

Thanks to you...



# Change is Happening!



In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:10-11



 Presbyterian  
World Service  
& Development

## Worship Resource

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The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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All hymns are from the Book of Praise 1997

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# Preparation for Worship



Here are some things you may do to help prepare for worship:

- Consider making PWS&D educational materials available such as the Annual Report and *PWSDevelopments* newsletter to anyone who might like to learn more about PWS&D
- Order PWS&D's bulletin covers for worship from The Book Room
- Post the PWS&D poster
- Create a special bulletin board or PowerPoint presentation using quotes and scripture along with stories, maps, photos and resources from the PWS&D website
- Request a PWS&D audio-visual presentation for use during or after service, such as the PWS&D "Change is Happening!" video
- Photocopy the Call to Worship, Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness to use as a bulletin insert (the text can also be downloaded from the PWS&D website at [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd))
- Make available the *Gifts of Change* catalogue which provides simple ways individuals and congregations can support specific themes, such as water and sanitation, agriculture programs, etc.
- Consider having a special PWS&D offering using PWS&D offering envelopes that can be ordered from The Book Room.

# Worship Service

## Call to Worship

*(Psalm 95:1-7a)*

Leader: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**All: Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!**

Leader: For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

**All: The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.**

Leader: O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

**All: For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.**

## Welcome and Introduction

Today, on Presbyterian World Service & Development Sunday, we remember the work of PWS&D in prayer and with thanksgiving.

PWS&D is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is *our* agency! Through PWS&D, Canadian Presbyterians work with partners around the world, taking part in the mission of Christ by combating long-term poverty, responding to emergencies, protecting refugees and advocating for change.

Sometimes, when we see all the need in the world — poverty, crisis, wars and disasters — we feel overwhelmed and wonder what we can do. But Jesus has given us the strength and the opportunity to respond, and change *is* happening. Today, we remember how our gifts can serve God’s work and do God’s will. Today we are reminded how, in God’s hands, our gifts have the power to lift spirits, to spark hope, to nurture love and transform lives.

Come, let us worship God.



## Suggested Hymns

- 63 O sing a new song to the Lord  
474 The love of God comes close  
630 When we are living  
661 We give thee but thine own  
674 In the bulb there is a flower  
712 Arise, your light is come  
722 Lord, whose love  
736 For the healing of the nations  
760 Where cross the crowded ways of life  
762 When the poor ones  
784 Thy kingdom come — on bended knee  
802 For the fruits of all creation



## Scripture Readings

Proverbs 3:1-10

Psalm 85:8-13

1 John 4:7-16

## Prayer of Adoration & Confession

Gracious and loving Lord,

We worship you in joyful offerings of praise and thanksgiving  
through Jesus Christ.

You are our God who has come to us with outstretched arms of  
mercy, love and reconciliation.

We are called to celebrate that love and give witness to your  
reconciliation as we minister in feeding the hungry,  
comforting the poor and dispossessed, defending the  
powerless, and strengthening the weak.

You are the Author of life who gives us sustaining grace to  
do all things.

For this we praise and glorify you, Lord.

Hear our prayer and accept this worship offering.

God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are sinners, that we have  
done you and our fellows wrong.

Our pride keeps us from truly loving others and from extending  
your message of grace and compassion.

In our indifference we have neglected the needs around us and  
failed to honour you by our faith confession.

Lord, forgive us. Give us the spark in our hearts to commit to  
your kingdom's vision.

Empower us to build a stronger and more genuine faith with  
hearts that embrace you.

We praise you for all blessings, received and those yet to come,  
for you are our Great Provider, the true source of life.

We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

## **Assurance of Pardon**

Let your hearts rest assured that the love of God is  
greater than our sin.

It covers us by Christ's blood in forgiveness and redemption.  
In him we are pardoned.

This is the good news of the gospel.

Thanks be to God!

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Great Maker and Sustainer of All Things, we thank you for the joy  
of creation on this day you have given us to come and worship.

We are privileged to be called your beloved sons and daughters,  
and are blessed that we can find meaning and reason for being  
within you.

We can rest assured that in you we have our hope, purpose,  
meaning and identity.

Compassionate God, we affirm your unity and grace, and declare  
your healing to all peoples.

Help us nurture the seeds planted in our hearts — seeds of  
peace and justice.

We lift prayers for our global neighbours, especially those  
living in fear and poverty, victims of tragedies and hardship,  
the imprisoned, the neglected, the abused and oppressed,  
and for those who have lost hope.

Grant us the courage to reach out to them with your hands  
so they might know your abundant love and presence.

As your church, we desire to be mission-minded, with a clear  
sense of commitment and a new understanding of your call  
to service.

And so we pray for the vision and work of our church through Presbyterian World Service & Development, for its staff, committee and volunteers.

Illumine and empower them to be your agents of change so that Christ's ministry might continue and the work of your kingdom be done.

Transform our lives and enable all of us to be healers and agents of reconciliation and mercy to those most vulnerable and in most need.

Revive us by the power of your Holy Spirit and place a new song in our hearts.

For these blessings and for your promise to always be with us we offer our prayers of praise and thanksgiving through your Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.



# Children's Story

## "Growing in Christ"

*Galatians 5:22-26*

This lesson shares with children how things grow and mature over time with proper care and nurturing. We also are called to spiritual growth by making efforts to cultivate the gifts of God in us, not only for our own sake, but also to reflect God's care of others as a natural expression of that growth.

Things you can use:

- Pair of baby/small shoes
- Piece of baby/infant clothing, i.e. shirt, pants, bib, etc.
- Small piece of exercise equipment, i.e. handgrips, small dumbbell, skipping rope, etc.
- Various kinds of plant seeds

Show the children the pieces of clothing and ask if they think they ever wore any of these in the past — when and for how long? Then ask, "Why are you not wearing these today? What happened to you that you can't wear them now?" Explain that growing and changes happening to the body mean that they are developing properly and are healthy.

Next, show the different exercise props and ask what they think is the purpose for using them. Tell them that they are used to help us exercise our bodies and make our muscles stronger and bigger so that we can do things better and faster (you can specify what each piece of equipment can help us do better).

To illustrate this point, perhaps you can arrange to have an adult volunteer come forward at this point to show a “fit” arm muscle. Draw a parallel between faith and muscles and explain that just as muscles get stronger when they are exercised, faith also needs exercise to grow.

Now show the children the seeds and explain the different kinds. When seeds are properly planted, watered and cared for, in due time they bring forth their harvest — apples, oranges, pears, grapes, etc. This is the process of growth and change.

By these examples, make sure the children understand the importance of growth not only of things, but more importantly of us. Share with them the Galatians reading of the fruit of the Spirit emphasizing that, as God’s people, this is something we are all called to develop in our lives. God wants the wonderful gift of love that has come into all our hearts to cause us to grow bigger and change for the better. And when we change in this way, we can become more mature, loving, helpful and caring to others around us. Just as regular seeds must first be planted in order to yield a harvest, spiritual seeds from God must be planted in order for us to yield spiritual fruit.

The important point here is not that the fruit are simply ours to enjoy, but we are to share them with others. One of the ways we share is by supporting PWS&D with our prayers and gifts. And when we all do this, our relationships become stronger, our fellowship matures and our “spiritual muscles” grow.



# Sample Sermon

## "Love Passionately Given"

*Proverbs 3:1-10*

*1 John 4:7-16*

"Love" is a very popular word in our society and people spend much of their lives in search of it. But as we all know, this often goes unfulfilled, is often misunderstood and is more than often misused. The latest search on Amazon.com reveals some interesting results: when you type in the word "money," it lists over 90,000 book titles, "sex" has nearly 90,000, "heaven" has over 27,000, "God" has over 170,000, and for "love" there are over 240,000 book titles listed.

If you Google the word "love" you will get over 4.2 billion hits with some websites called, [ilovedogs.com](http://ilovedogs.com), [ilovecheese.com](http://ilovecheese.com) and [ilovelucy.com](http://ilovelucy.com). If you're looking for a partner there is [trueromancedatingservice.com](http://trueromancedatingservice.com), [lovetest.com](http://lovetest.com) and [matchmaker.com](http://matchmaker.com). There's even a website called, [thelovecalculator.com](http://thelovecalculator.com), which claims to give you the odds of your relationship lasting!

The common element in these sites is that love is seen as something that arises exclusively out of human desire and belonging, solely within the realm of human gratification. It is created *by* humanity *for* humanity. This seems to be the way that many people see it.

One man wrote to the popular columnist with a problem: "Dear Abby, I am in love and I am having an affair with two different women other than my wife. I love my wife but I love these other women too. Please tell me what to do, but don't give me any of that morality stuff." He signed it, *Too much love for only one*. Abby's reply was classic. She wrote: "Dear *Too much love for only one*. The only difference between humans and animals is morality. Please write to a veterinarian."

The Scriptures reveal to us a love that is more than something entangled with mere feelings and emotions. They proclaim a love that is real, genuine and beyond superficial human fancies. We are invited to embrace this love. God's message for us is clear and profound, according to John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." God's love is evident in the very fact that God gave Jesus as the best expression of that love.



Several years ago a psychologist named three types of Christmas gift-givers and the characteristics of each. One is the Duty-Gift Giver. This person feels an obligation to buy a gift; it really doesn't matter what it is, and not a lot of thought goes into it. Anything will do.

The second is the Traditional Gift Giver. This person always chooses something appropriate, like a book for the coffee table. It's always an acceptable choice but maybe not a really personal gift. It's nice, sends the right message and it never goes over budget.

The third type of giver is called the Passionate Giver. This person enthusiastically looks for just the right gift for the right person. The giver knows the right colour, the right size, and doesn't mind going over budget if need be. The gift fits the need or desire of the recipient regardless of budget. The giver is simply happy to give it. Such a gift, naturally, is deeply appreciated by the recipient and elicits the most genuine and heartfelt thanks.



God is a Passionate Giver. The gift to us was not given as something just to get by with or out of obligation. Jesus Christ was the very best God had to offer; the gift was given for our sake, but with utter passion for God's sake. At the very heart of who we are as Christians, this concept of love is what defines us and our relationship with our Lord — that God, motivated by love, gave passionately and extravagantly to us.



Love is the foundation of the fruit of the Spirit: *joy* is love that sings; *peace* is love that rests; *patience* is love that endures; *kindness* is love's touch; *goodness* is love's character; *faithfulness* is love's habit; *self-control* is love holding the reins. It is this love that has the power to transform us and change lives one by one.

David knew this love. Through Nathan, God said to him, "I will be his father, and he will be my son. My love will never be taken away from him. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever; your throne will be established forever."

The prophet Isaiah spoke of this love to the people: "I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, do not be afraid; for I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west."

Jesus, the Son of God, is this love: "...In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11).

Let us be truly thankful then for such a passionate gift that is beyond our highest expectations but one that is perfectly suited for us. Once we lose our sense of gratitude, the gift's meaning is lost and the high price paid for it is forgotten. There's a story about two friends bumping into one another on the street one day. One of them looked sad, almost on the verge of tears. His friend asked, "What has the world done to you, my old friend?" The sad fellow said, "Let me tell you. Three weeks ago an uncle died and left me \$40,000." The friend said, "Wow, that's a lot of money." The sad fellow said, "But two weeks ago a cousin I never even knew died, and left me \$85,000 free and clear." His friend replied, "Sounds like you've been blessed...." The fellow quickly came back, "You don't understand! Last week my great-aunt passed away. I inherited almost a quarter of a million dollars." Now the friend was really confused. "Then, why do you look so glum?" The guy said, "This week... Nothing!"

That's the trouble sometimes with receiving something wonderful — we can easily take it for granted and eventually come to expect only good things. This is the "entitlement mindset" that has permeated both our society and the church. We have been blessed to live in a land of plenty, and as a result we have become complacent. Many times we are completely unwilling to give thanks to anyone for anything.

The Gospel message tells us that love's power is in the fact that it was expressed to the world in a concrete way and that it was given with utmost passion. It isn't connected with the whims of our emotions or gratifications. When our lives are characterized by the awareness of this gift and profound gratitude this gift causes, then we become committed to living out that same passionate love in our world as God's agents of change.

What an opportunity we have as followers of Christ to be his instruments of love! It is not enough simply to cling to an individualistic spirituality and bask in the personal contentment of the idea of God's finished work in our lives as a status symbol. The work of the Lord is far from finished indeed. As the kingdom of heaven is birthed within us here on earth, Christ calls us as his disciples to cultivate these kingdom values of peace, justice, service and the yearning for righteousness in a world that is in want and need of healing. Our Christian path to which we have been called by Christ is one of giving — of our time, talents and resources in showing and sharing the heart and message of our God. Indeed, it can be said that when we stop giving, we stop loving.

What an opportunity we have as members of local Presbyterian congregations to join together in the work of Presbyterian World Service & Development and touch the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world as they strive to build better futures for themselves! In its work, PWS&D joins with faithful and passionate partners worldwide to address real needs through our prayerful and financial support. We have been part of massive relief efforts to help survivors of the Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquake in Haiti, the flooding in Pakistan and the enormous disaster in Japan. Also we are engaged in sustained development missions in lower-income regions by supporting human rights efforts, protecting the vulnerable, improving health and nutrition, ensuring children receive education and helping to improve the status of women both in the home and community. These are just some of the ways we are able to give of our passionate love.



Of course, this is not always easy because we don't always see the fruits of our labours. But the change we are having in the lives of others through PWS&D is incredibly meaningful.



Narmada is just one example of a woman whose life has been forever changed. Living in an impoverished community in rural India, Narmada lost both her parents to illness, and her eldest brother was forced to drop out of school in order to provide for the family. Overcome with grief, Narmada sunk into a deep depression. Every day was a struggle to get by. She described herself as living a dark life without hope. She wanted to die.

A recommendation from her pastor led Narmada to attend a PWS&D-supported community college that changed everything. She began attending classes and received the support she needed to complete her schooling. Through the friendships she made, and with guidance from the college's dedicated and compassionate teachers, Narmada took an interest in the nursing program. Her teachers watched as Narmada's attitude toward life began to change.

In addition to helping students complete grade 12 and learn vocational skills, a key part of the college's curriculum is teaching life skills. Students learn about interpersonal relations and how to improve their communication skills. Over the course of their studies, they develop a fresh sense of confidence, enthusiasm and are able to recognize their own potential.

Narmada is now a young woman in her early 20s, enrolled in the nursing program. She has learned to cope and thrive. She has big plans to become a psychologist so she can help others who are struggling with similar difficulties find peace and hope.

Narmada has a new outlook on life, and she is incredibly grateful for the strangers from another country who supported her in her journey back to emotional health and into a life with promise. She is just one of the many people whose lives have been touched by our commitment to overcoming poverty and injustice, and empowering people to lead lives with dignity and opportunity.

The church can be an amazing place when it is working the way it's supposed to — when we understand that giving love means treating and serving one another as if each person were Christ himself. Today, what kind of giver will you choose to be? When we begin to live according to our faith commitment with passion and vibrancy for one others' sake, then we extend this authentic love in our giving — by sheltering the homeless, strengthening the weak and marginalized, rescuing the wounded, empowering the innocent, honouring all, effecting change in people's lives and thereby establishing God's kingdom on earth.

Glory to our God through Jesus Christ!

## **Benediction:**

Go now in peace and hold fast to all that is good. Reject all that is evil and let your gentleness be known by all.

And may the power and blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit rest upon you and abide deep within you, this day and forevermore. Amen.



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