This worship resource has been developed for use by congregations on Legacy Sunday (November 15, 2020), or any Sunday you wish to designate. Feel free to use or adapt all or part of this resource.

**Preparation**

**Why celebrate Legacy Sunday?**
Everyone can leave a legacy. The Presbyterian Church in Canada sets aside one Sunday a year as Legacy Sunday, giving worshippers an opportunity to think about the long-term impact of their gifts of time, talent and treasure. Legacy Sunday is an especially good time to start people thinking about planning to build a legacy through their wills. We also are often remembered by what we share through volunteering and church participation.

**Legacy request in your bulletin**
If your congregation is prepared to receive legacy gifts, consider including a legacy request at the bottom of the bulletin. This should include a statement or story that reflects the impact a gift can make as well as an invitation to give. The statement can reflect your congregation’s vision. For example:

> Your legacy gift will help our church have a lasting impact on future generations in our congregation, in our community and around the world. Please consider making a legacy gift, now or in your estate plans. Thank you.

If your congregation does not have a plan for legacy or planned gifts, check out the PCC resource *Setting up Legacy Funds and Endowments* at [presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/legacy-gifts-and-planned-giving](http://presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/legacy-gifts-and-planned-giving) to help you build one. This document contains practices, policies and procedures to help your congregation set up and administer legacy funds.

**Promoting planned giving**
Did you know that the Presbyterian Church in Canada’s website has colourful bulletin inserts about the different ways to give planned gifts, ready for you to download and print? These include gifts in your will, annuities, gifts of stock, life beneficiary and life insurance. To see these brochures and access the order form visit [presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/legacy-giving-bulletin-inserts](http://presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/legacy-giving-bulletin-inserts)

Watch stewardship and planned giving webinars at [presbyterian.ca/webinars/previous-webinars](http://presbyterian.ca/webinars/previous-webinars).

Contact the PCC’s Stewardship & Planned Giving department at stewardship@presbyterian.ca for other ideas and assistance with planned giving.
Worship Service

Responsive Call to Worship
Let all who take refuge in God rejoice;
    let them forever sing for joy.
The wings of God’s protection spread over us,
    so that those who love God’s name may rejoice.
God blesses each year with abundant bounty
and establishes a posterity for God’s people.
Future generations will be told about the Lord
and proclaim God’s deliverance to a community yet to come.
Sing the praises of the Lord, God’s faithful people; give thanks to God’s holy name.

Opening Words
Welcome as we gather together on the first day of the week to give to God our best and to worship in beauty and the spirit of truth.

God is pleased when we draw near in faith.  God is pleased when we love one another. God is pleased when we share what we have.  After all, God is at work in us, enabling us to do that which brings God pleasure.

Those who came before us pleased God with their gifts of praise and their offerings.  And because they were faithful, we are here worshipping together today.  Now is our time to be faithful, to do what pleases God, so future generations will gather together to glorify God.

Hymn
321 Praise to the Almighty
OR
324 Great is thy faithfulness

Prayer of Adoration and Confession
Almighty and merciful God,
we gather in your presence to worship you in beauty and truth;
to pray, grateful of your loving kindness.
You are our rock, our fortress, our stronghold and our deliverer.
We are your creation, made in Christ Jesus for good works.
Your Spirit fills us with life, faith and understanding. There is nothing we have that we did not receive from you. Everything we are, everything we have and everyone we love is a gift from you, And so, we worship you as Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit

While you are lavish and generous, we often live without gratitude; we count what we lack, we overlook what have, and we do not use the gifts you have given us.

Forgive what we have been, open our eyes to see the need around us, open our hands to share with others and use our lives and gifts to further your reign within your church and in the world. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Promise of Forgiveness/Assurance of Pardon
Hear and believe the good news: anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life is gone, the new life has come. God gives generously to all who ask, without reproach, and forgives all. Know that you are forgiven, forgive one another and be at peace.

Children’s Time
*Bring a rock and a toy made of some identifiable material (like a Thomas the Tank Engine wooden train).*

I found this rock today. It’s just a regular old rock you can find anywhere. Here is my question. Who made this rock? *(Encourage and engage participation from the children.)*

Yes, God made the rocks. God also made all the trees. God made the land and the sea and the sky. God made the water we drink and the air we breathe. God is the creator of the world that we live in and designed the whole system which gives us life. These are all God’s gifts to us. God loves us very much. Now, look at this. *(Show something made of wood such as a toy or a wooden spoon or carving etc.)*

What is it made from?

* A: Wood
That’s right, and wood comes from trees and God made the trees. Even when people make something, when a toymaker makes a toy like this, we make it out of the things God gave us. So, who made everything?

A: God

If everything comes from God, is there anything we can give to God that God doesn’t already have?

A: No

So, how can we say thank you to God—who has everything—for so many wonderful gifts? *(Encourage and engage participation from the children.)*

We can say “thank you!” in prayer. When we say thank you in prayer, we show that we know that God has given us good gifts.

We can say thank you when we show kindness and hospitality to other people – because God wants us to love people. When we use our actions to share God’s love, we are saying thank you to God.

We also say thank you when we take good care of the things God gives us. God wants us to look after the earth and everything in it! So, when you clean up garbage, recycle, look after parks, care for wildlife, you are saying thank you to God.

God wants us to use the gifts God has given us to do God’s work! How might you thank God this week? *(Encourage and engage participation from the children.)*

Now, let us thank God by praying together.

Dear God, thank you for all the things we have, the people who take care of us, our teachers, our friends, our warm homes, our toys, our clothes and the food we eat. Thank you for a wonderful world to live in. Help us to take care of God’s world and help us to share God’s gifts with others. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

(To the congregation)
Another way that we say thank you is with praise; declaring aloud how we feel about our awesome God. Let us sing hymn number...

**Hymn**

104 Your faithfulness, O Lord, is sure

OR

587 Called as partners in Christ’s service

*The Presbyterian Church in Canada*
Sermon: What Will Our Legacy Be?
In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus tells the story about a rich master about to embark on a journey. Before leaving, the master entrusts three servants with some of his money. The first servant receives five talents, the second receives two, and the third receives only one talent.

When the master returns, he discovers that his first two servants have invested his talents and doubled his returns. He welcomes them to share in his joy. The third servant, however, buried the talent in the ground and hands back to the master only what he was given. The master is angry and sends the servant away.

This seems like a simple story about the management of a rich person’s assets. However, if we dig deeper, we discover that Jesus once again reveals something unexpected, something surprising about the kingdom of God.

In the ancient world of the New Testament, a talent was a measurement of weight and a single talent weighed several pounds. We don’t know exactly how much a talent was worth, but one talent could have represented 9-years of wages for a skilled labourer or as much as 15 years of a day-labourer’s wages. So, even the single talent was a huge responsibility.

According to the parable, the master evaluated the servants before he gave them the money. He had faith in their abilities and all three should have been able to manage the money.

In order to double their investments – an impressive return – the first two servants probably needed to take considerable risks. The listeners would have known that. They would have known that the first two servants could have lost the master’s money. They would have known that to earn those returns the investments might have been unethical or even illegal. The listeners might have been surprised that these two risk-takers were so celebrated by the master.
The servant who buried the talent actually acted in a law-abiding, commandment-following way. He didn’t go to lenders to try to earn interest. By burying the talent, he protected the master’s assets. He didn’t gain the master anything, but he didn’t lose anything either. The listeners might have wondered whether he deserved such harsh punishment. Why was the master so angry?

Jesus was revealing something about the kingdom of God. The people welcomed into the kingdom might not be pure and clean, careful and safe and upright. They might be messy risk-takers. They might be the type who would risk everything for their master.

The first two servants saw potential in their talents: an opportunity to increase the master’s assets. They recognized the trust the master had in them, had faith in the master and used their knowledge and experience to grow their gifts. They took risks with what they were given because they could see what they might gain.

The third servant saw scarcity, not potential; letting uncertainty drive him. He expected loss, guarding what little he had at the expense of what he could have had. Even though he knew the master expected to reap what he had sown, he didn’t see the master’s faith in him. He did not invest in the hope of growth and overlooked the possibility of surprise. By burying the talent, he denied both the potential of the gift that he was entrusted with and his responsibility to the master.

The kingdom of God is about having faith.
The kingdom of God is about seeing the possibilities God presents.
The kingdom of God is not about playing it safe but using our gifts, risking them all, for a future of hope, the way Jesus eventually would.

Shortly after sharing this parable, Jesus took the greatest risk of all. He left the safety of Galilee to go to Jerusalem, where the religious authorities regarded him as a threat to their own power and privilege and where the Romans would consider him a disturber of their peace. In being faithful, Jesus risked everything God gave him, including his very life. The return was immeasurable, everlasting, and a blessing to all creation.

**Using Our Talents**
We are the soil in which God’s gifts are planted.
God has given us tools to do God’s mission.
What will we do with what we’ve been given and what will it say about our faith?
Right now, we are living under the shadow of a pandemic. We have no idea what is coming up next. With the future so uncertain, it would be easy to respond like the third servant, with fear. We could protect the gifts we have been given, fail to recognize them or pretend that we never received them. We could deny our relationship with God.

Or, we could be like the first two servants: living in faith, trusting God’s faith in us, stepping outside of our comfort zones to take risks and using our gifts to participate in God’s kingdom and share God’s message of hope.

The summer issue of our national church newspaper, the Presbyterian Connection, was full of stories about people using their gifts during the COVID-19 pandemic. They helped congregations adapt to an uncertain and frightening new reality and continued reaching out to share God’s love with neighbours.

Young people helped their congregations move worship online through live-streaming, or put together pre-recorded scripture readings, children’s stories and other aspects of worship to use online. Music directors sent recorded music to their parishioners and held online “hymn-sings”. Pastoral care teams responded to increased needs in their congregations, checking in with members and organizing grocery delivery for vulnerable people. Congregations donated money to food banks and delivered food to staff at long-term care homes.

(Share some examples you have seen of people in your using their gifts in your church or community)

The first response for many people and congregations was to figure out how to use their gifts to continue serving their communities during a time of uncertainty. Rather than seeing what they couldn’t do, they saw what they could do, took action and stepped faithfully into the unknown. Sometimes it meant that they took risks. Sometimes it didn’t quite work as they envisioned, but they learned and grew, and people experienced God’s love.

Congregational Legacy Story
(Use a legacy story from your congregation if possible – an example of someone investing their gifts to help grow ministry in the church. It could be a bequest or a gift someone gave as a living legacy)

When St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Brampton, Ontario received a legacy gift of over $130,000 from the estate of Bea Fenwick, they took a risk for the future by deciding to use the
gift to restore and renovate the church building, even though there wasn’t enough to cover all of the expenses.

The congregation could have responded like the third servant. They could have been overcome by fear. They could have locked the gift away in the event of hardships sometime in the future. But doing so could have created future hardships. The building might have fallen into disrepair. People might have thought they didn’t need to give when there was so much money in the bank. The congregation might have melted away.

Instead, the congregation took a step in faith and decided to invest in the future. Generosity inspired generosity. Two large, anonymous gifts were given to the church, regular givings increased, the project was completed, and the congregation continued to thrive.

The story of the third servant teaches us that the greatest risk of all is to play it safe. We need to do things with the gifts God gives us. Gratitude for God’s investment in us helps us remember our gifts and shrinks our fears for the future.

**Our Legacy Story**

Our life’s work and our legacy are our witness.

- The third servant’s legacy is fear.
- The first and second servants’ legacy is faithfulness.
- Bea Fenwick’s legacy is hope for the future.

What will our legacy be?
What will our legacy as a congregation be?
What will our actions say about our faith in God?

God confidently plants seeds of ability and faithfulness in each of us. We are given the freedom to choose how to use the treasures we’ve received. We can choose to hoard these gifts, or we can choose actions, great or small, to produce works of love and mercy. We can leave our comfort zones and take risks for God.

God provides us all with opportunities to make a difference – to share God’s love with our neighbours, our community, and the world. And as we do so, we share in God’s joy, today and into the future.

Amen.
**Prayer After Sermon**
Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gifts of faith, hope and charity, that we may love all of humanity as you love. Create in our hearts a sincere love for the people of God living today, your people in generations yet to come and the world that they will live in. Amen.

**Benediction**
Go forth from this place and shine like the stars of the heavens!
Use your words to bring peace and hope to those around you.
Initiate actions that will enable others to work together for the glory of God and the prosperity of all people.
Pray for each other and all others.
And know that you do not do this work alone, for you are always surrounded by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit.

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