

Call to Worship

As we gather together for worship today, let us remember who we are and whose we are. We are children of the living God, heirs of all God's promises. As God's people, our wealth is literally incalculable. The Apostle Paul put it this way in his letter to the Galatians:

*In Jesus Christ you are all children of God through faith... And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.
(Galatians 3:26,29)*

Let us worship God, who bequeaths to us the very keys to the Kingdom and gives us the Holy Spirit as the guarantee and pledge of our inheritance.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Gracious God, whose giving knows no ending, we praise you for your love, which extends all the way from heaven to earth and from here to eternity. We thank you that through Christ's death, resurrection and ascension you have adopted us into your family and give us everything we need to be the church and to carry out your ministry. Truly, there is no way we can exhaust the endless supply of your grace that you provide us day by day by day by day.

And yet we confess that, though we are rich beyond all measure, we persist in believing that we are hard done by.

Freely accepted by you, we persist in trying to earn our way;

Freely forgiven by you, we withhold our forgiveness from others;

Freely provided for by you, we hoard our possessions as if they actually belonged to us.

Forgive us, O God, and set us free from the fears that cripple us. Loosen our tight grip on ourselves and our possessions so that we might recognize our common wealth and use all we have and are for the common good.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who became poor that we might become rich and who offered his very life as a ransom for many. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (adapted from Romans 8:34)

Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ. And Christ died for us. Christ rose in power for us. Christ reigns with God for us. Christ prays for us! Friends believe the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.



Call for the Offering

I looked up the word, 'gift,' in my thesaurus and found the words benefaction, bequest, bonus, boon, bounty, contribution, donation, grant, gratuity, largess, legacy, offering, and present. There really are many different ways to give! Your tithes and offerings will now be received. (with thanks to Rev. Kristine O'Brien, minister of Trafalgar Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ontario)

Prayer of Dedication

We thank you, Lord, that there really are many different ways to give. We can give of our time and talents. We can give from our current income and our accumulated assets. We can give of our material wealth and our spiritual wealth. But, however we give and however much we give, our gifts are empty if they aren't filled with our love and gratitude. And so we ask that you would teach us to give even as you give to us. Teach us to give generously, freely, cheerfully, wholeheartedly. Teach us to give our very selves away in love. For in so doing we grow more and more like the one we seek to follow, even Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Hymn Suggestions

The Book of Praise, 1997 edition

#352 And can it be that I should gain?
#472 We are God's people
#663 God whose giving knows no ending
#717 We cannot own the sunlit sky
#798 What gift can we bring
#661 We give thee but thine own
#587 Called as partners in Christ's service

The Book of Praise, 1972 edition

#173 And can it be that I should gain?
#364 We give thee but thine own
#87 O God, our help in ages past
#362 Lord of all power

