



Celebrating the Journey

A Worship Service for Black History Month

Words of Welcome

God's hope is like "a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul."

In God, we find the rock on which we stand.

Every time we feel the Spirit moving in our heart

We will pray.

Opening Hymn: I'm a Rollin' (traditional spiritual)

(During music roll in a large stone and have others place stones around it; liturgical dance would also be fitting.)

I'm a rollin', I'm a rollin', I'm a rollin' through an unfriendly world,

I'm a rollin', I'm a rollin', through an unfriendly world.

Oh, Mother, won't you help me, oh, Mother, won't you help me to pray.

Oh, Mother, won't you help me, won't you help me in the service of the Lord.

(In subsequent verses, substitute "Preacher," "Father," "Brother," "Sister," etc. for "Mother.")

Unison Prayer

We journey and travel in a world that does not treat everyone as a friend.

A world that does not respect, care, and value each person equally.

Oh God, please help us to pray and work toward a new world; your world. Amen.

Scripture Reading Exodus 17:1-7

Litany

(You may wish to show pictures from Black Canadian history such as news reports.)

For 200 years we have lived in a land after the transatlantic slave trade was legally abolished.

For 40 years we have lived in a continent free of legal racial segregation

Yet we are still thirsty for equality.

For 30 years we have understood the injustices that keep HIV/AIDS spreading in every corner of the world including our own

Yet we are still thirsty for compassion.

For 20 years we have gone to workshops on "multiculturalism" and tolerance

Yet we are still thirsty for acceptance.

For 10 years we have known the importance of role models for our youth

Yet we are still thirsty for peace on our streets.

For centuries we have cried out

"Give us water to drink," wondering if "the Lord is with us or not."

And as we asked and as we are now asking, God provides us with living water of hope, so that strengthened we can continue our journey toward equality, compassion, acceptance, and peace.

With hope, though thirsty, we will not be parched.

One day our yearning will cease and our thirst will be quenched.

Thanks be to God. Amen.



Prayers of the People

(Based on the spirituals “Give Me Your Hand” and “Beams of Heaven”—you may wish to sing the chorus of either song before or after the prayer.)

Your feet, your feet.
Give us your feet, dear God, to dance!
For we need to celebrate your goodness.

When we love at your command...
When the captives are made free...
When we celebrate “who-we-be”...
When we attempt to understand...
Your feet, God, your feet; thanks for your feet to dance.

Your hand, your hand.
Give us your hand, dear God, to hold.
For we need to feel your presence.

When burdens crash us down...
When right yields painfully to might...
When sorrow blinds our sight...
When disappointment’s all around...
Your hand, God, your hand; thanks for your hand to hold.

Your eyes, your eyes.
Give us your eyes, dear God, to see.
For we need a vision of hope.

When the journey seems too long...
When swords and shields are lifted high...
When we see your children cry...
When it seems even the angels have forgotten their song...
Your eyes, God, your eyes; thanks for your eyes to see.

Lastly, give us faith.
For faith always sees a star of hope
May that star lead us, God, to where you want us to be.
Amen, amen, and again we say: **Amen!**

Offertory Music

(For a list of African American spirituals visit: www.negrospirituall.com)

For more on Black History Month, see:
www.united-church.ca/intercultural/becoming/blackhistory