

# **Be Brave, Be Bold, and Stand Up Tall**

## **Service for use During Conference Meeting Weekend - May 27, 2018**

*Many of the elements of this service are the ones that will be used during the Service of Praise at the Annual Meeting of Conference held in North Battleford, Saskatchewan (Treaty 6).*

*Please feel welcome to adjust as appropriate for your local context.*

*There is a lot of music in this resource, feel welcome to use it all or however much make sense in your community. Hymns are taken from More Voices and Voices United but substitutions can be made depending on the resources available to you.*

**Love Us into Fullness (More Voices #81)** is used throughout the service with a verse being sung/repeated at different points. If this is an unfamiliar piece in your context you may wish to teach it at the beginning of the service, or perhaps substitute something else where it appears. Since each verse is quite short, you may wish to repeat each verse a few times at each point that it appears.

*The Theme **Be Brave, Be Bold, and Stand Up Tall** has been the theme message of President of Conference, Krystal Sheremeta, as she has travelled the Province visiting Presbyteries and Communities. She hopes that we will hold these words closely and that they will guide us as individuals, communities, and as The United Church of Canada in Saskatchewan as we look into a future that is both full of potential and possibility, uncertainty and challenge.*

### **GATHERING**

#### **Music Prelude:**

**Processional/Opening Hymn: More Voices #122 “This is the Day”**

#### **Lighting of Christ Candle:**

#### **Call to Worship:**

One: In the morning of our lives, God calls “Come”

**All: And we come with joy and energy, basking in new life.**

One: In the noontide of our lives, God calls “Come”

**All: And we come with knowledge and confidence, journeying in God’s light.**

One: In the evening of our lives, God calls “Come”

**All: And we come with experience and insight, remembering that God has always been with us.**

One: In the beginning and the ending and the beginning again, God calls “Come”

**All: And we come because it is enough for us to know that God calls us and then journeys with us.**

One: In this time and in this place, God calls “Come”

**All: And we come to worship our God who calls to us in love.**

## **Welcome & Announcements:**

### **Acknowledgement of the First Peoples of the Land and Traditional Territories:**

For thousands of years, Indigenous people have walked in this land, on their own country. Their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives. As we open our worship service today, we acknowledge that we are gathered in the traditional territory of the Cree, the Anishinaabe, the Lakota, Nakota, Dakota, and the homeland of the Métis Peoples – area most recently defined as Treaty 4/6, and we acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.

### **Opening Prayer:**

One: Holy one,  
you who are the source of all love  
and the ground of our being,

**All: we gather as your people today,  
rooted in your love.**

One: We are grateful for the opportunity to come together as your church. We think of those gathered today in North Battleford, to celebrate the ministries of The United Church of Canada in Saskatchewan Conference, knowing that they likewise think of each congregation.

**All: We pray that your Spirit of hope, healing, and life will continue to embolden us to be faithful followers of the Way of Jesus.**

One: May our worship today inspire us to be the winds of change you need to bring your peace, justice, reconciliation, and love into our hurting world.

**All: Amen.**

### **More Voices #81 “Love Us into Fullness” Verse 1**

### **Prayer of Confession and Call to Transformation:**

One: Merciful God,  
God of wisdom and truth,  
You know us inside and out,  
better than we even know ourselves.  
For thousands of years,

**All: You have beckoned to your people, saying, “Come.”  
And for thousands of years,  
matriarchs and patriarchs,  
poets and prophets,  
dreamers, artists, and activists,**

**have dared to go where you would lead,  
 have moved forward in faith.  
 You beckon us still,  
 And some days we rise when we hear the call.**

One: But other days, we shy away from the challenge of it.

**All: We worry how others might perceive us,  
 or whether everyone will want to hear what we have to say,  
 worried we might be mocked or scorned.  
 We stay silent when our voices are needed.  
 We refuse to see the pain and the injustice  
 our neighbours are facing,  
 withholding love our world so desperately needs.**

One: Nudge us from complacency,  
 push us beyond our comfort zone,  
 out into your waiting world.

**All: When we have stood still,  
 instead of following,  
 God forgive us,**

*Silence*

One: God hear our prayer,

**All: And in your mercy answer. Amen.**

**Words of Assurance:**

One: Even as we offer our prayers of confession we are already forgiven.  
 At the empty tomb,  
 God declared Life to be stronger than death,  
 Love to be stronger than Hate.  
 And we are called into this truth,  
 Into this life of faith,  
 To be light bearers in the world.  
 When we would be silent, God gives us our voices once again,  
 When we would remain still,  
 God nudges us ever onward.  
 God continues to lead us towards Life for all.  
 For in Jesus Christ we are reconciled back to God,  
 And nothing can separate us from a Love like that!

**All: Thanks be to God! Amen**

**More Voices #81 “Love Us into Fullness” Verse 1 (Reprise)**

**Alternative/Additional Hymn: Voices United #359 “He Came Singing Love”**

## **WORD**

**Theme Time for the Young and Young at Heart – A Hole in the Paper**  
(Full Script and Instructions follow)

**More Voices #81 “Love Us into Fullness” Verse 2**

**A Prayer for Insight and Understanding:**

**All: Spirit of the Living God,  
turn on the light of truth and wake up our hearts  
by the words we now declare and ponder.  
In ancient stories let us find fresh life,  
fresh hope and fresh courage for witness in your world.  
Amen.**

**First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8 (NRSV)**

[The prophet Isaiah said...]

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of God’s robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of God’s glory.’

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’

And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’

**Second Reading: Matthew 14:22-33 (NRSV)**

[Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray.

When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.

And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.'

He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus.

But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

**A Space for Special Music**  
(if appropriate in your community)

**Reflection: Be Brave, Be Bold, and Stand Up Tall**  
(full Script follows)

**Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed**

In North Battleford this morning, Conference delegates stand together and affirm our shared faith as will thousands of worshippers throughout This United Church of Canada in so many spaces, many like ours, many very different.

We are invited to join them and allow these words to join us together—just as our stories of faith join us with Christians of so many other Traditions, across the globe, and throughout History.

Would the congregation please rise as you are able as we affirm our faith together, joining in as you feel comfortable

**We are not alone  
we live in God's world**

**We believe in God:**  
 who has created and is creating  
 who has come in Jesus  
 the word made flesh,  
 to reconcile and make new,  
 who works in us and others  
 by the Spirit.

**We trust in God.**

**We are called to be the church:**  
 to celebrate God's presence,  
 to live with respect in Creation,  
 to love and serve others,  
 to seek justice and resist evil,  
 to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen,  
 our judge and our hope.

**In life, in death, in life beyond death  
 God is with us.**

**We are not alone.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**More Voices #81 "Love Us into Fullness" Verse 2 (Reprise)**

**Alternative/Additional Hymn: More Voices #23 "Come, O Holy Spirit"**

### **RESPONSE**

**An Invitation to Offering:**

**One:** We are a people called by God to be bold in our striving to give Jesus' life and teachings meaning in our time and place in history. As we present our offering today, may we also present our whole selves to further the work of God's reign here and now.

**Offering Hymn: Voices United # 468 Let us Talents and Tongues Employ**

**Dedication of Offering:**

**All:** Source of Love and Ground of our Being, accept and bless all we offer this day. Grant that, in responding to your Spirit, we heed your call to serve your world in Jesus' name. Amen.

**More Voices 81 "Love Us into Fullness" Verse 3**

## **Prayers of the People**

Gracious God, whose love knows no bounds,  
 who seeks wholeness and reconciliation for all peoples,  
 we bring our prayers; those we speak aloud as well as the unspoken prayers of our hearts.

We pray especially for our siblings around the world  
 and within the borders of our own nation and province,  
 who know what it is to live without:

without security  
 without freedom from fear  
 without the hope of a better tomorrow  
 without water that is safe to drink  
 without a belief in those meant to protect.

We pray, too, for those whose relationship with their government is one of fear and struggle.

We hold them all in our hearts and pray that they might know the safety of your love and feel the wholeness of your loving embrace.

Hear our prayer O God.

We pray for our leaders -  
 those of our communities and nations and our church -  
 as they face decisions made in the past,  
 and seek a better envisioned future.  
 We hold them in our hearts  
 and pray that they might lead with prophetic voices for our future.

Hear our prayer O God.

We pray for our neighbors -  
 those who are near to us and those further away.  
 As our friends and families face new joys and new sorrows,  
 new uncertainties, new hopes,  
 as they begin new adventures and try to heal old wounds,  
 Loving God, help them to know  
 that in their brokenness and their blessings they are your beloved,  
 and a beloved part of this family.

We lift up these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts.

*Silence*

We pray using the words that Jesus taught his friends and followers.  
 For as a child turns to her Mother, so we turn to God and pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your name,  
 your kingdom come,  
 your will be done,  
 on earth as in heaven.  
 Give us today our daily bread.  
 Forgive us our sins  
 as we forgive those who sin against us.  
 Save us from the time of trial  
 and deliver us from evil.  
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
 now and forever. Amen.**

**More Voices #81 “Love Us into Fullness” Verse 3 (Reprise)**

**Closing Hymn:   Voices United #509 I, The Lord of Sea and Sky**

**Commissioning and Blessing** (a paraphrase of a Franciscan Blessing):

May the Creator bless us with *discomfort* at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May the Creator bless us with *anger* at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May the Creator bless us with *tears* to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may the Creator bless us with enough *foolishness* to believe that we can make a difference in this world and this Church, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all God’s children, especially the poor and excluded.

As we leave here today to live into the Lord’s requirements of doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God (Micha 6:8) let us remember that as in the past, the present, and all the tomorrows to come, we are watched over, we are cared for, and we are blessed as we serve God, this community, and those outside this community.

Go in true partnership and service with the blessing of God.

**Recessional Hymn:   Voices United #352 “I Danced in the Morning”**

**Musical Postlude**

*This Liturgy was prepared by President of Conference Krystal Sheremeta, President Elect Bonnie Morton, Cam Fraser, and Conference Personnel Minister Liz Mackenzie.*



## **Theme Conversation — A Hole in the Paper (Script)**

*In this Theme Conversation, the story of Jesus & Peter walking on Water is paired with a bit of a “magic trick” of cutting a hole in an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper that is big enough to step through. It probably warrants some practice both to accomplish the cutting of a hole and to time the cutting with the story. You may want to have two people lead this, one to cut the hole and one to tell the story. Feel free to adjust script as you see fit!*

I have a piece of paper here. Can someone confirm for me that this is an ordinary piece of paper?

*Have child check.*

Who here thinks I can cut a hole in this paper?

Who thinks I can cut a hole big enough for my whole body to go through?

Who wants to see me try?

*Begin cutting*

In our story today Jesus’ friends are in boat when the wind starts to blow and the waves start to rock the boat around and they are scared! And just when they thought they could not get more scared, suddenly they see someone – WALKING ON THE WATER!

They think it is a ghost until they hear the voice of their friend Jesus – “It’s me. Don’t be afraid” (easy for him to say!).

But one of Jesus’ friends, Peter, hears him and actually calls out. “Jesus, if it’s you, call for me and I will come out on the water.” The rest of Jesus’ friends must have said to each other WHAT IS PETER THINKING?

But Jesus says come.

So Peter does.

He puts one leg over the boat.

And then another.

And he walks.

On Water.

Just like Jesus did.

Now, the story goes on that when he saw the waves and wind, he got afraid and began to sink

until Jesus took him by the hand and helped him back into the boat, so a lot of tellings of this story focus on the fact that Peter sank. But today, I want to celebrate that before he sank – HE WALKED!

Now just like Peter’s pals, we might wonder, “WHAT WAS PETER THINKING?”

You know what I think? That Peter was thinking, if Jesus says I can do this, I can do this!

I bet if you asked Peter that morning if he could walk on water, he’d laugh at you. But when Jesus looked at him, he saw someone who could answer the call to walk on water. And when Jesus saw that, Peter could see it in himself too.

Sometimes, we do not have any idea of what we can do, who we can be, until someone else helps us see it. Maybe that’s what it means to be called by God, to see something inside ourselves, each one of us, and our churches, that we never thought was there before!

Now back to our paper.

*Cutting Should be done by now.*

When we looked at this paper, we didn’t think there was a hole inside big enough to put a body through. But let’s look at it differently.

*Unfold the hole.*

We see what was there the **whole** time!

*Step through the hole or ask a Child to do so.*

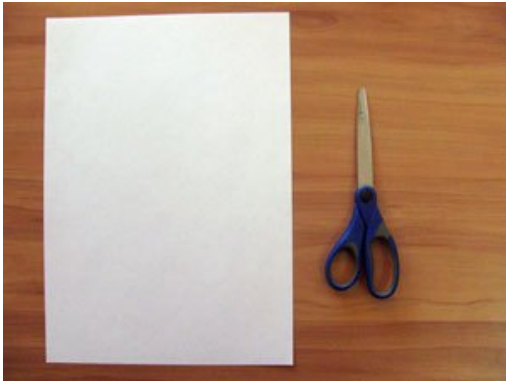
I wonder if part of our call to follow Jesus, our call to be church, is a call to imagine that within us there is more than we could ever imagine, and to be people who call one another to imagine what we might do...

If we only step out of the boat.

And take our first step!

### A Hole in the Paper (Instructions)

1. Tighten your shoelaces, because this will blow your socks off!
2. You need a piece of paper and a pair of scissors.
3. Fold the Paper in  $\frac{1}{2}$  length wise
4. Make a first cut away from the fold across the paper stopping a few cm from the edge.
5. Make second beside the first from the edge and stop a few cm from the fold.
6. Go back and forth, **always** leaving a few cm.
7. Make sure your final cut is from the fold to the open edge.
8. Go along the fold, cutting the pieces held together leaving the first and last intact.
9. This should allow you to unfold the paper into a large hole.
10. Practice a few times to make sure you can do this.



## **Be Brave, Be Bold, and Stand Up Tall – Reflection Script**

*Feel free to use as is or to adjust to fit your context. Maybe there are local stories from your own community that will bring these ideas to life.*

Maybe you've heard this one before...

Frustrated with all the suffering and pain they saw on the evening news, a long time church-goer, turns off the tv, walks out into a field and prays (or maybe shouts at the heavens is a more accurate term).

*WHY GOD?*

*WHY DO YOU ALLOW POVERTY?*

*WHY DO YOU ALLOW WAR?*

*WHY DO YOU ALLOW PEOPLE TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE THEY DO?*

*WHY ARE YOU JUST SITTING THERE DOING NOTHING ABOUT IT?*

The long time church-goer pauses to catch their breath when, in a rare and miraculous moment, the clouds part, the heavens open and a gentle voice replies from above.

FUNNY. I WAS ABOUT TO ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION.

Jesus' followers are in a boat, travelling from one side of the lake to the other when the waves begin to rise and the wind begins to howl. It's also at night so one needs to question whether any of them had their safe boating certification.

As their fear reaches a peak they see a figure walking across the water.

They assume it is a ghost, which I am certain is not helping the level of fear.

That's when they hear a voice.

The voice of their friend.

The voice of their teacher.

The voice of Jesus.

*Take heart. It is I. Don't be afraid.*

Peter is quick to answer.

*Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.*

Jesus says, *Come*.

And he does it.

Peter does it.

He steps over the side.

He puts one leg in front of the other.

And he walks.

On the water.

Be Brave, Be Bold, Stand Up Tall.

I often imagine the rest of them in the boat hearing Peter shout *command me to come to you on the water* and saying to each other.

*What is Peter thinking?*

But you know what I think Peter was thinking?

I think Peter was thinking of that time when he and his brother were mending nets, and a teacher walked along the beach, and said, *Come and Follow Me*.

I think Peter was thinking about that time when their teacher sent them out two by two to go to towns and villages and do what he'd been doing.

I think Peter was thinking of what happened earlier in this chapter of Matthew (although Peter likely knew it as "earlier that afternoon") when Jesus was surrounded by 5000 people in a deserted place and when evening came and the disciples asked him to *send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.*'

Jesus said to them, *'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.'*

You give them something to eat.

The disciples brought what little they had and Jesus gave thanks for it, broke it and gave it to them in baskets.

And they indeed gave them something to eat!

Peter fell through the waves but first he walked.

The disciples misunderstood and messed up.

But first they fed a crowd.

Be Brave, Be Bold, Stand Up Tall.

When we affirm our faith in the words of A New Creed we affirm that we have been called to be the church.

BE

THE

CHURCH

This of course means to gather together to worship and pray...

*to Celebrate God's Presence.*

But then we complicate things by saying

*Live with Respect in Creation.*

*Love and Serve Others.*

*Seek Justice and Resist Evil.*

I wonder where, we, not the whole of the United Church, but we, the people in this room, I wonder where we might be called to live with respect in creation today?

What stream, lake, watershed calls for our respect?

What eco-system longs for our cooperation?

And I wonder who there is, within walking distance or a few KM of this place today feels unloved? Feels forgotten? Feels like the people who sing and pray in this building don't even know they exist.

And I wonder how we might learn their names? Hear their stories? Build something beautiful? How we, now knowing who they are, might offer an act of service?

And I wonder if there is justice that needs seeking in our immediate area?

I wonder who are our fellow children of God who long for better conditions in their children's schools? Who long for safe water to drink? Who long for their children to be safe?

I wonder what it might mean for us to learn the answers to these questions, and then to ask ourselves, what might we do? What small intentional step might we take, and what might it

look like when one step becomes two?

Then three?

Then four?

I think we'd be walking.

Maybe not on water.

But certainly on new ground.

On a new path.

Be Brave, Be Bold, Stand Up Tall.

And when the songs we sing in this place, the prayers we pray and the stories of Jesus we ponder, when these fuel our walking forth from here, then I think we've begun embodying where I left off in the creed before...

*To Proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our Judge and our Hope...*

Not our judge as in the one whose watching and waiting for us to be bad, but the one whose example of love and sacrifice, the one by whose stance against suffering we judge whether we're on the right track.

And our Hope, not as the one who is going to come and make all things right in the blink of the eye (maybe like the proverbial church-goer in our opening story) but the one who gives us Hope by helping us see we can indeed make the steps towards right ways that we have been called to. Whose example inspires us to make our own faithful steps.

Peter walked on Water.

Isaiah said send me.

The Disciples gave them something to eat.

And we are called to be the church.

Be Brave, Be Bold, Stand Up Tall.

In life. In death. In life beyond death.

God is with us. We are not Alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.