

2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

“Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit” (John 15:5-9)

TIPS FOR PREPARING THE WORSHIP SERVICE (ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION)

Before you begin

Canadian Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Writing and Animation Team encourages worship organizers to begin their planning with a review of the background information provided by those who crafted the international materials. This year we felt it would be particularly helpful, as the service reflects the ways in which the writers of the Monastic Community of Grandchamp pray daily. The service (ecumenical celebration) for 2021 WPCU is shaped by the sections which follow the pattern used by the Community of Grandchamp. We encourage you to enrich your understanding of the context by reading the *Introduction to the Theme* and *The Community of Grandchamp and the Ecumenical Experience of the Religious Life* sections of the international 2021 WPCU booklet, available on www.weekofprayer.ca.

Contents of the Service

- 2021 worship service (Ecumenical Celebration) has three different sections (vigils) and opening and closing sections.
- Each Vigil includes moments of silence and other actions, as indicated in the guide below.
- To prepare for worship each person in the congregation is given an unlit candle.

Invitation to Prayer

Entrance Hymn: A hymn invoking the Holy Spirit (chosen by your local community). As the Entrance Hymn is sung, the main worship leader lights the central large candle (see below).

Word of Welcome: A brief address that introduces 2021 WPCU theme.

Litany of Praise: Congregational response can be read or sung (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca).

First Vigil (Abiding in Christ: The Unity of the Whole Person)

Psalm: Psalm 103 read or sung (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca); the Psalm can also be replaced by a hymn chosen by your local community.

Reading: John 15:1-17

Response: Sung - *Ubi Caritas* (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca).

Short Silence: 1 minute of silence

Intercessions: Prayers with congregational response to each petition; responses can be said or sung (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca).

Action: Time of silence, 5 minutes

Hymn: *Light of God* (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca) or another song chosen by your local community.

Second Vigil (The Visible Unity of Christians)

Psalm: Psalm 85 read or sung (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca); the Psalm can also be replaced by a hymn chosen by your local community.

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

Response: Sung – *There is One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism* (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca).

Short Silence: 1 minute of silence

Intercessions: Prayers with call (reader) and response (congregation).

Action: Sharing of sign of peace in keeping with the local context.

Hymn: *Light of God* (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca) or another song chosen by your local community.

Third Vigil (The Unity of All Peoples and All Creation)

Psalm: Psalm 96 read or sung (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca); the Psalm can also be replaced by a hymn chosen by your local community.

Reading: Rev. 7:9-12

Response: Sung – *O you who are beyond all things* (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca) or another song chosen by your local community.

Homily (optional): A homily / sermon / reflection / message can be delivered if desired by local organizers.

Short Silence: 1 minute of silence

Intercessions: Prayers with congregational response to each petition; responses can be said or sung (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca).

Action: A large lit candle may be set in the middle or at the front of the worship space at the beginning of the service. If it is possible for the entire congregation to gather in a circle around it, all participants may light their candles from this central candle during the reading of the accompanying prayer. Alternately, leaders (6-8) from different traditions stand in a circle around the central candle, carrying small unlit candles with drip catchers, and take steps towards the centre to light their candles from the central flame during the reading of the accompanying prayer. They then return to the congregation and light everyone's candles – during the singing of the *Light of God* hymn (after the Lord's Prayer – see below) or at another time chosen by the local organizers.

The Lord's Prayer: Leaders and congregation pray the Lord's Prayer in the language / words they prefer.

Hymn: *Light of God* (see Hymn and Music Suggestions on www.weekofprayer.ca)

Blessing

Final hymn: Chosen by local organizers.

Materials needed for the service

1. Small, unlit candle with a drip catcher for each person in attendance (think Christmas Eve Service or Easter Vigil)
2. 1 large, raised (tall) lit candle (think Christ candle, Easter candle) placed at the front or in the centre of the worship space + lighter

3. Order of Service: 1 printed for each participant, with music included, or an electronic version to project
4. Optional: a bell or gong to end the ‘times of silence’

Worship Leaders Needed for Service

Leaders are needed for the following elements of the service:

Main worship / service leader (1)

Word of Welcome: 2 readers (3)

Litany of Praise: 2 readers (2)

Psalms (if not sung): 1-3 readers (1-3)

Readings: 1-3 readers (1-3)

Intercessions: 3 readers – 1 for each Vigil (3)

Sharing of Peace: 1 reader (1)

Actions:

- Person to time silences and ring the bell or gong (1)
- People in circle moving towards centre and lighting candles of congregants (6-8)
- Reader for the prayer accompanying the Third Vigil action (1)

The Lord’s Prayer and Blessing: 1 reader (1)

Sermon or reflection (optional): 1 homilist / preacher / speaker (1)

Music: pianist, organist, accompanist, cantor or vocal lead (1-2)

Depending on the number of churches involved in the service, and the number of people willing to take on leadership roles, you could involve up to 30 people. This maximum number is calculated based on assigning a different person to each role. It is also possible to select one person to fulfill all the parts described as ‘leader’ and a group of 6-8 others who serve as readers / intercessors throughout, and also keep time for silences.