Lydia Gruchy, Celebrating Women in Ministry

For use during 2016, and especially during November, Lydia Gruchy's ordination month.

Room set-up: Post the names of celebrated women in ministry around the worship space in cut-out petals, along with markers, tape, and blank petals for others to add women's names.

Supplies needed: four lanterns, four candles on the communion table, communion.

THE SERVICE

Prelude and Gathering Time

Acknowledgment of the Traditional

Territory: *(as appropriate to your area; see Gathering Pentecost 1 – 2015, p. 87 for wording)*

Words of Welcome: Lydia Gruchy was the first woman to be ordained within The United Church of Canada. In her honour, this service is inspired by Psalm 122, the text that Lydia Gruchy used for her master of divinity thesis.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Darkness is a wonder to be explored,
full of Holy Mystery.
In the dark, we can find comfort and rest.
In the night, we are reminded of how a
candlelight is a small and mighty flicker of
resilience and resistance.
We gather today to worship the One
who surprises us with wonder,
who challenges our comfort,
and who supports our resilience.
We follow the One who says "I am the light" –
always.

Call to Worship: *(based on Psalm 122)*

(Readers can be located in the four corners of the worship space.)

Leader: Come to the house of God,
and feel God's welcome here.

**With longing, we go to God's own house
and enter with a song.**

Voice 1: Come to the house of God,
and celebrate the women who helped build
these walls.

**With joy, we go to God's own house
and enter with a song.**

Voice 2: Come to the house of God,
and cry with the women who seek justice and
compassion for all.

**With tears, we go to God's own house
and enter with a song.**

Voice 3: Come to the house of God,
and with thanksgiving remember the women
who have led us here.

**With gratitude, we go to God's own house
and enter with a song.**

Voice 4: Come to the house of God,
and worship our mother, redeemer, and
sustainer.

**With humility, we come to God's own house
and enter with a song of praise.**

Opening Hymn: "Rejoice, rejoice, come sing
with me" Psalms for All Seasons (PFAS) 807

Opening Prayer: *(based on Psalm 122 adapted
from PFAS p. 806)*

Sophia God,
we long for the day when we will find ourselves
inside your city.

There all your people will experience justice,
peace, and fullness of life
regardless of their gender identity, race, age,
sexuality, class, or ability;

There all of us called to ministry will be
supported in the work
that you have prepared us for.

Until then, as we journey toward home,
guide and protect your holy catholic church.
Be our unity, truth, and peace.

We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Responsive Song: “Give me oil in my lamp” #14 in *Joyful Noise: Songs of Faith & Fun for Children* (UCPH, 1999)

Scripture Readings: Proverbs

(The four people who spoke the call to worship come forward with their unlit lamps.)

Voice 1: read Proverbs 8:1–4

(after scripture is read, the first oil lamp is lit)

Voice 2: read Proverbs 8:22–31

(after scripture is read, the second oil lamp is lit)

Voice 3: read Proverbs 8:32–36

(after scripture is read, the third oil lamp is lit)

Voice 4: read Proverbs 9:1–6

(after scripture is read, the fourth oil lamp is lit)

Responsive Song: “Give me oil in my lamp”

Responsive Psalm: Psalm 122 (VU p. 845)

Sermon

Hymn: VU 380 “She Flies On” chorus and verse 1 *(The four people with the lit oil lamps gather around the communion table. The four candles on the communion table will be lit from lanterns during the litany.)*

Litany of Remembrance and Celebration

Voice 5: She has been with us always, hovering at the moment of our birth and lingering during our rebirth.

Voice 6: She was with Lydia Gruchy, Millicent Howse, Nellie McClung, Betty Gale *(add names of other local heroes of the early 1900s)* and all of the women who were a part of building the church in Canada, who we remember now *(invite people to add other names)*.

She was with Barbara Heck, Stella Bury, Gladys Taylor, Lois Wilson, Wenh-In Ng, Kay Cho, Hazel Bigby *(add names of local women who were trailblazers in the church)* and the countless women who dreamed dreams that the Spirit helped turn into action that we name now *(invite people to add other names)*.

Sung response: VU 380 “She Flies On” verses 1 and 2

Voice 5: She has sung her song into the hearts of many.

Voice 6: Women who have heard and responded to wisdom’s cry with courageous actions and

prophetic voices. Women like Marion Best, Marion Parry and Marion Current, Lorna Standingready, Gini Shrivastava, Anne Squire, Mardi Tindal, Maggie Hosgood and Maggie McLeod, and the many modern-day saints we name now *(add other names from the present)*.

Sung response: VU 380 “She Flies On” verses 3 and 4

Voice 5: She has encouraged many to fly on despite racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, and the various other forms of exclusion and oppression that we name now *(name challenges facing women in ministry)*.

Voice 6: She whispers softly words of encouragement, guidance, and challenge. She empowers us to fly on.

Sung response: VU 380 “She Flies On” chorus and verse 5

Voice 5: With her, women continue to dream, continue to challenge, and continue to soar with the guidance and companionship of the Spirit.

Voice 6: Together, with the saints before and behind us, we will continue to build God’s house.

With hope we come to God’s own house, offering our gifts to the banquet.

The Offering

Sung Response: *a local choice* or VU 958 “Halle, halle, halle”

Holy Communion—Call to Give Thanks:
We are not alone.

We live in God’s world.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks and praise.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

(translate stanzas of the prayer in multiple languages as appropriate to your context)

To you, our Creator, who crafts the heavens, the earth, and everything in them.

You, who have been with us always hovering at the moment of our birth and lingering during our rebirth.

Let us give thanks and praise.

To you our redeemer, who reconciles and provides a vision for a world of love beyond our imagining.

You, who have called us to courageous and prophetic action.

Let us give thanks and praise.

To you our sustainer, who supplies nourishment and sustenance on the journey.

You, who softly whispers words of encouragement, guidance, and challenge, empowering us to fly on.

Let us give thanks and praise.

We take up all our praise, and add them to the heavenly chorus in singing:

Sung response: "Holy, Holy, Holy" (such as VU p. 944)

We thank you for the life and ministry of Jesus, our Redeemer.

**His life revealed radical grace;
his death radical love.**

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it, saying:

"This is my body, which is given for you."

"Do this in remembrance of me."

After, he took the cup,

blessed it, and poured it, saying:

"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant."

"Each time you do this, remember me."

And so we remember Jesus and proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Sung response: "Christ has died" (such as VU p. 943)

Send your spirit on our offerings, and on these simple gifts.

May all who are broken find wholeness in your bread.

May all who are empty be filled by your cup.

And may we who are many become one at your table.

We add to these prayers all the prayers we name to you now silently or out loud...

We join with your people around the world in the prayer that Jesus taught us (in the language that we learned it)...*the Prayer of Jesus*

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

The body of Christ, **the bread of life.**

The lifeblood of Christ, **the cup of blessing.**

The gifts of God for the people of God,

thanks be to God!

We practise an open table:

all who seek spiritual nourishment,

all who seek justice and resist evil,

all who wish to love their neighbours as themselves are welcome here!

Let us eat, drink, and sing together in thanks and praise.

Prayer after Communion

Sophia Christ,

you have gathered us to this meal to be loved and fed.

Nourished and refreshed.

Like Eve, Miriam, Deborah, and Esther,

you now send us out to witness to your ongoing revelation.

Like Sarah, Elizabeth, Martha, and Lydia,

you now send us out to extend your love and hospitality to all.

Like Rachel, Ruth, Mary, and Mary Magdalene,

you now send us out to be god-bearers.

Like Hagar, Tamar, the Samaritan Woman, and Lois,

you now send us out to be builders of your great kin-dom. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "My life flows on" VU 716

Commissioning and Benediction

With gladness we continue to build God's house.

We do not go alone in this journey of building up.

We go with a great cloud of witness, our sisters, the prophets, and the saints.

Go with the grace and love of God.

Amen.

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