

Order of Worship

September 2, 2018

Labour Sunday

(people's part in **bold** type)



Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Entry Into Labour Sunday Worship

On this Labour Sunday let us in a special way, lift up all people who labour, either for pay or as volunteers – in jobs, or at school, or at home, or in the workplace – for all who labour in Canada and around the world.

Silent Reflections

As we enter into this sacred hour of Labour Sunday worship, let us remember that our God is a God of justice and compassion – a God of grace and transformation. And let us remember too that our God gives us the courage and strength to live out our faith not only in the church sanctuary, but also in the workplace and market place.

(www.ucc.org/justice/worker-justice/labor/labor-sunday/worship-resources.html - adapted)

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

We pray for our elected leaders, asking that they place our sister- and brother-workers at the very centre of their deliberations, especially those who are pushing against glass ceilings and struggling at the margins.

We pray that they will support progressive policies that stamp out sexism and harassment, support equality-of-opportunity, create good jobs with living wages, and set goals to make the working poor a thing of the past, and for the eradication of poverty itself.

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

And finally, God, in our prayers voiced aloud and in the silent prayers of our hearts, we pray that we – the members of the faith-community – may be part of the holy work of building a just local and global economy which reflects not only prosperity, but dignity, compassion and justice for all...

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Presentation of Our Gifts and Offerings

Offertory Hymn VU 537

"Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands"

Offertory Prayer

Closing Hymn VU 560

"O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"

– for farm workers who work beneath the hot sun without shade and in the deadly heat, sometimes without water, and do not make sufficient wages to buy the food they plant, tend and harvest;

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

For our sisters and brothers living in Canadian communities as migrant workers, who work in the shadow of a legally sanctioned but flawed and broken ‘temporary foreign workers’ program, and who too often face exploitation, discrimination, unsafe working conditions, sexism, denial of rights through intimidation, as well as threatened and actual deportation .

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

For those who labour in the hospitality industry and earn very little in ‘tipped wages’;

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

For ethical business owners and employers who have transparent and progressive workplace policies, paying their workers living wages and providing benefits sufficient to support their families;

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

We pray for employers who do not value their workers, and oppose minimum wage legislation; for business owners, CEOs and managers who hoard riches for themselves, thus denying fair wages and benefits to their employees. May their hearts of stone be turned into hearts of compassion.

Opening Prayer (UCC, 2016 – adapted)

God of Life,

You are as near to us as our breath.

Touch our eyes,

So that we may see You in one another.

Open our ears,

**So that we may hear Your voice
in the voices of all who labour
and are heavy burdened.**

Open our minds,

To the desperation of the oppressed.

Enter our hearts,

**So that we may be filled
with loving compassion for all people.**

Come, O God of life and breath and wholeness.

Be with us now.

Show us the way of new life

**And grant us the courage to be
faithful followers of Jesus.**

May it be so. Amen.

Opening Hymn VU 582 “ *There’s a Spirit in the Air* ”
omit v. 3

A Conversation With All Ages

“ *Why the Church Celebrates Labour Sunday* ”

Hymn VU 567 “ *Will You Come and Follow Me* ”

A Labour Sunday Litany: *Beatitudes for Workers*

(UCC, 2016, *adapted*, based on Matthew 5: 3-6 & Luke 6:20-21)

Blessed are you poor
who have no work or too little income.

**Jesus has promised:
yours is the kingdom of God.**

Blessed are you who are hungry now.

**Jesus has promised:
you shall be filled.**

Blessed are you who weep
over the loss of your job, unpaid bills,
or your children's lack of opportunities.

**Jesus has promised:
you shall be comforted,
you shall laugh.**

Blessed are you who are
compassionate and empathetic.

**Jesus has promised:
you too shall experience
compassion and empathy.**

Blessed are you who hunger and thirst.

**Jesus has promised:
you shall be filled.**

The time is surely coming when God's
justice and peace shall reign throughout the land...

Silence

Sharing the Peace (Responsive)

May a heart of peace rest with you.

And also with you.

Peace

– both male and female workers, especially
vulnerable women and children
– for managers, owners, bankers and unions
– for agents, lobbyists, elected officials, policy-
makers and consumers.

O God, on this Labour Sunday,
we acknowledge that all of us have a responsibility
to help create a faithful economy that values work
and honors the dignity of all workers.

Silent Prayers

We pray today for all those seeking employment,
those facing a difficult and uncertain future,
whether they are experiencing joblessness for the
first time or are among the millions of the
long-term unemployed;

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

For those trapped in poverty because they work
in low-paying jobs – workers who need fair wages,
respect and dignity in the workplace;

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

For children whose parents must work long hours
in hard jobs just to afford food, shelter and
clothing, and for mothers, fathers and children who
are deprived of each other's companionship
because of long commutes or long work days,
or both;

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who work in the fields
providing us with food each day

Hymn VU 579

“ The Church Is Wherever God’s People ”

READINGS

First Reading: *Luke 15: 4-6*

(Jesus’ Parable of the Lost Sheep)

Second Reading:

A Responsive Reflection on Justice

(by Rebecca Sutton, Global Women’s Exchange)

Pray for those who are hungry.

Pray harder for those who will not feed them.

*Pray for those who struggle each week
to pay their bills.*

Pray harder for the wealthy who do not care.

Pray for those who are homeless.

Pray harder for those who deny them shelter.

Pray for the sick and lonely.

**Pray harder for those who will not give them
comfort.**

Pray for those who cry out for dignity.

Pray harder for those who will not listen.

Pray for those oppressed by unjust wages.

Pray harder for those who exploit them.

Pray for those who bear the yoke of prejudice.

**Pray harder for those who discriminate
against them.**

Pray for those whose basic needs are denied.

**Pray harder for public officials who
cater to the greedy,
and ignore those bound unjustly.**

Amen.

Third Reading: *Luke 15: 8 -9*

(Jesus’ Parable of the Lost Coin)

Reflections on This Morning’s Readings

Let us recognize the seeds of truth and wisdom
in these readings.

**And let these seeds of truth and wisdom
be planted in the fertile soil
of our minds and hearts.**

May it be so. Amen.

A Labour Sunday Sermon

*“ Thinking About the Parables of Jesus
Part Five: Loving Recklessly,
Foolishly and Joyfully ”*

Rev Del Stewart

A Labour Sunday Prayer

(Prayers for a Just Economy, Washington, D.C., July 24, 2013
– adapted)

O God, on this Labour Sunday, our prayers
surround those who are struggling on the
economic margins
– the ones who have not shared in the great
abundance of our wealthy country; those left
behind by the so-called economic recovery;
the ones who are unemployed, underemployed
or unemployable; and those who are unjustly
employed, working hard, yet living in poverty.
We pray too for all those caught up in the
workings of an unjust and sexist economic system

Sending Forth

The time has come to leave this sacred place.
As you depart, and throughout the coming week,
remember this...

Benediction

Salt of the Earth (Connie Epp, Riverside East Mennonite
Brethren Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba)

The Spirit of God is upon you and has anointed
you.

You are the salt of the earth and
you bring light into the world.

You are not too young or too old,
you are not too rich or needy
to bring good news to the impoverished,
to give a hand to the broken-hearted,
and to live out freedom and pardon
through the gifts you have been given,

So remember to pack peace in your toolbox,
hope in your briefcase,
love in your lunch box,
and may integrity, honesty, and joy be your
designer wear of choice.

Do not be frightened, for you are never alone.
The God in whose image you are made
will walk with you and guide you today, tomorrow,
and every day. Amen.

Choral Sending Forth MV 209

“ Go, Make a Difference ”

Refrain

Postlude