



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Volunteers play a vital role in building the kingdom of God through their work in our congregations and ministries. It is important that we celebrate their contributions on a regular basis. Volunteers who feel valued and appreciated are more likely to feel connected to their church community and inspired to continue contributing to its ministry. Showing appreciation for our volunteers is one of the many ways that we can answer Christ's call to "love one another" (John 13:34).



Everyday Expressions of Gratitude

It is important for congregations to demonstrate appreciation for volunteers on a regular basis through small, everyday expressions of gratitude.

- Say thank you often and in different ways (in person, cards, church announcements).
- Be sure to thank ALL types of volunteers (teachers, gardeners, cleaners, leaders, etc.)
- Bring treats and/or small gifts for volunteers (a cup of coffee, flowers, baked goods).
- Name specific gifts that you recognize in your volunteers. For example, instead of saying, "you are doing a great job," say "I noticed how kind you are with our seniors and I really appreciate the extra time you put in getting to know them."
- Offer opportunities for education and training to enhance their volunteer work.
- Celebrate achievements in your ministry (even small ones) often. For example, if you have more teens in youth group this month than last month, celebrate with your volunteers!

The Christian Reformed Church of North America has a helpful list of **10 Tips for Recognizing Church Volunteers**: <https://www.crcna.org/news/10-tips-recognizing-church-volunteers>.

Host a Volunteer Recognition Event

When people think of volunteer recognition events, they often think of dinners or banquets. But, volunteer recognition events can take any form and don't need to cost a lot of money. The important thing is to recognize and celebrate your volunteers, which can be done over a potluck meal as well as it can over a fancy dinner!

When planning the event, consider the interests and needs of your volunteers. Ask them how they would like to be celebrated, and don't be afraid to be creative!

- Would they enjoy a spa day? Ask if there are any manicurists and massage therapists in your



All photos included are from Amberlea Presbyterian Church's (Pickering, Ontario) Volunteer Recognition Sunday.



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congregation who would be willing to volunteer their time to put together a spa day for church volunteers.

- ➡ Would they enjoy attending a sporting event or concert? Ask members of the congregation to donate money to purchase tickets to an upcoming event for volunteers to attend together.
- ➡ Would they enjoy a tea party? Ask the youth group to help prepare and host a tea party for church volunteers.
- ➡ Would they enjoy a trip to the beach or a picnic? Organize for ride sharing and invite everyone to bring food for a potluck party in a park or at the beach.

Whatever you do, the important thing is that your volunteers feel recognized and appreciated. As part of your event, be sure to thank them, not only as a group but also as individuals. If possible, lift up and celebrate the individual gifts that each of your volunteers bring to your ministry.

Celebrate Volunteers on a Special Sunday in your Church

Amberlea Presbyterian Church in Pickering, Ontario holds an annual Volunteer Appreciation Sunday. During the service, they thank their many volunteers. After the service, they celebrate with cake, balloons, flowers, and gifts.



Amberlea Presbyterian Church in worship on Volunteer Appreciation Sunday. Note the “thanks” balloons on display at the front of the sanctuary.

There are many ways you can celebrate your volunteers during worship:

- ➡ a song dedicated specifically to volunteers;
- ➡ a special blessing for volunteers;
- ➡ a special prayer of thanksgiving;
- ➡ presentation of certificates and gifts of appreciation.



Gifts for volunteers and cake for all at Amberlea!