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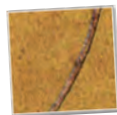
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WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2014

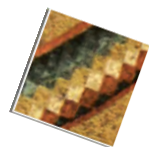


# INTRODUCTION TO THIS YEAR'S THEME

This year's theme comes to us from the Churches of French Canada. Canadians live in a country that is marked by diversity in language, culture, and even climate, and it also embodies diversity in expressions of Christian faith. Living with this diversity, but being faithful to Christ's desire for the unity of his disciples, has led them to a reflection on Paul's provocative question in 1 Corinthians, "Has Christ been divided?" In faith we respond, "No!" yet our church communities continue to endure scandalous divisions. 1 Corinthians also points us to a way in which we can value and receive the gifts of others even now in the midst of our divisions, and that is an encouragement to us in our work for unity.



The Churches of Canada have a strong history of co-operation and mutual support. Their history includes examples of common efforts, shared ministries, and even the union of several churches. Where organic unity of churches has not been possible, they have often achieved common agreements and shared ministries that witness to growing unity in Christ. The churches have acted together on issues related to poverty and social justice, and together many of the churches are beginning to take responsibility for what they see as their un-Christ-like attitudes towards indigenous peoples in their country. And yet, despite these encouraging movements towards the unity that Christ desires, disunity prevails. A consequence of this disunity is revealed in behaviour towards neighbours and the planet.



In considering the many blessings and gifts of God made manifest in their country and peoples, the Canadian Churches have begun to recognize that they must treat one another, and the very land from which they derive their living, with dignity and respect. We can share this recognition and how it calls us all to confession and repentance, and to the seeking of new and sustainable ways of living on the earth. It raises our consciousness about how God has blessed us all, and that no one group can decide how to use the world's resources without hearing and including the voices of our fellow human beings.

## THE 8 DAYS

As well as the main worship service you may want to observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on each of the "8 days". We have provided resources for this which can either be shared in small groups or used by individuals for personal devotion.

Each of the days begins with the word “Together...”. This is to emphasise that the Body of Christ is not divided, even if we, as Christians, are. Together reminds us that in Christ we are one and that in all aspects of our Christian living we should seek to discover that unity which is God’s gift to us.

### **DAY 1 - TOGETHER...WE ARE CALLED TO BE SAINTS (1 COR 1: 2)**

We reflect on how God calls us to be ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood’ and consider our attitudes, and behaviour and action as saints.

### **DAY 2 - TOGETHER...WE GIVE THANKS FOR GOD’S GRACE IN ONE ANOTHER (1 COR 1: 4)**

We celebrate God’s grace and the many ways in which it is manifest in our diverse Christian communities.

### **DAY 3 - TOGETHER...WE ARE NOT LACKING IN ANY SPIRITUAL GIFTS (1 COR 1: 7)**

We recognise we have been given abundant gifts and that together we have everything necessary to do God’s work.

### **DAY 4 - TOGETHER...WE AFFIRM THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL (1 COR 1: 9A)**

God’s faith and love for us calls and inspires us to strive for justice and unity.

### **DAY 5 - TOGETHER...WE ARE CALLED INTO FELLOWSHIP (1 COR 1: 9B)**

We consider our need for friendship and togetherness, with each other and with Christ.

### **DAY 6 - TOGETHER...WE SEEK TO BE IN AGREEMENT (1 COR 1: 10)**

We acknowledge that disagreements are painful and divisive but that, with God’s guidance, we can reach out to each other in peace and unity.

### **DAY 7 - TOGETHER...WE BELONG TO CHRIST (1 COR 1: 12-13)**

Recognising and rejoicing in the gifts of different church traditions is a step towards Christian unity.

### **DAY 8 - TOGETHER...WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL (1 COR 1: 17)**

We have journeyed through the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity reflecting on and celebrating how we are bound together as Christians through God’s abundant gifts to us. Our response to his outpouring of endless love is to unite in sharing the Good News.



## YOU

- What do saints look like?
- What would a holy nation look like?

## THE WORD - READINGS

Exodus 19: 3-8	"...you shall be for me a priestly kingdom..."
Psalms 95: 1-7	"...we are the people of his pasture..."
1 Peter 2: 9-10	"...now you are God's people..."
Matthew 12: 46-50	"...whoever does the will of my Father..."

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

- In Exodus God's people are described as a treasured possession, a priestly kingdom, a holy nation.
- 1 Peter says that God calls us to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood to proclaim his mighty acts.
- In Matthew, we find that our oneness in Jesus must extend outwards.

## REFLECTION

'Something to do,  
someone to love,  
something to look forward to'  
the trinity of peace-of-mind-perfection;  
life giving:  
purpose, point and prospect –  
activity, affection, and anticipation –  
life with God, saintly and holy.

"Better together"  
a current political mantra,  
but Corinthian divisions  
drew on different boundaries  
of emotional commitment:  
and denied proper peace.

A low falling indeed.

A high calling indeed.

## THE WORLD - PRAY

Merciful God, as you have made us a chosen race,  
a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
so draw us together,  
strengthening us to do your will.  
This we pray through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

## GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Consider issues around food – its scarcity, expense, wastage. Learn more about food poverty and get involved in initiatives to tackle shortages and ensure food security.

## YOU

- How do you experience God's grace?
- What gifts can you see in other churches?

## THE WORD - READINGS

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11 "The Lord brought us out of Egypt..."

Psalms 100 "Give thanks to him [God], bless his name."

Philippians 1: 3-11 "I thank my God every time I remember you..."

John 1: 1-18 "...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

- In Deuteronomy, gratitude is seeing God's grace in all people, including strangers.
- In ecumenism, gratitude is to rejoice in God's grace as seen in other Christian communities.
- We thank God for the gifts of grace given in Jesus and manifest in one another.

## REFLECTION

The attitude of gratitude  
is never wasted.

The cherishing of time  
and chances ripe with fruit  
for faith and union  
a choice well made.

Gratitude is grace for grace:  
a response from respect  
for all we receive;

a reminder  
of what we owe to whom  
for all we are and can yet be.

Gratitude glues us together  
in joy at common bonds  
of Godly presence:  
all life a gift,  
all gifts given that life be  
lived in grace and truth.

## THE WORLD - PRAY

We thank you, gracious God,  
that we can recognise your grace in one another.

May this grace enable us to experience your gift of unity in new ways.

This we pray through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

## GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Find out about global campaigns for providing education for everyone.  
Consider volunteering to become an active part in this work.

### YOU

- How have we forgotten the abundance of God's gifts, complaining "we have no bread"?
- What gifts (spiritual and material) do you have to share and how can you do so?

### THE WORD - READINGS

Job 28: 20-28	"Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom..."
Psalms 145: 10-21	"You open your hand..."
Ephesians 4: 7-13	"...each of us was given grace..."
Mark 8: 14-21	"Why are you talking about having no bread?"

### POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Job realises that to be wise is to fear the Lord.
- In Christ, we have enough gifts to build up his body.
- Christ has not been divided: together, we have enough to share.

### REFLECTION

Falsely pleading poverty must get God's goat! A curious pride, as if humility? Or an excuse to do nothing? Falsely boasting riches must get God's goat, as if material matters, and heaven can go in a handcart. Falsely hoarding wealth must get God's goat! Trust is gone, self is centre.

Grace can be wasted in lives lacking fear but in those broken open in awe and in wonder, the flesh is as strong as the spirit is willing.

### THE WORLD - PRAY

Faithful God, we ask for courage and humility to accept anew the gifts you pour on your people; gifts that empower, transform and heal. This we pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Consider issues around gender, and particularly on-going support for and celebration of women's potential.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2014

# ORDER OF SERVICE

## FOR AN ECUMENICAL ACT OF WORSHIP

IS CHRIST DIVIDED?  
BASED ON 1 CORINTHIANS 1: 1-17





# I. GATHERING IN HOPE AND UNITY

## OPENING HYMN

*The worship leaders and others may enter in procession.*

## GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

LEADER(S)      Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1.3)

ALL                **We give thanks to God always.**

*If a local greeting has not been given, one can be given here.*

LEADER(S)      Preparations for our worship today began in Canada. In that land's Iroquois (pronounced *ear-uh-kwa*) language *Canada* means *village*. As members of the household of God, Christians around the world indeed inhabit one village. When Christians worship, they link themselves to this worldwide village full of beauty, of struggle and of hope.

Let us pray.

Loving God, you call all – from homes and offices, from mines and factories, from fields and shops, from fishing boats and herds, from schools and hospitals, from prisons and detention centres – to be one in fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL                **Make us one in Christ.**

LEADER(S)      The indigenous peoples of Canada honour an ancient ritual of praying while facing in different directions. Let us unite in a prayer that is used by them facing the appropriate direction.

*Facing east*

LEADER(S)      From the East, the direction of the rising sun, we receive peace and light and wisdom and knowledge.

ALL                **We are grateful for these gifts, O God.**

*Facing south*

LEADER(S)      From the South come warmth, guidance, and the beginning and the end of life.

ALL                **We are grateful for these gifts, O God.**



*Facing west*

LEADER(S) From the West comes the rain, purifying waters, to sustain all living things.

ALL **We are grateful for these gifts, O God.**

*Facing north*

LEADER(S) From the North come the cold and mighty wind and the white snows, giving us strength and endurance.

ALL **We are grateful for these gifts, O God.**

*Turning towards the front, and facing upward*

LEADER(S) From the heavens we receive darkness and light and the air of your breath.

ALL **We are grateful for these gifts, O God.**

*Facing downward*

LEADER(S) From the earth we come and to the earth we will return.

ALL **We are grateful, O God, for your good creation, our earthly home.**

LEADER(S) May we walk good paths, blessed God, living on this earth as brothers and sisters should; rejoicing in one another's blessing, sympathizing in one another's sorrows, and together with you, in the name of Jesus, and with the Spirit's awakening breath, renewing the face of the earth.

ALL **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

PRAYERS OF REPENTANCE

LEADER Challenged by Paul's appeal to the community of Corinth, let us confess our sins. Gracious God, through our union with Christ Jesus you have made us rich in speech and knowledge. In our pride, we attribute these gifts to ourselves and do not recognize their true source. Forgive us, Lord.

ALL **Lord, have mercy or Kyrie eleison.**

LEADER Gracious God, you have given us so much. In Christ we are not lacking in any spiritual gift. Yet we are too self-absorbed to share the marvels of his life-giving gospel. Forgive us, Lord.

ALL **Lord, have mercy or Kyrie eleison.**

LEADER Gracious God, you call us to fellowship in your Son, Jesus Christ.  
Yet we lack enthusiasm to be united and allow divisions to persist  
among us. Forgive us, Lord.

ALL **Lord, have mercy** or *Kyrie eleison*.

LEADER Gracious God, you remain faithful even while seeing our weakness.  
By the grace of your Holy Spirit, rekindle our zeal to honour our  
covenant of unity with you, with one another, and with all  
of creation.

ALL **Amen.**

## II. LISTENING FOR THE WORD OF GOD

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 57: 14-19	God's healing peace
Psalms 36: 5-10	God's unfailing love
1 Corinthians 1: 1-17	Call to unity
Mark 9: 33-41	What humble service means

### SERMON/HOMILY

## III. RESPONDING IN FAITH AND UNITY

### A METRICAL VERSION OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

We believe in God the Father,  
God almighty, by whose plan  
earth and heaven sprang to being,  
all created things began.  
We believe in Christ the Saviour,  
Son of God in human frame,  
virgin-born, the child of Mary  
upon whom the Spirit came.  
Christ, who on the cross forsaken,  
like a lamb to slaughter led,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
he descended to the dead.

We believe in Jesus risen,  
heaven's king to rule and reign,  
to the Father's side ascended  
till as judge he comes again.  
We believe in God the Spirit;  
in one Church, below, above:  
saints of God in one communion,  
one in holiness and love.  
So by faith, our sins forgiven,  
Christ our Saviour, Lord and friend,  
we shall rise with him in glory  
to the life that knows no end.

### ECUMENICAL EXCHANGE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*We receive spiritual gifts from each other. The gifts are brought forward and then placed on a table. A leader may announce each gift using this or a similar format:*

LEADER From the \_\_\_\_ church, we gratefully receive the gift of \_\_\_\_ represented here by \_\_\_\_.

ALL **We are grateful for these gifts, O God.**

### SIGN OF PEACE

LEADER Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly city, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever.

ALL **Amen.**

LEADER When the French came to Canada in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they found a land rich in resources. The ship that brought the founder of Québec City was named *Don de Dieu*, which means "Gift of God". *Don de Dieu*, "Gift of God" has deep Eucharistic and ecclesial resonance and so as a sign of our peace and a way to recognise the gifts we receive from one another, let us say to each other with French-Canadians, *Don de Dieu*.

ALL **Don de Dieu.**

*The worshippers greet one another with an embrace, bow, or handshake as they say, "Don de Dieu". An instrumental piece of music based on the tune of St. Columba may be included here.*

### INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

*These intercessions follow the themes of the United Nations' Eight Millennium Goals.*

VOICE 1 Let us remember those suffering in poverty and hunger.

VOICE 2 Nearly one billion people go to bed hungry every night and two million children die from malnutrition every year.

VOICE 3 Gracious God, we pray for an end to such suffering, in justice and peace.  
Hear our prayer,

ALL **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1 Let us remember those striving for universal education.

VOICE 2 Around 69 million school-age children are not in school.



VOICE 3      Gracious God, we pray the thirst for knowledge  
                 throughout the world is quenched  
                 so that the potential of all children is realised.  
                 Hear our prayer,

ALL            **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1      Let us remember those promoting gender equality.

VOICE 2      Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly  
                 two-thirds of its work-hours, receive one tenth of the world's  
                 income, and own less than one hundredth of the world's property.

VOICE 3      Gracious God, we pray we honour your image in all people.  
                 Hear our prayer,

ALL            **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1      Let us remember those working to improve child health.

VOICE 2      Nine million children still die each year before they reach their  
                 fifth birthday.

VOICE 3      Gracious God, we pray we always care for people of all ages  
                 as if caring for Christ.  
                 Hear our prayer,

ALL            **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1      Let us remember women who bear new life.

VOICE 2      More than 350,000 women die annually from complications during  
                 pregnancy or childbirth, almost all of them – 99% –  
                 in developing countries.

VOICE 3      Gracious God, we pray care is provided to end this needless loss.  
                 Hear our prayer,

ALL            **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1      Let us remember those who combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and  
                 other diseases.

VOICE 2      Every day over 7,400 people are infected with HIV and 5,500 die  
                 from AIDS-related illnesses. Malaria kills a child in the world  
                 every 45 seconds.

VOICE 3      Gracious God, we pray for those for whom illness robs

hope and diminishes dignity.  
Hear our prayer,

ALL **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1 Let us remember the consequences of our poor care for creation.

VOICE 2 Nearly 17,000 species of plants and animal are currently at risk of extinction, and the number of species threatened by extinction is growing by the day.

VOICE 3 Gracious God, we pray we be wise in our ways  
with the world in our care...  
Hear our prayer,

ALL **and, in your love, answer!**

VOICE 1 Let us remember those working for global partnership.

VOICE 2 We have the resources to end poverty it will take the work of all of us  
to make this happen.

VOICE 3 Gracious God, we pray we rise to the challenge together...  
Hear our prayer,

ALL **and, in your love, answer!**

LEADER Together we pray *the Lord's Prayer*.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the  
glory are yours  
now and forever.  
Amen.

## IV. GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

### OFFERING HYMN

*A collection may be taken.*

## COMMITMENT TO UNITY

LEADER(S) Paul challenged the Christians in Corinth to know in their hearts  
and to show in their actions that Christ has not been divided.  
We declare our commitment to the unity we long for in Christ.

ALL **Together, we proclaim his good news!**

LEADER(S) We are rich in blessings through our union in Christ.

ALL **Together, we proclaim his good news!**

LEADER(S) We are embraced by Christ.

ALL **Together, we proclaim his good news!**

LEADER(S) We are united in the mind and purpose of Christ.

ALL **Together, we proclaim his good news!**

LEADER(S) We will overcome our quarrels about him who was crucified for us.

ALL **Together, we proclaim his good news!**

LEADER(S) Christ has not been divided.

ALL **Together, we proclaim his good news!**

## SENDING OUT HYMN

### BLESSING AND SENDING OUT

LEADER(S) The Lord be with you.

ALL **And also with you.**

LEADER(S) May the love of Jesus draw you to himself,  
may the power of Jesus strengthen you in his service,  
may the joy of Jesus fill your spirit,  
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the  
Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you forever.

ALL **Amen.**

LEADER(S) Go in peace,  
to love and to be loved,  
to welcome and to belong  
to serve and to be nourished.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**



## YOU

- How has God been faithful to you in the last year?
- How does God's faithfulness inspire you to work for Christian unity?

## THE WORD - READINGS

Lamentations 3: 19-26	"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases..."
Psalms 57: 7-11	"Your [God's] faithfulness extends to the clouds."
Hebrews 10: 19-25	"...he who has promised is faithful."
Luke 1: 67-75	"...he has looked favourably on his people..."

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The unity of the Trinity calls us all to a deeper communion.
- Zechariah testifies to God's faithfulness.
- We pray for the unity of the church, that love and justice flourish.

## REFLECTION

'God is love' is readily said  
with scarce a thought  
of what that means;  
which formula might  
best describe its content?  
Mere sentiment will never do:  
the meek and mild misunderstood  
as gentle and accepting come what may.

But love lacking justice  
is tearful and spineless  
and justice, love-lacking,  
is brutal and cold.  
Tempered by mercy,  
such justice is loving,  
so mercy is key to it all.

Justice plus mercy equals love equals God:  
the constant consistent equation:  
always and everywhere true.

## THE WORLD - PRAY

Lord God,  
*Awaken* in us the call to love  
and *strengthen* in us the call to service,  
so that *together* we witness to your gospel.  
This we pray through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

## GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Christian Aid estimates that tax dodging costs poor countries \$160 billion every year. This sum would be enough to save the lives of 350,000 children aged five or under. Find out more about this stark reality and support action for tax justice.

### YOU

- How do you experience fellowship with God?
- In what ways is God calling you into fellowship with others?

### THE WORD - READINGS

Isaiah 43: 1-7	"...I will be with you..."
Psalms 133	"...together in unity!"
1 John 1: 3-7	"...we have fellowship with one another..."
John 15: 12-17	"I have called you friends..."

### POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The nearer we are to the Trinity, the closer we are in unity.
- As friends of Jesus, not servants, we are to reject power in favour of love.
- We witness to the gospel both to those who have not heard it and to those who have.

### REFLECTION

Kids crave best friends  
elders crave companionship  
all together need to know  
they never walk alone.  
Christ craves much the same,  
calls us to walk with him –  
friendship a two-way path.

How could we call enemy  
those Christ calls friends?  
The good enough for him  
are surely good enough for us?

### THE WORLD - PRAY

Father of love,  
you have called us into the fellowship of your Son  
and appointed us to bear witness to the gospel.  
By the grace of your Spirit,  
enable us to overcome our divisions  
and dwell together in unity  
so that our joy may be complete,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Working in partnership enables us to learn more about each other and build community. Consider forming a partnership of local churches to help communities across the world.

## YOU

- Describe an occasion when a painful church disagreement was the beginning of a renewed struggle towards greater unity.
- What issues still cause divisions?
- What paths do you see towards greater unity?

## THE WORD - READINGS

Judges 4: 1-9	"If you go with me, I will go..."
Psalms 34: 1-14	"...seek peace, and pursue it..."
1 Corinthians 1: 10-15	"...be united in the same mind and the same purpose."
Luke 22: 24-30	"A dispute also arose among them..."

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Acknowledging division is the first step to establishing unity.
- Deborah and Chloe show us the need for renewed unity leading to action.
- As we strive to be united, we are called to seek the Lord in peace.

## REFLECTION

"If I wanted your opinion, I would give it to you" is no road to respectful peace but a rocky highway to conflict. Denying difference merely primes the time-bomb: defused only by difference acknowledged and denied its power to part.

Deep difference needs more than shallow agreement: unity of mind and purpose costs and the price is paid in pride sidelined.

## THE WORLD - PRAY

Loving God,  
in whom our divisions have no meaning,  
send us your Holy Spirit to guide us  
as we strive for reconciliation.  
Unite us in mind and purpose  
and renew us for mission,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Malaria kills thousands of people every single day – half the world is in its devastating grip, predominantly the poorest half, and many of them are children. Find out how you can help stop this preventable disease.



### YOU

- What shows that you belong to Christ?
- How does the phrase “I belong to Christ” divide Christians rather than unite them?

### THE WORD - READINGS

Isaiah 19: 19-25

“he [God] will send them a saviour...”

Psalms 139: 1-12

“Where can I go from your spirit?”

1 Corinthians 12: 12-26

“If one member suffers...”

Mark 9: 38-41

“Whoever is not against us is for us.”

### POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Christian unity is part of God’s plan for the unity of the cosmos.
- Recognising the gifts of various church traditions compels us towards visible unity.
- Paul tells us that all who call on the name of the Lord are with us in Christ.

### REFLECTION

It is too small

to presume one Church!

It is too small to presume one World!

The whole Creation is the canvas

on which God paints a purpose

of unity and peace.

All the more then

the sadness of traditions held

at the expense of togetherness.

One body, biblically:

broken by us, tragically.

### THE WORLD - PRAY

We give you thanks, O God,

that you bless every member of the body of Christ

with the gifts of your Spirit.

Help us to rejoice in the gifts of our various church traditions

and to work for the unity of all who call upon Jesus as Lord.

Amen.

### GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

- Consider climate change and the effect it is having on people’s lives all over the world. What can you do to make a difference?

## YOU

- In what ways is the “gospel” you have received bound up with its cultural and historic transmission? Has that been an obstacle to unity?
- How would our fuller unity in Christ make us better witnesses to the gospel?

## THE WORD - READINGS

Isaiah 61: 1-4

“The spirit of the Lord God...has sent me to bring good news...”

Psalms 145: 1-7

“One generation shall laud your works to another...”

1 Corinthians 15: 1-8

“...I handed on to you...what I in turn had received...”

Luke 4: 14-21

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled...”

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

- We have a common mandate to proclaim the good news fulfilled in Jesus.
- The path to unity is to be found in the power of the cross.
- The Gospel becomes tangible when we live like Jesus did.

## REFLECTION

It is all about good news for the poor  
not impoverishing aspiration;  
it is all about release for captives,  
not binding by rules;  
it is all about sight for the blinded,  
not making more wounded;  
it is all about freeing oppressed  
not crushing more spirits.

The Messiah's manifesto  
is surely ours:  
a gospel of glorious goodness;  
vulnerable love  
in courageous and creative action;  
consigning dispiriting  
denominational division  
to an unrepeatable past.

## THE WORLD - PRAY

Gracious God,  
you sent your son in the power of the Spirit  
to redeem your people.  
Unite us in our diversity  
and heal our broken church  
so that the world may be drawn  
to the source of all healing in Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

## GO AND DO (SEE [WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO](http://WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/GOANDDO))

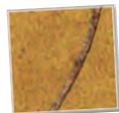
- Consider our joint responsibilities for global development. What's the significance of the Millennium Development Goals, and what should be the priorities for setting the next agenda for development?

# WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2014

Is Christian disunity a scandal before God? Or is it something we have grown accustomed to, as though it were a creaky door that we never seem to get around to fixing? St Paul's words challenge us as we reflect upon this question. To suggest that disunity is something acceptable is declaring that Christ himself is divided – and that really is a scandal!



2013 was the year in which churches from all inhabited continents of the world gathered in Korea for the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. We gathered for no other reason than to declare to the world that our disunity is a scandal and that we will go on praying for and working for that unity which is God's gift to the church and to the world.



The Churches of French Canada have chosen for us a key biblical text of the ecumenical movement and have invited us to think about what our divisions say to the world and to each other about the Christian faith. They have also suggested that we use the Millennium Goals as a focus for our prayers for the world.

I am delighted to commend to you these resources, which we have adapted for use in the churches across Britain and Ireland.

*Revd Bob Fyffe, General Secretary Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*

## ORDER OF SERVICE

See pages 7-14 for the pull-out order of service (which may be photocopied). Notes and guidance for leaders can be found at [www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## FURTHER COPIES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See [www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)

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