



# I Intend...

A workbook for  
Generous, Faithful and  
Intentional Living



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# A Prayer for Our Journey

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Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator of heaven and earth,  
You create the fruit of the land to sustain our families and neighbours,

You nurture the church, loving communities of faith, deepening our  
relationship with you and with one another,

You offer us the gift of baptism and the sacrament of Christ's body and blood  
so that we may be fed and filled with your Holy Spirit,

You bless us with generous hearts so that we may support the outcast, the  
hungry, the sick and all those who long for intimacy with Jesus.

You fill us with determination to be mindful of the ministry and mission to  
which we are called,

And you call us to generous support of our congregations, diocese and the  
wider church,

Blessed are you Lord our God.

Amen.

**Faithful Living—  
What we do with all God  
has given us, all the time.**

# Introduction

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Being a Christian is not just about what we believe—it is a way of life!

God has abundantly blessed us. Our response to this generosity is to care for God's creation. This includes caring for ourselves, other people and the world. Every action and decision, no matter how mundane, comes from the starting place of recognizing this sacred responsibility. We are God's stewards and this leads to living with loving and generous intention. As Christians, we do this by patterning our life after Jesus Christ. This workbook is designed to give you the opportunity to reflect on five areas of your life and ask yourself: "How would living more like Jesus affect my decision to...". The five areas of intentional, generous living are:

- the environment,
- your time,
- your talent,
- your finances and
- your physical and mental being.

## **Ultimately, you are being asked: "How do you want to live your life?"**

A helpful spiritual practice is to periodically take time to reflect on our abundant blessings and intentionally share a portion of what we have been given. The act of setting aside a portion of our time, talent and treasure in response to God's generosity and for the good of others and creation cultivates a deeper, stronger faith.

Characteristics of living faithfully and being a good steward are: care, compassion, commitment, thoughtfulness, generosity and...being intentional! Live with intention and be who God is calling you to be!

***"Think of us in this way,  
as servants of Christ and  
stewards of God's mysteries."***

—1 COR 4:1

## **Steps for completing the workbook and generous intentional living:**

1. Read the session and say the prayer.
2. Discuss with those you trust or anyone who might be affected.
3. Attend Sunday worship, participate in a small group.
4. Complete the Intention Statement and the Intention Sheet.
5. Tear off the Intention Sheet and put it in a sealed self-addressed envelope. Only you will see the commitment you make to yourself. You may wish to share your financial pledge with a financial leader so that the church can faithfully serve God's mission..
6. Either drop off the envelope at the church or mail it in.

**In six months we will send the sealed envelope back to you so you can see how well you are doing!**

# SESSION I:

## Creation and the Environment

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At the very beginning of the Bible we are told that God not only created everything but also declared it to be good. Yet for most of Christian history we have paid little attention to the created order. We have tended to take it for granted. In recent decades, that has begun to change. Space exploration has revealed the Earth to us as something beautiful, rare and precious. Even if there are other habitable worlds, they are unimaginably far away across light years of inhospitable space. At the same time, developments in environmental science have made us aware of the fragility of this “island home.” For the first time in human history we have become aware of our capacity to damage or even destroy the very Earth that nurtures and sustains us.

We are called to think anew about our responsibility for God’s creation. Scripture is clear that loving God means we must love and care for everything God creates and loves. Care for creation and the environment is an expression of our faithfulness and gratitude to God.

### A New Creed

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.

The United Church of Canada 1968; rev. 1980, 1995

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## REFLECT

Take a look at all the ways you recognize your relationship to creation—the beauty of a bright sunny day—the breathtaking view of a dark night sky full of stars—a walk in the woods—the love of a companion animal.

**How does the beauty of creation help me connect with God’s love?**

**When do I see God’s love in creation?**

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## ASK

**How do I reflect my love and gratitude to God? What is my responsibility to respond to God's goodness? How might I be a steward? Be specific.**

## DECIDE

**What will be my carbon fast? How can I reduce my impact on the environment and creation?**

### INTENTION STATEMENT

God willing, it is my/our intention to respond to the needs of God's creation and the environment by lessening my impact on the environment and participating in a carbon fast for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks beginning \_\_\_\_\_

God willing, it is my/our intention to respond to the needs of God's creation and the environment by \_\_\_\_\_ beginning \_\_\_\_\_

## CARBON FAST!

One of the ways we can do this is by looking at what is often called our ecological footprint. The larger our footprint, the larger (and less sustainable) is our impact on the world. Remember, recycling is good but because of plastics, until we reduce we are still killing the planet. Here are a few ideas for your carbon fast:

- Eat vegetarian one day a week
- Cut down on food waste
- Ban the plastic water bottle!
- Eat less beef
- Use reusable coffee cups and grocery bags
- Walk or bike instead of driving
- Carpool! We will help you
- carpool to church
- Buy secondhand
- Share your magazines

***The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it. For God has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.***

—PSALM 24:1-2

Make sure you fill in the Intention Sheet at the back of this workbook.

## SESSION II:

# Time

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***Faithful living is the responsible use of God's gifts in light of God's purpose revealed in Jesus.***

Remember how short my time is.

—PSALM 89.47

There are many inequities in the world, but one thing we all have in common is the same amount of time each day. God has allotted twenty-four hours to each one of us.

Time is a fixed resource. We cannot make more of it and there always seems to be too little of it. Being responsible for the use of our time is a spiritual practice of faithful living.

The Bible teaches us that time is a resource for which we are all responsible before God. It is easy to fall into the trap of the western mindset which sees time from a utilitarian standpoint where performance and accomplishments, or doing something productive, is the all-important goal. When this happens we lose the capacity to simply enjoy God, people and the life God has given us. We need a biblical balance.

You can start by identifying: "At the end of each week, when I look back, what do I want to have achieved?" There are many answers to this question. You may want to have:

- been a good partner to a friend or loved one
- deepened your relationship with God
- been in service to others
- been a good worker who acted with good character

Ecclesiastes chapter 3 tells us there is a time for everything. A key verse in the passage states: "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and do good while they live." Eccles. 3:12 So. . . what will make you happy? What does it mean to "do good" in the eyes of God?

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## REFLECT

**What are the key goals of my life? And how do these goals compare to how I currently spend my time?**  
**Does my use of time align with my intentions and purpose?**

## ASK

**Based on my gifts, my deeply held beliefs and what is important to me, my purpose for the next few (days, weeks, months) is to...**

**How do I want to change how I use my time?**

Changing your choices can seem very difficult when you are “in the weeds” so you need to be really clear on what it is that you want. The truth is that you can do anything you want, you just can’t do everything you want, so you have to set priorities in accordance with your goals and purpose.

## DECIDE

**During the past few \_\_\_\_\_ (days, weeks, months) I have done a \_\_\_\_\_ (good, very good, not very good ) job of spending time on activities that serve my purpose above. Based on this, I think I should redirect \_\_\_\_\_ % of my time to activities that better reflect my purpose.**

An ancient practice of our faith is Sabbath. It is the deliberate setting aside of time to play and “enter into God’s delight.” We sacrifice the effort of accomplishment. For that small amount of time we do not have to **do** anything. We simply have to **be** the person God cherishes. No matter how busy Jesus was he took time to slow down and be with his loving God.

I need to spend time with God each day to reflect on God’s purpose for my day and for my life.  Yes  No

***Christ within us,  
Light above us,  
Earth beneath us,  
Love surrounds us.***

—CELTIC PRAYER

## INTENTION STATEMENT

I intend to give \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day to meditation and prayer.

Yes  No

God willing, it is my/our intention that beginning \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
I/we will use my time responsibly and faithfully by...

*Make sure you fill in the Intention Sheet at the back of this workbook.*

## SESSION III:

# Talent

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***God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And wisdom to know the difference.***

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

—ROMANS 12:6<sup>8</sup>

The more honest we are in facing our strengths and weaknesses, talents and limitations, the more we come to know the God who formed us in the first place.

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## REFLECT

**Do you know what your calling is? What God wants of you?**

One way to discern your calling is to follow your talents or the things that give you joy. When you feel happy and whole, what are you doing? Don't forget about trusted loved ones; they often know us better than we know ourselves. For what do people compliment you?

**Here is a list of some spiritual gifts. Do any give you a sense of joy?**

- |   |   |                                   |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping                | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discernment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism     | <input type="checkbox"/> Praying                | _____                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giving         | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and Studying | _____                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring         | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoring              | _____                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating  | <input type="checkbox"/> Serving                | _____                             |



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## ASK

**Do you feel that your talents are being used well through the many work tasks you do:**

**At work?**

**At home?**

**In the community?**

**At church?**

**If not, what would give you joy? How might you like to offer your talents as a steward?**

**At work?**

**At home?**

**In the community?**

**At church?**

Sometimes God calls us to step past our joy and into our fear and into the things that make us uncomfortable.

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## DECIDE

**Where in your life are you being called to step into the unfamiliar and challenging?**

### INTENTION STATEMENT

God willing, it is my/our intention that beginning \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
I/we will use my talents responsibly and faithfully by...

*Make sure you fill in the Intention Sheet at the back of this workbook.*

## SESSION IV:

# Treasure

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This is not only a contribution towards the needs of God's people. More than that, it overflows in a flood of thanksgiving to God.

—2 CORINTHIANS 9:12

## Money!

How we use money says more about our value system than anything we say or do. The way we handle money is a window into our souls. Everything belongs to God, and we are the caretakers. Gratitude is our only response.

From a spiritual perspective, we do not own anything. Rather, we tend, care and steward the things that are within our responsibility. This twist of perspective comes from the realization that, ultimately, everything belongs to God.

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## REFLECT

**When I review my spending, does it reflect what I value most?**

We are made in the image of God. God is generous, therefore we are generous. This must be why it feels so good to be helpful and do things for others. When we are giving, we are reflecting the likeness of God. It is our basic nature to give of ourselves. Clinging to our worldly things is actually a restricting and suffocating way to live. Sir Winston Churchill said it this way, "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

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## ASK

**From this perspective, how might you use your resources differently?**

### ***The biblical advice is to set aside a proportion of our income for:***

- equipping the saints of the church and building up the Body of Christ.
- sharing with those less fortunate and helping to restore justice in our community and world.
- to assist with the betterment of our common life and to sustain the beauty of creation.

GENESIS 1-2, DEUTERONOMY 10:17-22,  
EPHESIANS 4:12, MATTHEW 19:21,  
LUKE 10:29-39, JAMES 1:29

## DECIDE

We begin by having a household budget and by managing our finances. Then we prayerfully determine an appropriate percentage of household income we will give away to our church and other charities. Each year we endeavour to increase the proportion. Jesus speaks a lot about giving. He knew our material goods can be a spiritual impediment. He also knew how important it is for us to share those goods and care for the needy.

**STEP 1: Calculate your annual household income.**

**STEP 2: Calculate 2% of gross income.**

This is considered a minimum tithe. The goal is to increase that by 1% each year until you reach 10%. You can use the Proportional Giving Chart on the next page.

**STEP 3: Determine how much of your tithe goes to the church.**

It is really helpful to share your intentional tithe with the church as it helps the church with the budget and plans for ministry.

**STEP 4: Decide how you want to make your offering.**

1. Pre-Authorized Giving—either bank account or credit card  
(This option makes it predictable and smooth for both you and your congregation.)

OR

2. Offering envelopes

**STEP 5: Determine where else you will share your financial resources.**

**STEP 6: Complete the Intention Statement below.**

- Be sure to fill in the Treasure portion of the Intentional Sheet at the back page of this book.

- STEP 7: Check throughout the year to see that you are on track.**

***By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.***

GALATIANS 5:22-23

***Almighty God, to you all hearts lie open, all our desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden: purify the thoughts of my heart by the outpouring of your Spirit, that I may love you with a perfect love and praise you as you deserve; through Christ our Lord. Amen.***

	ANNUAL		MONTHLY		WEEKLY	
<b>Family Income</b>	2%	10%	2%	10%	2%	10%
<b>\$10,000</b>	\$200	\$1,000	\$17	\$83	\$4	\$19
<b>\$25,000</b>	\$500	\$2,500	\$42	\$208	\$10	\$48
<b>\$50,000</b>	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$83	\$417	\$19	\$96
<b>\$75,000</b>	\$1,500	\$7,500	\$125	\$625	\$29	\$144
<b>\$100,000</b>	\$2,000	\$10,000	\$167	\$833	\$38	\$192
<b>\$200,000</b>	\$4,000	\$20,000	\$333	\$1,667	\$77	\$385

If you would like to make a one-time, memorial or other donation at any time throughout the year, you may do so through the offering plate or by mail as above. In addition, you may be able to make an electronic donation through Canada Helps or through your congregation website. All amounts received via any and all methods will be receipted to your name.

If you would like to explore contributing by way of gifting shares or other securities to your church or adding your church to your will, please contact the church office and a member of the Stewardship Committee will call you directly to discuss.

## INTENTION STATEMENT

God willing, it is my/our intention to respond to the needs of the church and its programs by committing to the following financial support for the 12 month period beginning \_\_\_\_\_ :

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER MONTH OR \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER YEAR

*Make sure you fill in the Intention Sheet at the back of this workbook.*

# SESSION V:

## Mental and Physical Well-being

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You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. . . and love your neighbour as yourself.

—DEUT. 6:5 AND MARK 12:30

In our effort to accomplish more, we can forget to take care of ourselves. We put others first and we forget that Jesus said to love others as yourself. Loving yourself is not selfishness. That is something entirely different. Loving yourself is a spiritual practice that comes from being respectful of God's creation. Remember, we are made in the image and likeness of God.

---

### REFLECT

**Do you feel guilty when you take time for yourself?**

Yes  No

Unhealthy disregard of our physical and mental limitations is a form of denial and reveals an unchecked egotism. We think that everything depends on us. We think we are God!

---

### ASK

**Where in my life do I overstep my limits and reveal a lack of trust in God?**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At work      | <input type="checkbox"/> With my family  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In my home   | <input type="checkbox"/> With my friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At my church | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____    |

We are entrusted with the care of our minds as well as our bodies. Because of the stigma associated with mental illness, sometimes we are reluctant to talk about this. This, too, is a stewardship issue of care. Depression and anxiety disorders are issues that must be brought to intentional discernment. This is especially difficult when the very tool we use to care for our mental being, our mind, is wounded and impaired. All the more reason why we must talk openly about mental illness and get the community support and medical help required.

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.***

***In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.***

***Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.***

***It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body.***

***Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.***

***My child, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.***

—PROVERBS 3:5–12

***I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.***

—ROMANS 12:1-2

## DECIDE

### How do I plan to care for my mental being?

- Take time for rest
- Take time for play
- Take time for prayer
- Find a support group
- Stop hiding the problem
- Face my limitations and tell my doctor and get the needed help
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### How do I plan to care for my physical being?

- Take time for exercise
- Go for walks
- Join a gym
- Address my overeating
- Eat more nutritious meals
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTENTION STATEMENT

God willing, it is my/our intention to treat my mental and physical self with respect recognizing that I am a gift from God. Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, I will...

*Make sure you fill in the Intention Sheet at the back of this workbook.*

# Intention Sheet

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What I am is God's gift. What I do with my life is my gift to God.

—MELVIN BANGGOLLAY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ INTEND TO:

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## CREATION

God willing, it is my/our intention to respond to the needs of God's creation and the environment by participating in a carbon fast for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks beginning \_\_\_\_\_.

God willing, it is my/our intention to respond to the needs of God's creation and the environment.

Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, I will

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## TIME

God willing, it is my/our intention to use my time responsibly and faithfully.

Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, I will

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## TALENTS

God willing, it is my/our intention to use my talents responsibly and faithfully.

Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, I will

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## TREASURE

God willing, it is my/our intention to respond to the needs of the church and its programs by committing to the following financial support \_\_\_\_\_ for the 12-month period beginning \_\_\_\_\_.

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## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL SELVES

God willing, it is my/our intention to treat my mental and physical self with respect, recognizing that I am a gift from God. Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, I will

COMPLETE THIS INTENTION SHEET AND RETURN IT IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Place it in a sealed, self-addressed envelope on the offering plate.
- Mail it to the church office in a sealed, self-addressed envelope.



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