

# Offering Invitations and Prayers: January‒June 2024 (Year B)

## January 7: Baptism of the Lord

### Invitation

We are called to be the embodiment of God’s Word. We are called to use our whole selves to care for creation, community, and the church. You are invited to share your financial gifts for the ministry and work of this community of faith and through Mission and Service to the world. You are called to serve as a steward for God’s gifts for the good of all.

### Prayer

We pray that the gifts we give today will go farther in God’s world than we can imagine. Bless these gifts, and those given through PAR and online. Amen.

## January 14: Second Sunday after Epiphany

### Invitation

God calls to us—sometimes by name, sometimes in the dark, sometimes in quiet moments. Can we respond with an enthusiastic “Here I am!”? Can we respond to our neighbours and our community with an enthusiastic “Here I am!”? Sharing your financial resources through the church community is one way to say, “Here I am!” As faithful stewards, we give generously in response to God’s call.

### Prayer

We pray that the gifts we give today will go farther in God’s world than we can imagine. Bless these gifts, and those given through PAR and online. Amen.

## January 21: Third Sunday after Epiphany

### Invitation

From the mouths of leaders or prophets or children, sometimes the truth is hard to hear. It can be challenging when we are called to repent, or give more, or see the world through new eyes.

As we offer our gifts today, whether you put an envelope in the plate, give through PAR or online, or have no money to give, take this moment to consider the ways that you have been called to share yourself this week. How have you responded? Can you be open to the prophetic voices in your midst calling for abundant living for all, through generous giving?

### Prayer

God of second chances and deep love, we pray that all gifts given will help us and others find meaning, and that our generosity will make the world a more whole and holy place. Thank you for the ways we experience our blessings today, and help us share our gratitude with others. Amen.

## January 28: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

### Invitation

We all come to worship with different needs and leave with different answers. Spending this time as community, sharing sacred story, singing holy song, and translating this time into our lives is a core spiritual practice for many of us. Sharing financial gifts is also a spiritual practice. You are invited to support the work of this church, Mission and Service, and beyond by giving freely what you can.

### Prayer

God, as we offer our gifts, please use them along with those already given through PAR and online to create a space where you are present. Please help us to be your people, to be a blessing to others and to lead others to you. We ask this in Christ’s name. Amen.

## February 4: Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

### Invitation

We have come to the time where we worship with our gifts. You are invited to generously share what you have for the healing of the world. Offering is collected by plates being passed, automatic monthly debits, e-transfers, and online through our website. The act of giving not only helps this community and its many ministries, but it is also an act of self-care--we connect deeper to the sacred when we share.

### Prayer

God, thank you for our church, for the way we are called to be church to a world in need. Help us to continue to share with those in need and with each other through these gifts and those already given for ministries of this church and those of Mission and Service. Amen.

## February 11: Transfiguration Sunday

### Invitation

While our hearts and minds may be transformed by sacred stories, wise words or beautiful music during worship, it is through sharing generously that we are releasing our gifts into the world to transform others. We give with the prayer that our generosity will not only help us feel connected to God, but our gifts will transform and transfigure—flowing through our faith community and into the world to prepare the way for God’s Kin-dom. Let us share.

### Prayer

Holy Mystery, help us tap into the deep faith of Elijah, Moses, and Jesus. Through our giving, expand our hearts to make room for challenge and joy, transformation and summons. Please take our gifts, and those already given through PAR and online, and use them to help us create transformation in the world, in our homes, and in ourselves. Amen.

## February 18: First Sunday in Lent

### Invitation

In our baptism, we are called to participate in Jesus’ ongoing ministry. Through the gifts we offer to the ministries of this church and those of Mission and Service, we live out that calling. Let us present our offering.

### Prayer

Gracious and rebirthing God, we offer these gifts and those already given through PAR and online. May they be transformed into bread to feed the world, welcome for the lost, and ways to fulfill Jesus’ mission of shalom. Amen.

## February 25: Second Sunday in Lent

### Invitation

Taking up our cross means so much more than just being concerned with those who are less fortunate than we are or simply being a good neighbour. Taking up our cross involves sacrifice, radical serving, and standing up to injustice with the power of love. When we offer gifts in this way, we are taking up our cross and following in the Way of Jesus. Let us present our morning offering.

### Prayer

Gracious and radical God, we offer these gifts and those already given through PAR and online. May they not only demonstrate our caring for the last and least, but be part of our larger dream for a world transformed, where all are free from oppression and feel your abundant love. May our gifts demonstrate our willingness to take up Jesus’ cross and follow him. Amen.

## March 3: Third Sunday in Lent

### Invitation

And now we pause in our worship to commit an act of rebellion. When so much around us tells us to hold tightly to our money and resources, or spend and consume beyond our means and rack up large debt, we choose to turn the tables, follow Jesus, and give some of it away. Please join me in rebelling and making fun of the world’s foolishness by giving generously.

### Prayer

Gracious and Holy God, your foolishness is wiser than our wisdom and your weakness is stronger than our strength. We give these gifts, those given through PAR, those given online, as an act of faith in your care and of rebellion against an economy that devours and destroys. Thank you for this opportunity to raise up a new way. Amen.

## March 10: Fourth Sunday in Lent

### Invitation

“God so loved the world that God gave....” Loving the world means being as concerned with what happens on the other side of town as on the other side of the world. Through the gifts we offer to ministries of this church and those of Mission and Service, we can love the world on God’s behalf. Let us present our offering.

### Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we offer these gifts and those given through PAR or online. May they show our love for your world, for our world. Amen.

## March 17: Fifth Sunday in Lent

### Invitation

Making an offering, giving, and being generous are a lot like planting seeds. A single seed can produce a bountiful harvest. Imagine how big an impact we can have when together we plant generously with our gifts to this community of faith and Mission and Service. As followers of Jesus, I invite you to give.

### Prayer

Gracious and creating God, we offer these gifts and those already given through PAR and online. May they bear much fruit, may they be signs and symbols of Jesus in our world. Amen.

## March 24: Palm Sunday

### Invitation

Today, we are each invited to welcome Jesus. Some will offer their voices. Some will offer their possessions. Some will offer their presence. All are important and valid. Thank you for what you offer.

### Prayer

Gracious and welcoming God, we offer these gifts and those already given through PAR or online. May they be used to joyfully proclaim your vision and hope for our world. Amen.

## March 31: Easter Sunday

### Invitation

In this economic climate, fear is the greatest obstacle to generosity: fear that there isn’t enough to go around; that if we give away what we have, we won’t be able to take care of our own needs. Fear is like a big stone standing between us and the experience of the resurrection miracle. So “who will roll away the stone?” We will, through the gifts we now give.

### Prayer

God of new life, we offer these gifts and those given through PAR and online, acknowledging our fear but stretching beyond it to generosity. Thank you for your empowering love. Amen.

## April 7: Second Sunday of Easter

### Invitation

I love this vision of the community of the early church. Those with the most resources used them to help make sure that no one was in need. Everyone fed, everyone clothed, everyone cared for: it is a model that we would do well to mirror, because then we are clearly living the Way of Jesus. So let us offer our gifts, following the example of the earliest Christians.

### Prayer

Dear God, we are thankful to be able to share our gifts in Christ’s name. We wish to live out your vision for our lives. Please accept all our sacrificial gifts, those given now and those given through PAR and online, for ministries of this church and those of Mission and Service.

## April 14: Third Sunday of Easter

### Invitation

One of the ways that we witness to the resurrection and all that it means and does in our lives is to be generous. We give to show that Jesus is alive and new life has settled within us. In the spirit of Jesus, I invite you to make a generous offering.

### Prayer

Dear God, please accept these gifts and those given through PAR and online from we who have answered the call to be new life, who witness to the miracle of Christ risen, and have felt the renewing energy of your Holy Spirit. Use these gifts and all of us to create new life in your church and the world. Amen.

## April 21: Fourth Sunday of Easter

### Invitation

Some of you may be wondering, “How much should I give?” as if there is a specific amount required and then you are done, like a membership fee. Some of you may be trying to answer that question based on what other people give; “I should give as much as so and so gives”—except unless you’ve talked to them about it, you don’t actually know how much so and so gives or why they give that much.

Let me suggest an answer based on the first letter of John in the New Testament. John encourages the followers of Jesus to “lay down our lives for one another” and challenges us to love “not in word or speech, but in truth and action,” for when we see a sibling in need, we are supposed to help.

So, as we make this offering of money, whether with cash or cheque on the offering plate, or PAR, or online (*mention your method for online giving*) as the Apostle John challenges us, may we each give a meaningful gift to empower the ministry of this community of faith and the wider ministry we do through Mission and Service.

### Prayer

Dear God, as we make this offering, we ask that your Spirit would fill it and us and all people, that your love may be revealed as we use these gifts to care for those in need, wherever we may find them. Please abide in us as we love one another in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## April 28: Fifth Sunday of Easter

### Invitation

I know it’s time for us to each make an offering as part of our worship. And yes, I believe you want to be generous with your finances. But today I am reminded that some of the most important stories of sharing in the Bible don’t involve money, like Philip in today’s reading from Acts. So, as we make our offering, let us also commit ourselves to give in other ways: to give friendship, to give knowledge, to share the amazing news of what Jesus is up to in this community of faith and in each of our lives, because I am convinced that God will use every offering we make, and every offering we make will bring us closer to God.

### Prayer

Holy God, as we offer these gifts today, help us to listen for the movement of your Spirit and be willing to respond. May the giving of these gifts be just another way that we share your hope and peace and love with the people you set on our path. May it be so. Amen.

## May 5: Sixth Sunday of Easter

### Invitation

It was just over a month ago that we celebrated Christ’s rising from the dead and walking among us. But the media distracts us, our activities keep us busy, and we forget that this is still Eastertide and that we are to honour this time of physical communion with Christ. It’s hard to feel the spirit with inflation taking a toll on our income, family responsibilities, maybe working more than one job, and just the state of the world! Yet Christ is there. When we give generously and freely, we are bringing the spirit of Christ to everywhere our gifts reach. Let us present our offering.

### Prayer

In our busy lives and in our quiet times, Jesus, you are with us. We offer our gifts and those given through PAR and online for the work of God’s church to bring Christ’s presence into people’s lives. Amen.

## May 12: Seventh Sunday of Easter

### Invitation

What happens to your offerings once you make them? You may never know. After you ask God for guidance in making your gift, have faith that your gift will make an impact, and let go of your claim to it. Let us make our offering in response to God’s guidance in our lives.

### Prayer

God, you know what the world needs, and our faith in your guidance inspires us to give. Please accept these freely given gifts and those given through PAR and online, and use them through this congregation and Mission and Service for ministry where they are needed most. Amen.

## May 19: Pentecost Sunday

### Invitation

Today we celebrate the start of the church, the Day of Pentecost: the day when the church was filled with the Spirit. What God’s Spirit moves us to do in our day may look foolish to others, but we know that giving generously is never foolish. Let us present our offerings.

### Prayer

Holy Spirit, help us to feel your inspiration every day. Please accept these gifts, and those given through PAR and online, as our way of sharing your power and grace with others. Amen.

## May 26: Trinity Sunday

### Invitation

God asks us, “Whom shall I send?” And through our gifts, we say to God, “Here I am, send me!” There is a purpose for everything you have been given and for everything that you give. Respond from the fullness of your heart and your love for the world God created, and trust that God will use it for good. Let us now present our gifts.

### Prayer

God of love, take our gifts and send them to places we never dreamed they would go. Let us follow your lead and give from our hearts. Please accept these gifts, and those given through PAR and online, as a symbol of your love for us and the world. Amen.

## June 2: Second Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

We are called to plant seeds of grace, hope, and justice that we might help God’s mystery to work in the hearts and minds of others. We are called to give to those who ask and wherever we can provide for an unspoken need. The gifts we offer for local ministry and Mission and Service are seeds that reap a harvest beyond our knowledge or imagining. Let us present them now.

### Prayer

Bountiful God, accept these gifts and those given through PAR and online—our seeds of hope for the healing of the world. May the harvest be plentiful. Thank you, God, for this opportunity. Amen.

## June 9: Third Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Believing in God’s goodness, you are called to give to the people who most need to receive God’s abundance. Your gifts will make a difference in the world through local ministry and Mission and Service. Please bring them to be presented.

### Prayer

God, help us to feel thankful for everything that you’ve given us. Our prayer this morning is that through us the world will come to know your goodness. Please take our gifts, and those given through PAR and online, and use them to strengthen the United Church’s ministry, here at home and everywhere in the world. Amen.

## June 16: Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

We, as Christians, can help comfort a hurting world by sharing our gifts so that others in the world can flourish. No matter what we think of the gifts we give, God will help us share them far beyond anything we could do ourselves. Let us present them now.

### Prayer

Caring God, we thank you for the opportunity to care for others through our gifts. We pray that you will use these gifts, and those given through PAR and online, to continue sharing Christ’s love. Amen.

## June 23: Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

Open your hearts and live without fear. Give without thought of what you may receive in return, share without restriction, and live in the certainty that your gifts will be multiplied in our ministry here, and across the world through Mission and Service. Let us now present our gifts.

### Prayer

O God, we give in thanks for this community of faith, for the wider church, and for all those who live and give boldly. Bless these gifts, and those given through PAR and online, that we may be a church that lives in generosity. Amen.

## June 30: Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

### Invitation

We honour the time, talent, and labour represented in our gifts today. Your generosity makes it possible to continue our ministry here in our community of faith and across the world through Mission and Service. Let us now share our gifts.

### Prayer

We joyfully share our offerings in celebration and gratitude for all we have received, O God. May these gifts, and those given through PAR and online, be used to continue your work wherever they are needed. Amen.