Worship Plan for Mediated Joint Worship Services

**GATHERING**

**Introduction**

Good morning and welcome to the shared worship of the Nith Valley Ministry Area. My name is Tanya Ramer and I serve with Trinity Lutheran New, Hamburg, and as one of the Dean’s of our ministry area. This morning, Rev. Jeff Laustsen joins us as our preacher, Pr. Jeff services the congregation of Zion, Stratford. We are so glad that you are able to join us this morning for worship.

**Greeting** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray…

God, we come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving. You have searched us, known us, cared for us, and welcomed us as your daughters and sons. In you, we find our home. Through the power of your Holy Spirit and the inspiration of your Word, continue to work in us and through us. Transform us into your image. Make us signs of grace and hospitality to the world around us, so that your kingdom would come, and your will would be one, on earth, as it is in heaven. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**WORD**

Psalm Reading: Psalm 146

Praise the LORD!  
 Praise the LORD, O my soul!  
 2I will praise the LORD as long as I live;  
 I will sing praises to my God all my life long.  
 3Do not put your trust in princes,  
 in mortals, in whom there is no help.  
 4When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
 on that very day their plans perish.  
 5Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
 whose hope is in the LORD their God,  
 6who made heaven and earth,  
 the sea, and all that is in them;  
 who keeps faith forever;  
 7who executes justice for the oppressed;  
 who gives food to the hungry.  
 The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
 8the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.  
 The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
 the LORD loves the righteous.  
 9The LORD watches over the strangers;  
 he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
 but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.  
 10The LORD will reign forever,  
 your God, O Zion, for all generations.  
 Praise the LORD!

Bible Reading: Ruth 1:1-18

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. 2The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. 3But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, 5both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.  
6Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. 7So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in- law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. 8But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. 10They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? 12Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, 13would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." 14Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.  
15So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16But Ruth said,  
 "Do not press me to leave you  
 or to turn back from following you!  
 Where you go, I will go;  
 where you lodge, I will lodge,  
 your people shall be my people,  
 and your God my God.  
 17Where you die, I will die —   
 there will I be buried.  
 May the LORD do thus and so to me,  
 and more as well,  
 if even death parts me from you!"  
18When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

*Word of God, word of life. Thanks be to God.*

**Sermon** *Silence for reflection follows sermon. Visual is candle with the following verse: You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

**Prayers of Intercession**

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

For your whole church throughout the world. Give courage in the midst of storms, so that we see and hear Jesus calling: “Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid.” May we follow Christ wherever he leads. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of your creation. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Help the human family endeavor to sustain and be sustained by the resources of your hand. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and their leaders. In you, steadfast love and faithfulness meet, and righteousness and peace kiss. May nations in conflict know the peace that is the fruit of justice, and the justice that is the path to peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those in need. Everyone who calls upon your name will be saved. Accompany all who are lonely, hear the voices of those who cry out in anguish, and support those who are frustrated in their search for an affordable place to live. We pray for those suffering this day *especially the people of Beirut*. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our ministry area. You have gathered us today as your people and we thank you for this gift. We pray for those who are new to this community, for students and teachers preparing for a new school year, and for those struggling with unexpected hardship. Supply us generously with your grace for our life together. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks, O God, for the saints of the whole church from all times and places, and for the saints in our lives and in our community whom you have gathered to yourself. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**MEAL**

**Prayer for our Offerings:** Over the past week, we have received offerings by mail, drop off, or online and so we give thanks for the many gifts we have received: Almighty God, we worship today as a scattered church, yet we are one and we are blessed. Receive the gifts we bring in gratitude for your care for us, and help us to bless you with dedication of our lives; through Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Blessing of Children**

Great and Holy Mystery, known and unknown,  
We thank you for the blessing of this day. We thank you for the blessings of this place: for its great beauty, for the power and the majesty of the land and the waters. And we thank you especially for the people who live here, for our friends, our families, and our neighbours.

Today we wish to lift up our prayers to you for the children and the youth of our city and of our neighbours in First Nation communities.

We dare this day to dream for their futures. We dare to dream that their futures will be wonderful. That they will all be able to lead full lives, that they will have a wide variety of good experiences over the course of their lives and grow up to do things that will amaze us and amaze them.

We pray for our children and youth, knowing, Great One, that at this time many of our youth are hurting. They do not live surrounded by love and compassion. Their needs are great. Many feel alone, uncertain, and even afraid.

We remember how your son, Jesus, came into this world as a baby in a lowly stable. Our Lord was vulnerable and dependent on the love and protection of others. He and his family fled to Egypt in his youth in need of protection in a foreign land, far from home.

And so we think especially today about the many Indigenous children and youth of our community. Many have been our neighbours since the day they were born. Others have come to our community seeking an education that is not yet available at home, in the First Nation communities where they were born and where their families live. They have had to leave parents, grandparents, younger siblings, and other relatives behind. They have come in hope.

These youth have been entrusted to the care of this community. We lament that some have not always felt welcomed or even safe. We grieve that across this country some young Indigenous people have come to cities like ours and have lost their lives, far from home. We grieve with their loved ones and friends.

Holy One, pour out your spirit of wisdom upon us. We are looking for answers. We need your guidance, your courage, and your healing power to help all of us in this community do everything possible to love, to encourage, to nurture, and at all times to look out for the safety and security of the children and young people who live among us. (from The United Church of Canada)

**Words of Institution**

On his last night, as he shared a meal with his friends, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

**Lord’s Prayer** *Though we are apart, we are made one in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, and so we pray as one:*

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.

**Invitation to Communion** *Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

**Communion** *Let us eat together: the body of Christ, bread of heaven; and the blood of Christ, cup of salvation.*

**Prayer after Communion** Gracious God, in this meal you have gathered your scattered people, drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now give us courage to be your people in the world, and voice to proclaim your truth this day and always, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

**SENDING**

**Blessing** Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, ☩ Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. Amen.

**Peace** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**Reflective Questions (**Preacher to provide**)**