

## 2022 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

*“We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him” (Matthew 2:2)*

### HOW TO ORGANIZE AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE OR EVENT FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

**PLEASE NOTE:** Any of the suggestions below can be adapted to online meetings / gatherings. We would encourage you, at the earliest planning stages, to reach out to members of your community who have experience with organizing online worship or online gatherings.

While the resources provided this year can be used to craft a WPCU-themed service or event within your own congregation, that is not our goal. Our intention is that worship and gatherings for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity should be truly ecumenical, promoted widely, and draw leaders and participants from a broad range of Christian traditions in your community.

But how can you meet this goal of inclusive, ecumenical worship service or event celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity? Here is a basic plan you can use to get you started for either in-person events or virtual gatherings.

#### General Suggestions:

- Traditionally, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is celebrated January 18-25 in Canada, but you are encouraged to organize WPCU-themed worship services, Bible studies and other events any time during the year! The season of Pentecost is another traditional time for celebrating the WPCU globally.
- For churches and Christian communities which observe the WPCU together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is available at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca).
- Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the “Eight Days” Biblical reflections resource (available at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca)), and a selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in your own setting.
- Communities which celebrate the WPCU daily during the eight days may draw material from the “Eight Days” resource (available at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca)).
- Those wishing to undertake Bible studies on this year’s WPCU theme can use the biblical texts, reflections and discussion questions provided in the “Eight Days” resource (available at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca)). Each day the discussions can lead to a closing intercessory prayer.
- Those who wish to pray privately may find these resources helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world.

#### 4-6 months prior:

- Visit [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) / [www.semainedepriere.ca](http://www.semainedepriere.ca) to download 2022 WPCU international and Canadian resources and to find great tips for planning and preparing WPCU ecumenical worship services, Bible studies, and other events. You might also be inspired by the photos and stories from previous years' WPCU events across Canada published on those websites!
- Reach out to other faith leaders in your neighbourhood by phone, email, or just dropping into their place of worship; invite them (or their representative) to participate in a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity planning meeting. If Christians from the Middle East are present in your community, it would be desirable to invite them to the planning meeting. They may be asked to lead the singing of some of the hymns and chants in their own languages during your event(s). Since the use of digital resources for worship has grown in recent years, links to online video recordings of some of the music have also been included in 2022 WPCU resources. Depending on your local context, appropriate hymns and songs that highlight this year's theme can be substituted. Some people prefer to have additional music than the Order of Service suggests, especially for the gathering time at the opening of the service. Adapt the service to your own context.
- Gather those interested in an in-person or online planning meeting; select date, time, and venue for your event(s); for a virtual WPCU event, select the date, time, and login information. At the planning meeting, divide tasks (e.g., event promotion / communications, worship planning / bulletins, music / musicians, hospitality / refreshments, children's story time / activities).
- Craft a 'save the date' media release for others who are interested to get involved; decide how you will use social media to promote and report on your event(s). **For social media posts this year, use #WPCU2022 and #WeekofPrayer (for posts in English) and #SPUC2022 and #Semainedeprière (for posts in French).**
- Print an appropriate number of posters or other materials for promoting your event(s).

#### 2 months prior:

- Hold a follow-up planning meeting; divide worship, Bible study or other event leadership roles; finalize Order of Service and select hymns and other music; print additional materials, if necessary.
- Finalize plans to promote your event in each participating congregation and in the wider community (e.g., assign someone to place posters in grocery stores, libraries, other public locations; craft another media release with more details about your event and details for online registration for a virtual event; divide posters for distribution in churches; plan to include details of the event on various church websites; continue your social media promotion plan).
- **Share your in person or virtual event with us for Canada-wide promotion!**  
<https://www.weekofprayer.ca/share-your-week-prayer-celebration>

### **2-4 weeks prior:**

- Communicate with all participating churches; remind them to promote the event in their worship bulletins, during announcements, and in their online communications.
- Several items should be prepared for the part of the worship service entitled ‘Sharing Christ’s Light’: (1) a piece of dark blue cloth to be strategically hung to evoke the night sky; (2) a large star which will be hung on the cloth; (3) small paper stars for the participants. Depending on the context, all of those present may be invited to take a star and hang it on the ‘sky’. Alternatively, representatives can be selected to do so on behalf of the various participating churches, congregations or groups.

### **1-2 weeks prior:**

- Hold final, brief meeting to confirm all arrangements (e.g., event staffing, hospitality); walk through the worship service with leaders (and musicians, if possible); finalize bulletin – printed or digital – to be used for online or in-person services.
- Print bulletin.

### **At event:**

- For in-person events, place hospitality ministers / greeters at the doors of the venue so that people who are unfamiliar with the space can be welcomed, provided with necessary materials, and directed to seating. For virtual events, designate someone to open the event early and to be responsible for greeting people as they join.
- For in-person events, at the beginning, ask your event leader – or someone from the host congregation – to let everyone know where the washrooms are located and whether there is a space that can accommodate special needs (such as a designated space for those with mobility issues, etc.) – as you are expecting a number of people who are probably unfamiliar with your space.
- For in-person events, have a guest register, so you can capture information about how many faith communities are represented.
- For in-person events, assign a photographer / videographer to capture some moments to share via traditional or social media. Post a sign on all doors with a standardized message, such as: “Please be aware that photographs may be taken at today's event and may be used in congregational media or by The Canadian Council of Churches and its Week of Prayer for Christian Unity team (in print or online) to promote and share this event. Your participation today constitutes your agreement to have your photograph taken and used in this way.” This notice can also have a little camera icon. For virtual events, ask permission at the beginning to record and/or take screenshots.
- **Use hashtags #WPCU2022 and #WeekofPrayer (for posts in English) and #SPUC2022 and #Semainedeprière (for posts in French) when you share your celebration on social media.**
- Speak with participants to ask about their experience at the event and/or to gather material for an article (make sure to get permission if you will attribute any quotes).
- If you would like to share your photos, videos, quotes or stories on [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) and CCC social media, please contact The Canadian Council of Churches’ WPCU Program Assistant, Amelia Pahl ([pahl@councilofchurches.ca](mailto:pahl@councilofchurches.ca)).

**After event:**

- As soon as you are able, meet briefly in-person or virtually with the organizing team to reflect on the event(s) and collect ideas on what went well, and what you would change for next year.
- Write a brief article about the event(s) for submission to local media outlets or for publication on [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) and be sure to include pictures. If you would like to share your photos, videos, quotes or stories on [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca), please contact The Canadian Council of Churches' WPCU Program Assistant, Amelia Pahl ([pahl@councilofchurches.ca](mailto:pahl@councilofchurches.ca)).
- Complete your social media communications about the event(s).
- Pass along any helpful feedback you may have to the Canadian Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Writing and Animation team, using the evaluation form available at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca).
- Select the organizing team and venue for next year's WPCU event(s).