# **Sermon Fodder for the Northern Lights Centennial Worship Service**

Before we wrote the Centennial worship service, one of the questions we asked ourselves and other representatives from around the church was: *What do you believe The United Church of Canada needs to receive from God at this moment in time?*

From our own prayers, consultation, and from discussions with many people, we discerned that God is calling us to have courage and trust in this moment in time. As one person said, “our church is facing a crisis of confidence heading into the next century.” As we reflected on the last 100 years of our history, we have seen many times where we as the church have moved ahead in *our* idea of what the gospel is, and instead, we have caused much harm. But we have also seen many times in the church’s history where we have listened for God’s call. And when we’ve done that, God’s embrace and love have been activated in communities, and the church and communities have all thrived.

In a time and age when anxiety runs high, we are prone to rely on ourselves to get things done *now*. But the church isn’t and has never been about “us”. It’s about living into what *God* is doing in this world *with* us and *for* us, as God’s beloved community that includes all peoples, and all places.

At 100 years, we believe The United Church of Canada is called to remember this deep relationship with God, the Spirit, and Jesus. We are called to come back to those roots that caused our founding denominations to move together in hope, joy, and celebration to become The United Church of Canada. We are called to rely not on our own ingenuity to solve the problems that lie ahead, but to humbly listen for the Spirit at work in and through the beautiful diversity of voices around Jesus’ banquet table. We are called to allow the Spirit to lead us into a future that will look different from what the past has, because the world around us does not look the same as it did in 1925.

But the message of the gospel remains the same! Our challenge is to remain courageous and hopeful as we seek to live the good news, trusting in the Spirit. And we will know that it is the Spirit at work when its fruit are made manifest: love, justice, peace, and joy. We are not alone. God is still with this church! So, let us boldly anticipate the future. For 100 years, we give thanks and listen for God’s call for the future to come. Go and share this good news with all you meet!

## ***Questions for Reflection***

1. Where do you personally experience hope and confidence in your faith?
2. What do you believe The United Church of Canada needs to receive from God at this moment in time?
3. How might your Community of Faith have “boldness and confidence” in the Spirit?