**Notes to the Worship Leader**

*Thank you so much for being part of this Tri-Region-wide worship service. Representatives from Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls, and Western Ontario Waterways regions have worked together on this service and the worship times that will take place during the Tri-Regional Spring Meeting. We have shaped these services around Moderator Carmen Lansdowne’s theme of “Life Together”, embracing the realities of our congregations today and recognizing how important it is for us to work together in our shared ministry of living Christ-centred lives, caring for people who need care, and spreading the Good News whenever and wherever appropriate.*

*We are hoping that this service brings you and your congregation a little closer together, and helps you feel connected with the wider church. To this end we are working to bring you video resources from all across the regions from different cultures and languages and backgrounds. At time of writing, our plan is to provide you with videos of*

*Welcome, Centring Time, Opening Prayer, Anthem, Invitation to Offering, Ezra 3:1-13, Acts 2:42-47, Psalm 133, Sermon, Benediction*

*These will be available as YouTube links, as well as downloadable if the internet connection at your church won’t support streaming video.*

*We have also provided the entire service in a printed form so that you can lead it without using any of the video resources if that’s a better fit for your community of faith.*

*We invite you to adjust and modify this as much or as little as you want. The service order was laid out similar to one of our congregations, and we encourage you to move parts around however you need to. The hymns also have various options, and even draw from some other popular hymnbooks that people across the regions use.*

*The responsive Psalm 133 was written especially for this worship service by Devon Hansen and Greg Simpson of St. Andrew’s United Church in Chatham, and you are encouraged to use and share it.*

*The written sermon is an edited transcription of Greg Simpson’s sermon that is also available as a video and download link. Greg is on the Congregational Support Commission of Antler River Watershed Regional Council, and this has certainly shaped his message. Please feel free to preach from the written transcription, edit or modify it as you need, or share the video as best fits your context.*

*Thank you again for leading worship on May 26th, and stepping bravely into the Moderator’s invitation to explore how we do “Life Together.”*

*Blessings,*

*Whitton Daley, Debbie McMillan, Greg Simpson, Jane Sullivan, Irene Ty*

**Prelude**

**Land Acknowledgement**

Today we recognize that our broader church connects us from many different areas and locations, but the land that is known as *[your city/town/municipality]* today is the traditional land of the *[fill in names of indigenous inhabitants of your area]* also know as *[use indigenous names if available]*. These Indigenous Nations agreed to the mutual sharing of the land, with obligations and responsibilities to the environment. Throughout the years people of many nations and nationalities have been part of the creation of the world we see and know around us. Many of them were oppressed, many were not given choice or liberty over their involvement. Today we pray our thanks for the conservancy and lessons of all oppressed people in our past and renew our commitment to recognize and undo legacy injustices, listen to the stories, and build better relationships between all races and nations. May this acknowledgement be more than just words, may it spur us to action toward reconciliation and right relations. Let us come before the Creating One as we offer our prayers, hear holy stories, and sing sacred songs.

**Welcome**

Welcome, friends, to this shared service of worship, shared today by congregations all across the Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls, and Western Ontario Waterways Regions. Wherever you are today, we all gather together in spirit, united by our common faith and shared journey. Today, we celebrate the vibrant diversity of our communities, affirming our commitment to walk this path of faith together. Let us worship God, who calls us into a life of love, peace, grace and community

**Passing the Peace**

**Centring Time**

Let us take a moment to centre our hearts and minds. If you feel comfortable to do so, I invite you to close your eyes for a moment. Pause, breathe deeply, and feel the presence of the Holy Spirit among us, binding us together across towns, cities, rivers, forests and fields. In this sacred time, let us open ourselves to the hope and unity that God offers.

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

As we light the Christ candle today, let it be a symbol of Christ’s presence among us and within our wider United Church community. May this light remind us of the unity we share in Jesus Christ, shining across our regions, bringing warmth and clarity to our hearts.

 **Call to Worship (responsive)**

One: In many places, we gather:

**All: We are one in spirit.**

One: From many backgrounds, we come:

**All: We are one in Christ.**

One: For many purposes, we serve:

**All: We are one in our calling.**

One: Together, let us worship God!

**All: Who makes us one body, one spirit, in Christ.**

**Hymn: We Are One Voices United 402**

**Alternate: Called by Earth and Sky More Voices 135**

**Alternate: We Are One in the Spirit The Book of Praise 471**

**Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, in your wisdom, you have called us together to reflect the body of Christ. As we gather in your presence, we acknowledge our imperfections and the times we have fallen short of loving as you have taught us. Forgive us for the moments we have acted in isolation rather than seeking the strength of our community. Open our eyes to the beauty of our shared life, and strengthen our hearts for the journey we undertake together. Teach us to cherish each other’s gifts and to face our challenges with courage and love. As we worship today, knit us closer to one another and to you, mending our spirits and renewing our purpose. In Christ’s name, we pray, Amen

**Special Music / Anthem**

**Family Ministry Moment**

*During the Family Ministry Moment, you could explore the value and sacredness of gathering together. Start by inviting young people to reflect on their own experiences of coming together with others. Encourage them to think about the different contexts and emotions associated with these gatherings. Your role is to guide them gently towards understanding that being together is not just fun but also deeply meaningful and sacred. Listen actively to their responses, and help them connect their personal experiences to the broader theme of community in our faith. This is a wonderful opportunity to show them that every time we gather (not just Sunday mornings), we create something special and sacred that echoes the community life we cherish in our church. Here are some possible questions to get you started:*

Can you think of times or reasons you get together with other people? (Learning, holidays, when people are sad or celebrating)

What do you do when you gather with people? (Eat, sing, play games, traditions)

Why do you think it feels special to be with family and friends? (feel loved, makes me happy, share stories, make memories)

Can you think of a time when being with others helped you feel better when you were sad or scared?

How do we show we care about each other when we are together? (listening, sharing our things, helping each other, just by being there)

**Prayers of the People (responsive)**

One: God of compassion and justice, we lift up our prayers to you, knowing you hear the cries of all who are in need. Teach us to see your face in the least of our siblings, as we remember your call to serve them.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

One: For those who hunger in a world of plenty, for children who go to bed without food, and for families who struggle to put a meal on the table, may we be moved to action and compassion.

**All: Give us the will to feed the hungry.**

One: For those who thirst, those without access to clean water, and for communities ravaged by drought, may we work together to quench their thirst and steward the resources of your creation.

**All: Give us the resolve to provide water to the thirsty.**

One: For those who lack shelter and those who are displaced from their homes by conflict or disaster, may we open our hearts and our communities to provide refuge and peace.

**All: Give us the strength to clothe the naked and shelter the homeless.**

One: For those who suffer in isolation—those imprisoned, those who are lonely, and those marginalized by society—may we bring the light of fellowship and care to their lives.

**All: Give us the courage to visit and comfort the lonely and imprisoned.**

One: For the oppressed, the exploited, and all who struggle for freedom and justice, may we lend our voices and our actions to their cause, reflecting your calls for justice.

**All: Give us the determination to support the oppressed.**

One: For our own community, that we may recognize the needs around us and respond with love, breaking down the barriers of fear or indifference that separate us.

**All: Help us to love one another as you have loved us.**

One: God of all, we pray for the church worldwide, that it may be a source of hope and a beacon of your love in the world. Strengthen us to live out the gospel, not just in word, but in deed.

**All: Inspire us to act as your hands and feet on Earth.**

One: We pray all this in the name of Jesus, who taught us the fullness of love and the power of humble service.

**All: Amen.**

**Life and Work of the Church / Announcements**

**Invitation to Offering**

As we gather today across all our regions, we recognize and give thanks for the many ways you contribute to the life and work of the Church. Each act of service, each moment of time, every skill shared, enriches communities and extends good work in the world. Your generosity in spirit and action help to light the path for others, reflecting the love of Christ in countless ways.

We are also deeply grateful for the financial gifts that sustain and empower the wider mission of our church. Today, as we prepare our offerings, we especially highlight the Mission and Service fund—a vital artery through which the lifeblood of our ministry flows to the far corners of our nation and beyond. This fund supports everything from local food banks and international relief efforts, to schools and micro-loans, to water and health care, embodying our commitment to live out the Gospel.

As we come together in this moment of giving, let us do so with open hearts and hands. May we continue to be generous in all aspects of our lives—giving gratefully of our financial resources, our time, our talents, and our skills. Each contribution, no matter the form it takes, is an essential thread in the fabric of our shared ministry.

Let us give as we have received, abundantly and with joy, knowing that through our combined efforts, we are doing God’s work, making a tangible difference in the world. Your generosity not only sustains but also expands the reach of our collective mission—sharing God’s love and justice with all.

**Offertory Time**

**Prayer of Dedication (together)
Generous God, we offer to you the gifts of our hearts and the resources you have entrusted to us. Bless these offerings, the finances collected here, those given digitally and all other shared resources and talents as a sign of our shared commitment to your work in the world. May they strengthen the church and spread your love and justice near and far. With grateful hearts, we dedicate all gifts to you. Amen.**

**Hymn: Come and Find the Quiet Centre Voices United 374**

**Alternate: Help Us Accept Each Other Glory to God 754**

**Prayer for Illumination**

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Illuminate our understanding, inspire our thoughts, and draw us closer to you. Amen.

**Scripture**:

Responsive Psalm 133 - attached

Alternate: Psalm 133 – VU 856

Ezra 3:1-13

Acts 2:42-47

**Message “Life Together**”

**Hymn: To Show by Touch and Word Voices United 427**

**Alternate: There’s a Wideness In God’s Mercy Voices United 271**

**Benediction**

Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast to what is good, support one another in faith. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.

**Postlude**