# Logo for Called to Be the Church: The Journey

# Offering Invitations and Prayers: July‒December 2023

*Blessings! These invitations and prayers are yours to modify and use as you please. Talking about generosity, gratitude, and stewardship every time you gather to worship is a key spiritual practice. Do not miss this opportunity to encourage worshippers to grow in faith through generosity and thankfulness. If you have feedback or want to submit a prayer or invitation, please contact us at* *stewardship@united-church.ca**.*

**Consider using this offering prayer each week from July 2 to September 3:**

Spirit of Life, giver of every perfect gift. We join together with hearts full of gratitude and eyes open to see the places your abundance shows up in our lives. Bless these offerings and those given outside this time of worship. May our contributions both here and in every part of our lives—how we share our time, our skills, and our money—work toward a world of justice and belonging. We pray that it be so. Through the ministries of this community of faith, through the work we do together through Mission and Service, and through our individual choices, may we lay foundations for the kin(g)dom. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## July 2, Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

We have been blessed with so much. I invite you to share of those blessings now through gifts to this community and, through Mission and Service, gifts to the world.

## July 9, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Jesus invites us to rest, to set down our heavy burdens. To learn from his gentle and humble heart. He reminds us we are more than what people call us, more valuable than labels placed on us. With this knowledge, and gratitude for all gifts coming from God, we are invited gently and humbly to share our abundance with this community and all those whose lives are impacted through it. Let us give generously!

## July 16, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Like the Sower, sometimes we share our time, talents, and money in places or with people where growth is not possible. Sometimes we feel our efforts choked out by thorns; sometimes our endeavours spring up but end up being scorched. But when we share ourselves generously, patiently, and consistently, we do find good soil.

I am inviting you to share your financial gifts now. As a community, we tend this ground, planting seeds through our work and bearing fruit in the lives of those who gather in worship and beyond these walls. Let us give generously.

## July 23, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

This world is not equal. We do not all have access to the same wealth, the same opportunities, the same caring relationships. There are always people with more, always people with less. Whether the field of your life feels full of weeds or full of wheat, you are invited to breathe in gratitude and share with our faith community. Let us give generously.

## July 30, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Have you ever wondered if your offering really makes a difference? It could be easy to feel like it’s nothing more than a drop of water in a bucket, but Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a tiny mustard seed that grows into a huge shrub. From the smallest of seeds, a home and resting place is created for the birds of the air. Your offering does make a difference. Let us give generously, both to this community of faith and to Mission and Service.

## August 6, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

You are invited to look at what you have and share it without fear. Instead of focusing on the problems in our community and world—of which there are many—I invite you to think of Jesus saying, “They need not go away; *you* give them something to eat.”

Our gifts, shared with hope and gratitude, can feed this congregation and beyond through the work of Mission and Service. Let us give generously.

## August 13, Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Turning on the news can feel like we are at sea. Howling winds and crashing waves leave us fearful and exhausted. Jesus asks us to have faith, to trust in the goodness of people and the endless love of God. When we share our financial gifts, we are engaging in a spiritual practice that helps calm our fears and ground us in God’s boundless gifts. I invite you to share generously.

## August 20, Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Generosity brings us closer to the Spirit. What joy! What privilege! Let our giving set us free. Free to imagine a world of daring justice. Free to engage as bold disciples. Free to set our hearts to a deep spirituality.

## August 27, Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Jesus calls us to be humble, and so we are humbled by the Divine Presence in our lives. As we consider our humility, we realize that it is intertwined with gratitude. I invite you to give because you are grateful and humbled by God’s blessings. I invite you to give because your blessings can bless others. I invite you to give to support the work of this community of faith, and work around the world through Mission and Service.

## September 3, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

In Romans 12, Paul tells us to feed not just strangers but also our enemies. How do we do this today? Really, it’s the same now as it was all those years ago: We feed everyone—or more broadly, we help everyone—without knowing whether or not they would consider us *their* enemies. And in this way, we share God’s love with them. Our offerings are for all who are in need, without exception. Let us give generously.

### Prayer

Loving and indiscriminate God, we know that the whole world is your family. Let us show that we mean it through what we share with others. Bless these gifts, and those given online and through PAR, so they may go where they are most needed. Amen.

## September 10, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

In the words of Maya Angelou, “When you know better, you do better.” As Christians, we are challenged to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. When we learn the impact our gifts have on others and on the community, we do better. So now I invite you to share generously as a loving, neighbourly act.

### Prayer

Patient God, help us both to know better and to do better in sharing our gifts. Help us imagine ourselves in the place of those who will receive them, and grant us the generosity to share what you have given us more fully. As we learn and do better, bless these gifts, and those given online and through PAR, so the good that they do can multiply.

## September 17, Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

When you donate, do you think about how much everyone else is giving? Do you wonder if you’re giving more than everyone else, or do you wish you could give more? Maybe there’s another way to think about this that has nothing to do with comparing ourselves to our neighbours. Each of us is called to be as generous as we can. I invite you to give in thanksgiving for God’s generosity.

### Prayer

Generous God, give us the wisdom not to compare our gifts with those of others but to give because of what you have given to each of us. Bless these gifts, and those given online and through PAR, and let them be shared where they will do the most good.

## September 24, Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

God says that we are not to decide who is worthy of the gifts we share. We are to give freely and abundantly. “The last shall be first, and the first last.” Let us now do as God does and share with everyone as we make our offering.

### Prayer

Abundant God, we ask you to help us look beyond the labels we put on people and their circumstances and see the faces of your children, so that we can lift up those who struggle and share what we have with them. Bless these gifts, and those given online and through PAR, for all who are in need.

## October 1, Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (World Communion Sunday)

### Invitation

Who is listening to God’s call? The answer may surprise you. Those who have nothing to lose often show more grace than those who are afraid to take the leap of generosity. Give from that deep place inside you that wants to respond and let your heart sing!

### Prayer

Understanding God, you know that we can be afraid to give too much. Support us as we take our first steps toward a generosity that truly reflects your love for us. Bless these gifts, and those given online and through PAR, so that joy is known by both those who give and those who receive.

## October 8, Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Thanksgiving Sunday)

### Invitation

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. Long before settlers came, many Indigenous people gave thanks for the bounty of the land. The Haudenosaunee, for example, give thanks daily in their Thanksgiving Address, which reminds them to appreciate the interconnectedness of all areas of life. Other Indigenous communities regard the holiday as a National Day of Mourning for the destruction of their nations and their cultures. Today, you’re invited to give thanks for what you have received and acknowledge what has been taken away from others in order for you to receive it. You are invited to do both of these through the gifts you give today.

### Prayer

God of wisdom, help us to understand where we have come from and where you call us to go. Let us not lose sight of the past as we give for the future. And bless these gifts, and those given online and through PAR, so they may bring healing and reconciliation to the world.

## October 15, Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

The people invited to the banquet that God provided—I wonder what they did afterwards? Did they go away praising? Did they try to be more generous themselves? Or did they hoard their leftovers? I wonder what we would do? Let’s offer our gifts now.

### Prayer

God of the feast, we give thanks that all have been invited to your table and you have provided enough for all. Help us to pass the salt, fill our neighbour’s cup, and share more, even if that requires us to live with less. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## October 22, Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

What you say to God matters. How you share your faith matters. What you give in response to God’s generosity matters—not just to you, not just to those who receive your gifts, but to God. God longs for us to be generous, as a sign of our love for God, for neighbour, and for all creation. Let us give like it matters.

### Prayer

Generous God, we give our gifts with all the faith that we possess. This is what we believe: that you provide, that you redeem, that you care. May our gifts be used to share this good news with the world. Amen.

## October 29, Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Sometimes, the great vision God has given us will not come to pass in our lifetime. Yet it is still our generosity that moves the vision forward. As you make your offering today, think about the impact it will have for generations to come. Let us give.

### Prayer

God of the past, the present, and the future, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. That reassurance inspires us to present these offerings. With our thanks and our hope for the future, we ask your blessing. Amen.

## November 1, All Saints Day

### Invitation

It might not look like much—that little envelope with your offering and your number, a business card about PAR, words on a computer screen—but it is profound. Your presence in worship today is because generations before you have generously given. Now it is your turn. Be profound. Present your gifts.

### Prayer

Our gifts we offer, O God, not out of duty or obligation, but out of a deep longing to be part of your never-ending story of love and salvation. May these gifts be a blessing to those who will come after us. Amen.

## November 5, Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost (Remembrance Sunday)

### Invitation

God has laid a path before each of us. A path of caring for the least, of seeking justice for all, of faithfulness, compassion, forgiveness, and love. When you give a portion of what you have, freely and generously, you take another step on that path, which draws you closer to God. Let us be generous.

### Prayer

Each gift given, on these offering plates, through Pre-Authorized Remittance, e-transfer, or any other way, is another step as we walk your path, O God. As we draw closer to you, draw close to us. We do this and we ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## November 12, Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Like so many other things these days, I think these offering plates should come with a warning label. Warning! If you think that simply putting money on this plate, or giving money through PAR or e-transfer or some other way, is all it takes to please God, you are in danger. To please God, your offering must be accompanied by action. “Let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24).

Carefully, and with prayerful consideration, let us present our offerings.

### Prayer

God of justice and righteousness, we have heard your warning as we make our offering. May these gifts, however given, be just one part of our work and life in you. In all we do and all we give, we seek your presence. Amen.

## November 19, Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

In difficult times, when scarcity seems to be reality, I invite you to a different way. Instead of hoarding and belt-tightening, let’s be generous! Let’s give with wild abandon, trusting that God will provide for us, for this is the Way of Jesus!

### Prayer

Really trusting you to provide, O God, is something we often struggle with. Capitalism and Canadian culture teach us repeatedly to rely on ourselves, to look out for ourselves first. In these offerings we show that we are committed to the Way of Jesus, instead. As we give, strengthen our faith, please, that we may be a blessing to all. Amen.

## November 26, Reign of Christ Sunday

### Invitation

We are the Body of Christ. Through us and sometimes in spite of us, God is at work. What an honour. What a challenge. We have been blessed with so much! Let’s share our abundance so that all have enough. That happens through the work of this community of faith and through the work of The United Church of Canada across our country and around the world, through Mission and Service. Now is the time to be generous.

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer), be evidence of your powerful love at work. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## December 3, First Sunday of Advent (Year B starts)

### Invitation

What hope each of us can find because of the grace of God that has been given us in Christ Jesus. We have been enriched and strengthened, and are not lacking. Giving thanks to God who is faithful, let us share our hope as we give generously.

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer), help to share hope: hope across the world, hope within our homes, and hope within ourselves. Amen.

## December 10, Second Sunday of Advent

### Invitation

There is a saying that likely originated in the protests against acts of ethnic violence in the United States during the 1980s: “No justice, no peace.” It can also mean that when there is justice, there will be peace. I invite you now to work for justice and increase peace as you practise generosity and give.

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer), help to build peace: peace across the world, peace within our homes, and peace within ourselves. Amen.

## December 17, Third Sunday of Advent

### Invitation

When the news is bad and the outlook is not much better. When we have had it up to here and one more thing will break us. When talk of joy seems futile. Then it is time to turn our attention to giving and caring. In these we can find joy! Your gifts to this church do that locally, while your gifts to the Mission and Service of The United Church of Canada do it across Canada and globally. It feels so good to be generous! Let’s do it!

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer), help to create joy: joy across the world, joy within our homes, and joy within ourselves. Amen.

## December 24, Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Invitation

God’s Kin(g)dom is all about love. Love for God. Love for neighbour. Love for yourself. Just like God gave God’s-self to be with you in Jesus, what better way for you to show love than to give? Your resources. Yourself. When you give generously to this congregation and to the Mission and Service of the United Church, you help love to expand.

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer), help to expand love: love across the world, love within our homes, and love within ourselves. Amen.

## December 24, Christmas Eve

### Invitation

We know the story. Angels and shepherds. Joseph and Mary. The baby lying in a manger. It warms our hearts and brings us together to celebrate. With gratitude for this special time of worship and for this community of faith, let us each give a financial gift as one way we share the good news of Jesus’ birth.

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer) help to share the good news of Jesus’ birth. We give with thanks. Amen.

## December 25, Christmas Day

### Invitation

By now you have probably already given gifts and may even have more yet to give. Way to go! Giving and generosity are spiritual practices that draw us closer to each other and closer to God. Jesus was clear about this. Now you have another opportunity to give. I invite you to take good advantage of it.

### Prayer

Thank you, God, for all you have given us. Not just stuff and money and food, but your very self in Jesus. Receive these gifts in his name. Amen.

## December 31, First Sunday after Christmas

### Invitation

I invite you to make your gift today in a spirit of celebration and a spirit of hope for what God is doing in our midst and through each one of us.

### Prayer

O God, may gifts given here today, and those we have given by PAR (or online, or by e-transfer), help to share the good news of Jesus’ birth. We give with thanks. Amen.

*Please watch for special worship resources for this Sunday to highlight your community of faith and Mission and Service.*