# General Council 44 Worship Resources for June Discussion Session

Congregations are also encouraged to use resources for [Indigenous Day of Prayer](https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/indigenous-day-prayer).

## Welcome and Land Acknowledgment

We begin this time of worship by acknowledging that we are meeting on the land of the (insert your local Indigenous nations’ name and territory) people. This land has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. We thank all the generations of Indigenous people who have taken care of this land and been its stewards for thousands of years. We give thanks for the countless ways they have assisted the settler peoples who came to inhabit the land. We also recognize the contributions Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made in shaping and strengthening this region, the provinces, and Canada as a whole. May the Creator hold us gently in this time as all mourn the loss of innocent Indigenous children’s lives. Meegwetch. All my relations.

(Rev. Nancy Best, [All My Relations: Indigenous Day of Prayer Service 2022](https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/indigenous-day-prayer))

## Lighting of Christ Candle

We light this candle. May its light guide us to truth talking and to travelling good paths. May we in turn share the light with those we meet until it spreads to all peoples worldwide.

(Rev. Nancy Best, [All My Relations: Indigenous Day of Prayer Service 2022](https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/indigenous-day-prayer))

## Call to Worship

We are a Maundy Thursday and Good Friday people.  
**We share our lives, we share our loves, we share our passions and heartbreak in community,**(A pitcher of water and/or a communion setting is added to your worship space.)  
while the Holy sets their seal upon our hearts.

We are a Holy Saturday people.  
**We carry the pain, the longing, the trust, and the certainty of waiting,**(A budding flower in a pot or a seedling is added to the space and watered from the pitcher.)  
assured that the Holy lives within each of us.

We are an Easter people.  
**We bring hopeful expectation and promise of the new things God is doing,**(A cross or another symbol of resurrection is added to the space.)  
and the Spirit summons up what shall be.

We are a Pentecost people!  
**We share many names, many languages, many insights, many joys, and many sorrows,**(Additional candles or a lantern is lit from the Christ candle and added to the worship space.)  
and the Holy takes us as we are.

We are faithful people,  
Gathered in expectation,  
**We offer our song, our praise, and ourselves to God**

Come, let us worship.

(Alydia Smith, General Council Office)

## Hymn

MV 85 Take, O Take Me as I Am

## Opening Prayer

Holy One, you know us each by name.  
Be with us now as we talk with one another about deep-down things.  
May the conversation be Spirit-filled and expansive,  
 with room for differences and dreaming and the breaking in of grace.  
May there be room for each voice.  
May your many names be among us.  
In the speaking and in the silence, let your names be praised.  
Amen

(Bev Brazier, General Council Worship Team)

## Exploring Together

Today in scripture, Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” and then when Peter responds, “You are the Messiah,” Jesus sternly orders them not to tell anyone about him.

Invite people to share how they have encountered the Holy over the past week; where and when have they celebrated God’s presence, experienced the risen Christ, or testified to who Jesus is for them? Tell someone about it! Depending on the size of your community people could be invited to reflect silently, write or draw on a sheet of paper that could be added to a bulletin board, or share their story with the people sitting close to them.

## Hymn

VU 268 Bring Many Names  
MV 1 Let Us Build a House

## Praying Together (Confession and Assurance)

Holy God, creator of this United Church of ours:  
 We must confess that we are not who we say we are.  
 We aspire to be an inclusive, intercultural, affirming, and activist church.  
We admit that we are not.

Having been shaped in a world that values one gender over others,  
 one sexual orientation over others,  
 one faith over others,  
 certain body types over others,  
subjected to countless social preferences for ability, age, education, and income,  
we harbour inaccurate assumptions of everything we deem “other.”

Holy God, source of justice:  
As we examine and dismantle the scaffolding of entitlement and privilege that undergirds our society and our church,  
 as words and phrases and terminology change,  
 as social constructs and conceits crumble,  
we feel that we’ve had to mask our opinions like we’ve had to mask our faces.  
 We are fearful of being found out,  
 of offering opinions now outdated and offensive.

We know this is the work of confession and repentance.  
We name the disquieting truth that each of us harbours prejudicial thoughts  
 that we judge with reactionary haste,  
 that we don’t know how to express our frustration.

Holy God, maker of safer spaces:  
We pray for the wherewithal and fortitude  
 to challenge one another,  
 and ourselves,  
 with clarity and forbearance,  
 with grace and forgiveness,  
as you have done for us.  
Amen.

(Kenji Marui, General Council Worship Team)

## Hymn

MV 95 How Deep the Peace  
MV 81 Love Us into Fullness

## Prayer of Illumination

In those difficult moments of our lives  
we go in search of your face,  
you who are Christ, our guide of life.  
At times we fabricated a picture of you  
that corresponded more to our expectations  
than to your true face.

You are the human face of our God.  
What wrong paths have we sometimes taken  
at the heart of our difficulties or in our desire to seek you.

No, you’re not some kind of vigilante of the super-human type;  
you are near us in all our difficulties in a very different way.  
You turn out to be the one who always surprises us  
by the way you show up when we least expect it.

The Samaritan Woman did not expect to meet you by the well that day, nor did Mary of Magdala when she came to the tomb that morning.  
This is how you reveal yourself to us, in an unexpected way.  
Give us, as to these two women,  
the ability to discover you  
where you are waiting for us.  
Amen

Dans des moments pas toujours faciles de nos vies  
nous partons à la recherche de ton visage,  
toi qui es le Christ notre guide de vie.  
Nous nous sommes à certains moments  
fabriqués une image de toi  
qui correspondait plus à nos attentes  
qu’à ton véritable visage.

Tu es le visage humain de notre de Dieu.  
Que de fausses routes avons-nous parfois prises  
au cœur de nos difficultés ou de notre volonté de te chercher.

Non tu n’es pas une sorte de justicier  
du genre Superman; tu es près de nous  
dans toutes nos difficultés d’une manière très différente.  
Tu te révèles celui qui nous surprend toujours  
par ta manière de te manifester quand on ne t’y attend le moins.

La Samaritaine ne s’attendait pas à te rencontrer près du puits  
ni Marie de Magdala quand elle est venue au tombeau.  
Tu te révèles ainsi à nous, de manière inattendue.  
Donne-nous comme à ces deux femmes,  
la capacité de te découvrir  
là où tu nous attends.  
Amen

(Pierre-Paul Lafond, for the General Council Worship Team)

## Scripture

Mark 8:27‒30

(Invite three or four different people to read the scripture passage in different ways, possibly different languages, acted out, from memory.)

## Music Ministry

Suggestions:

“[We Are a Rainbow](https://youtu.be/48rinNWfFqk)” by David Kai (youtu.be/48rinNWfFqk)

“[We Must Learn to Walk Together](https://youtu.be/3DpkFCLxgEs)” by Lisa Waites (youtu.be/3DpkFCLxgEs).  
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## Sermon/Reflection

Have a question-and-answer or panel sermon with two or three members from the congregation or from the community, with each preparing brief responses to the following questions:

1. Who do you say that Jesus is, and how has your identity shaped your understanding of Jesus?
2. How has this answer changed over time?
3. What has challenged or strengthened your understanding?
4. How does your understanding of Jesus shape how you live your life?

Share the [sermon from the Feb. 13 session](https://youtu.be/7-7tD5l2nrI), starting at 0:35.

Consider including recorded testimonies as well, such as [GC44 Feb 13: Testimony](https://youtu.be/eu_RonPdLcY)

## Invitation to Offering

We return some of the abundance of our lives to share with others who need a caring touch. Here is the work of our hands, and here is the love of our hearts. Accept them and use them, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Rev. Nancy Best, [All My Relations: Indigenous Day of Prayer Service 2022](https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/indigenous-day-prayer))

## Dedication

VU 538 For the Gift of Creation

## Pastoral Prayers

Holy One,  
We praise you for your deep and abiding love, which holds each one of us every moment of our lives.  
We praise you for your generous spirit and your infinite patience as you wait for us to embrace your transforming love and accept your forgiveness.  
Help us to bring these words of praise from our minds to our hearts so we can live into sharing your gracious compassion and extravagant blessings with all our neighbours, known and unknown.  
Accept, we pray, our sorrow and shame for the times when we have not shown compassion and mercy to those you have created in love and for love. Help us grow in courage and hope so we are no longer bound by the lies that have been spoken to us, free us from the untruths that prevent us from being your faithful partners in the healing of Creation.  
You have embodied truth and mercy, you have suffered for and with us―accept our faltering words of gratitude; breathe your Spirit upon us once again, and kindle in us the love that would ever reflect your creative joy and peace.  
Thank you, Creator, for inviting us to lay claims upon your heart; we come with these petitions, knowing that ours is a mutual relationship and you ask us to be your heart, and hands, and voice in this world.  
We pray for all the war-torn places in this world… We pray for the millions of displaced persons sojourning upon this earth, for all who have lost nearly everything… We pray for your precious children who are being murdered, trafficked, and enslaved… Thank you for holding our collective grief.  
We pray for our country; guide us and our leaders into the ways of truth-telling and compassion. While our truest citizenship is found in being with you, O God, help us to live responsibly and generously among all the people of this land.  
We pray for all your faithful people, that we and all who follow your pathways would embrace your wisdom and humility and embody your compassion.  
We pray for our communities, especially for those who are lonely or afraid and those who need healing of body, mind, and spirit. We pray for those who are hungry, for those who are unhoused. By the prompting of your Spirit, guide us so that we offer kind words and deeds of love in gratitude for all that we have received from your gracious kindness. Holy One, we thank you for all the countless people who have given their lives to ease the suffering that fills this world. Bless them and empower each of us to find our own ways to create justice and peace out of your love.  
We pray for those we hold closely to our hearts, for all who are grieving deep losses, for all who need mercy, love, healing… In silence we pray, entrusting them to your great compassion….  
Thank you, Creator. Thank you for your everlasting love. Amen.

(*Jan Jorgensen,* [*All God’s Beloved Children: Indigenous Day of Prayer Service 2022*](https://united-church.ca/worship-special-days/indigenous-day-prayer)*.*

The Rev. Jan Jorgensen shares ministry with Robert Patton, a Kanien'kehá:ka Congregational Designated Minister and Elder, and the people of Kahnawake United Church.)

## Hymn

VU 699 Live into Hope  
VU 697 O for a World

## Commissioning and Benediction

Be bold. Be brave. Be blessed, beloved.  
Be determined. Be deep. Be daring, disciples.  
Together, connected in the name of Love,  
wade through the waters. We are hip deep in glory;  
awash in hope, filled with love.

Amen