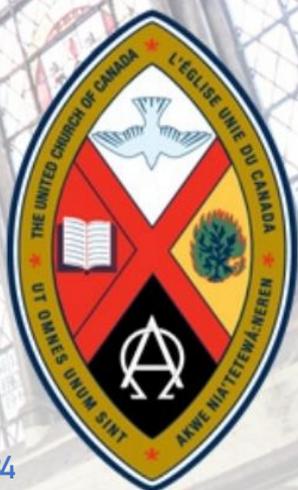


# Radical Belonging:

A Mental Health Sunday Resource for All



United Church of Christ  
**MENTAL HEALTH™**  
**NETWORK**



Rev. Franklyn James

Zion United Church | Armstrong, BC V0E1B0 | 250-546-9384

St. Andrew's United Church | Enderby, BC V0E1V0 | 250-838-7315

# THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

## APPROACHED TO GOD

Before the service, meditate and speak to God. During the service let God speak to you. After the service talk to each other and the wider community about God.

## KEYS

Words printed in **ALL CAPS & bold** are spoken or sung by everyone.

At places marked with the “✝,” you are invited to stand, as you are able.

## Functionaries

### On Piano

- Lindsay Lundquist

### Singer(s)

- Leona Harrison

### Reader(s)

- Ed Murdoch

### Support Personnel

- Ed Murdoch

### Videographer & Editor

- Franklyn James

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## Order of Worship

### INTROIT:

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TERRITORY AND RECONCILIATION

As we gather today, we recognize that the first peoples lived here for countless generations before we did. We acknowledge that we are on the unceded traditional lands of the Splots'in First Nation, and we celebrate their faithful stewardship.

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENT!

**Welcome to Radical Belonging: Mental Health Day Worship service.....**

The resource we are using was created in prayer and partnership between the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network, an independent mental health ministry in ecclesiastical covenant....

with the United Church of Christ, and The United Church of Canada, with generous contributions by Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, the United Church of Christ's Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice.....

## CENTERING HYMN: Open My Eyes, That I May See VU #371

### LIGHTING THE WORSHIP CANDLE

We light this candle to remind ourselves of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, may it also be a reminder for us to share this light of love and service for those living with mental illness and disability

The light invites us into radical welcoming and affirming communities; to be a light that dispel the darkness of stigma, labels, exclusion and marginalization for those touched by mental illness and disability.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We gather in the presence of the One who abandons no one.

**People: Come Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.**

One: All are welcome in this sacred place, made holy through your presence with us.

**People: Open our hearts and minds this day, guide us into a loving relationship with all your children.**

One: We gather as God’s beloved people, leaving no one outside.

**People: Spark us with a word of life and radical belonging—a message that we share with others as we seek to live out Christ’s love.**

One: We call on the name of God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us. **Amen.** - *Rev. Amy Petré Hill*

### OPENING PRAYER

One: O God, come into our place of worship this day and enliven us.

**People: Come into each heart, each story, each prayer, each song, each life here today so that we may live and love with purpose, courage, and beauty.**

One: O God, who has created each of us in your image and made us one body, each as holy vessels of your presence to one another, create in and among us a holy place.

**People: Give us hearts and minds, we pray, to be open to human vulnerability, to listen to each other with patient and thoughtful attention and support.**

**To perceive the grace of the differences in our embodied experience, to resist what excludes and diminishes, and to dismantle what acts as barriers to flourishing together in love and justice.**

One: O God, help us to trust your Spirit's work to make us whole, together in relationships of mutuality and partnership, in sacred rhythms of giving and receiving.

**People: Gather us together to be your people in the world. One: In Jesus' name we pray, All: Amen. - Dr. Tom Reynolds**

**OPENING HYMN:**

- **Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound VU#266**

**LITANY OF EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME**

One: Let us pray to the God of our Ancestors, who is the Creator of all Life: Eternal Divine Spirit, we pray for the Church that you created through your Son, Jesus Christ; that it may provide an extravagant welcome and serve those who live with a mental illness, particularly in minority communities.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Guide us, the citizens and leaders of this land, this region and this city ... that we may unite to provide for and protect those of us who are poor, homeless and suffer in mind, body and spirit.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Forgive us as a community, when we knowingly or unknowingly ridicule, look in disgust, neglect or discriminate against those who suffer from mental illness.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Comfort and relieve those who are troubled in mind and spirit. Bring them hope, peace and the consolation of a loving community.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Grant patience and courage to the families and friends of those who are ill. Increase their perseverance as they face challenges to recovery for their loved one.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Protect and defend those living with mental illness from exploitation, addictions and abuse.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Oh Lord, increase our awareness, compassion, and sensitivity so that we can embrace our siblings and cousins who wrestle with Mental Illness.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Because of their intense pain, and at times, their lack of perceived options, we commend to your mercy and defense all who are contemplating suicide today, right now. Bring someone or something to intervene.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: For the families who have lost a loved one to mental illness, bring them comfort in trusting that your grace accepts their loved one, despite the event that brought them into your loving arms.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Deep within the souls of black and brown people that are across the diaspora, empower us to speak up for those who do not have a voice; save us from making peace with the injustices in the social systems that have failed them.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Guide those who do research for the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses; uphold them with your compassion and diligence.

**People: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

One: Eternal Spirit of Love, Giver of life and health, we trust that in your time and way, you will dispel all confusion with your order, all fear with your peace. Through Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.** - Rev. Colin Jones, Co-Pastor of Advent United Church of Christ, Col., Ohio

## **HYMN: Take, O Take Me as I Am MV #85**

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of promise and possibility, we come before you broken and breathless, thinking we are trudging through a valley of lifeless bones.

We look for life amidst the bones and dust and fail to notice your breath flowing in and around us. We think we need to be perfect before we can enter the new life you have for us.

We become fearful when illness in body, mind, or spirit enters into our lives or the lives of those around us. We worry that sickness of body, that mental illness, is a judgement from you.

We would rather walk in a valley of bones than believe that your Love, your Spirit, claims us all – in our brokenness and our wholeness.

Open us to the power of your Spirit, a power that makes us all whole: bone, sinew, and flesh filled with your breath.

Let us remember that you do not leave us alone in a valley filled with dusty, dry bones; You call us into new life, again and again.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

One: Hear the Good News: No valley is too despairing, broken, or dusty for God to enter in. No fear, no chaos, no hopelessness is beyond the reach of the One whose breath gives us life.

**People: Through Christ, God sees only our wholeness. Through Christ, forgiveness, love, and new life are always possible.**

One: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Make all things new.

**People: We are reclaimed and remade by the Spirit of Life. In our brokenness and in our wholeness, we are God's beloved. Thanks be to God. Amen. (Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, based on Ezekiel 37)**

### **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

- **Psalm 84 or VU, p.800**
- **John 9:1-12**

*Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church today!!*

***People: We listened for the voice of God.***

### **REFLECTION/SERMON**

Psalm 84 is a pilgrimage song of praise that is sung by those who traveled to Jerusalem to worship. The journeys were often plagued with hardship as the traveler moved through the wilderness over

great distances in order to reach their destination. In verse 2, the psalmist speaks of the intense desire of these travellers:

*My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Psalm 84:2*

**It is not only people but creation even finds rest in the sanctuary:**

*Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. - Psalm 84:3*

Verses 4 and 5 express of the blessedness of those present in the sanctuary and those traveling toward that destination.

*Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. - Psalm 84:4-5*

As we read these words, there is an assurance that hope is found even in the wilderness in which the people are traveling

*As they go through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools. - Psalm 84:6*

Here we learn that Valley of Baka, a wilderness covered by balsam trees, becomes an oasis for the pilgrims.

**On this mental health Sunday, we need to ask this question, is faith community seen as a haven an oasis where people can find hope and a place of radical belonging?**

**Let us turn our attention to John chapter 9.**

As Jesus was walking by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples want to know who sinned "... the man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

The disciples' question comes from what they had learned from their worldview and understanding that disease and suffering is the direct result of sin.

The disciples wanted to know how this case fit into what they already believed. Sadly, they did not look upon the man as person who is suffering and in need of healing, but see his situation as a kind of mystery or riddle to be solved.

### **Jesus answered,**

*Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. John 9:3-4*

Jesus both answers their question and helps them to see a broader issue. His words do not explain the cause of the man's blindness, but the purpose. He sees in the blind man an opportunity to display the works of God.

- a. When we see suffering, do we see it as a problem or a possibility?
- b. If someone close to us suffers from physical or mental impairment, what do we see in that person?
- c. Do we see a problem, a hassle, an inconvenience, or do we see an opportunity to display the works of a compassionate God? For us this means providing assistance in whatever way we can.

As our communities slowly emerge from the collective trauma of COVID-19, we or someone we know has been touched by symptoms of depression and anxiety during the pandemic. The loss of lives, physical contact with beloved people, and life milestones weigh heavy on our lives and our communities.

Within this context, The United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network join our voices in calling faith communities to become places of radical belonging.

These are intentionally inclusive places where God's Kingdom manifests through relationships of mutual respect for all people, including those living with mental health challenges, substance use disorders, neurodevelopmental differences, brain disorders, and their families.

Such sacred places offer welcome into all aspects of our shared life, leadership, and work as faith communities, recognizing that God blesses everyone with spiritual gifts and graces to share.

This vision of faith communities as sacred places of radical belonging is not new: Paul shares the image of our Spirit-filled, mutually inclusive communities as "the body of Christ" in the world.

The Body of Christ is made of many members (I Cor 12, Rom 12), and its health (wholeness) is a factor of all being welcomed as co-creators of life together. The image of God is reflected in relation, not as a property in an isolated individual.

Created to be in relationship, the image of God is received and honored in connection with others, creating a communal mosaic, persons being together.

We need not be "perfect," but radical belonging requires more than good intentions; more than offering access to our sanctuaries and superficial greetings to newcomers.

Radical belonging calls us to provide welcome, inclusion, support, and engagement with every individual and family. It calls us to look into our own and our communities' conscious and unconscious stigma around difference.

This includes acknowledging and dismantling the systemic sins of racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and the oppression of indigenous peoples that emerged from the structures of colonialism and white supremacy.

Radical belonging demands living out a theology of human wholeness that is more expansive and inclusive than the narrow European cultural perspectives that declared ‘others’ as deviant.

Radical belonging challenges simple, harmful theologies that posit health equals goodness, while disabilities, differences, and illnesses are signs of sin.

Jesus himself rebuked his disciples in John 9 when they assumed that disability is a consequence of sin, proclaiming that neither the man’s parents nor he had sinned to cause the disability, but rather that the works of God may be displayed.

In this story, as in many others, the focus is not merely on ‘curing’ as eliminating impairments and illnesses, re-making people to function “normally.” Instead, **the emphasis is on the personal and social transformation that takes place through Jesus’ presence.**

Mental illness and disability are part of the natural diversity of creation, neither a flaw nor a blessing, but one of the diverse ways of being an embodied creature.

The image of God is not a set of capabilities that can be listed and measured according to standards of exchange value, such that their absence makes someone less human; rather it is a sign of intrinsic goodness and preciousness that is vulnerable and expressed differently in each person.

In Radical Belonging, challenges the systemic sins that create “otherness” and ableism, as well as resources that share the stories of people living with mental illness and disabilities.

In Radical Belonging we can find words of grace and celebration for the opportunities we have as the Body of Christ to love and care for one another, accepting each other as beautiful, wondrous, and vulnerable children of God whose strengths and struggles in the community come together to reflect the image of God.

Together, Zion United and St. Andrew's United Church Join with the United Church of Christ Mental Health Network and the wider United Church of Canada family send our prayers and blessings as you raise your hearts and voices on Mental Health Sunday.

***Let it be so!!***

## **HYMN: Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness VU #375**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

One: O God, who is beyond names, and yet who Jesus called Abba, who is the mystery of life itself, which still is at the center of all that is and comes close to us, we seek to be present to your presence.

Though we have fallen short of the ways we are to be living in your realm, your way which is here and is yet to come fully, we bring all that we have done, and that which we have not done, seeking your mercy.

Out of the many of our own vulnerabilities, we offer You our prayer for hope and compassion for those who are living with a mental health disease.

We place before you the illnesses of major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar and anxiety disorders, eating and post-traumatic stress disorders, and alco-holism and drug addiction.

You know us through and through and will never forsake anyone. Be with those who live with these conditions and their loved ones, so we all know that You are our sustainer and our guide.

Yet in these life disruptions, you come in surprising ways to lead people through the church, organizations, medicines and treatment centers to help us discover the ways to live, to discover the core of who we are as Your beloved children.

Be the light in our despair; be the love in the places of our isolation; be the truth when our fears bring falsehood; and be the grace that overcomes our shame.

You are the God who came in Jesus to show us who you are. May we find our true selves in You as we receive all the gifts which You have given us. We thank You.

Embolden us to speak and live with honesty and courage, embracing our vulnerabilities and find Your grace which is sufficient for our every need. Through the living Spirit of Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen. - Rev. Alan Johnson

**CLOSING HYMN: My Life Flows On VU #716**

**THANK YOU & BLESSING**

One: Holy One, Creator, God of many tribes and nations.

**People: By every name you are known, you bless the earth!**

One: By your spirit and imagination.

**People: Light the path to right relationships.**

One: Break the stereotypes, banish inaction, bring justice.

**ALL: End the long apart-ness that has twisted our souls.**

**DOXOLOGY: Make Me A Channel of Your Peace VU #684**



**THANK YOUS & CREDITS**

Thank you for participating in today's worship, I pray you have been greatly blessed.

Our minister Rev. Franklyn James has sought a change in Pastoral Relationship. This means Rev. James will no longer be the minister of Zion United Church and St. Andrew's United Church as of June 30, 2021.

Remember, for those we are unable to connect with for any reason; call to buoy up their spirits, and/or pray for them and entrust them to the care of the divine.

Due to physical distancing caused by the Corona Virus, COVID 19, all church activities that require physical contact are suspended until further notice.

**GIFTS & OFFERINGS**

You may send us your gifts & offerings using the information below:

- Zion United Church @ to [zionunitedarmstrongbc@gmail.com](mailto:zionunitedarmstrongbc@gmail.com)
- St. Andrew's @ [standrewsunitedenderbybc@gmail.com](mailto:standrewsunitedenderbybc@gmail.com)
- Mission & Service Link: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/giving-opportunities>

Those of you who are on PAR and those who mailed in the gifts and offerings thank you.

We are always happy to hear your comments and queries. If you have prayer requests, you may use our social media message tabs or email them to [ministerfranklyn@gmail.com](mailto:ministerfranklyn@gmail.com)

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## **MUSIC CREDITS**

### **Take, O Take Me as I Am - MV #85**

Words: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1995;

French trans. David Fines, 2005

Music: John L. Bell, 1995.

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### **Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound - VU #266**

Words: John Henry Newton; (v 5) anonymous from A Collection of Sacred Ballads. Inuktitut translation: Information sought.

Words, Music, Adaptation, and Harmony: Public Domain.

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### **Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness – VU #375**

Words, Music: James K. Manley © 1978

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Translation: Andrew Donaldson, Seraph Music

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### **Make Me a Channel of Your Peace – VU #684**

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### **My Life Flows On – VU #716**

Words. Robert S. Lowry.

Music: Robert S. Lowry.

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### **Open My Eyes, That I May See – VU #371**

Words, Music: Clara H. Scott 1895.

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# Simple Things You Can Do

to make the world a better place for people with mental health challenges and their families

1. **Be a friend.** Provide companionship and compassion on the road toward recovery. Offer a ride to church or to a local support group. Listen without judgement. Pray for those you know with mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and for their family members.
2. **Share your story.** Has mental illness impacted you or your family in some way? Your story may empower others to seek treatment or have hope.
3. **Watch your language.** Pay attention to the words you use and avoid stigmatizing labels. Do not refer to people as “crazy,” “psycho,” “lunatic” or “mental.”
4. **Be a “StigmaBuster.”** Challenge negative attitudes toward mental illness among your friends and acquaintances and in the media.
5. **Learn the facts.** Educate yourself about the various mental health challenges, substance use disorders, neurodevelopmental differences, and other brain disorders. Check out the resources at the UCC Mental Health Network ([www.mhn-ucc.org](http://www.mhn-ucc.org)), take a Mental Health First Aid class and host one at your congregation for the larger community.

Offer a class or going a support group with the National Alliance on Mental Illness ([www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)) and check out the facts at the National Institute of Mental Health ([www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)), the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) ([www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)), the Alzheimer’s Association ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)). Visit the Mental Health Commission of Canada for education, supports and programs related to mental wellness <http://mentalhealthcommission.ca/>

For more information on the resources used in this service and other resources visit <https://united-church.ca/leadership/worship-resources>