

2022

Your Generosity Matters

8 Inspiring Mission & Service Stories and Devotions



Mission & Service—helping transform and save lives,
inspire meaning and purpose, and build a better world.



The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada

Don't want to miss out? Subscribe to the free *God's Mission, Our Gifts* e-newsletter to receive all of these stories, videos, and more delivered right to your inbox every month. Visit united-church.ca/e-newsletters to subscribe. The full booklet is available for download at united-church.ca; select Mission & Service on the homepage. La version française est disponible en ligne à egliseunie.ca.

Want to make someone's day more meaningful?

Awesome! Simply share the inspiring video that accompanies each of these stories in your worship service, e-newsletter, and social media channels. Visit youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada for this year's playlist.

Looking for a spiritual resource? Look no further! Turn to this booklet when you need a quick meeting opener, are leading a small group faith study, or want to enhance your personal faith life.

Wondering where to get more free print booklets?

It's super easy! Visit UCRDstore.ca to order more booklets (CH11172).

Would you like to receive full Mission & Service seasonal worship services, including children's moments and sermons? We're happy to share! Reach out at ms@united-church.ca.

Can your community of faith test Mission & Service resources? Excellent! We are always looking for churches to pilot materials and offer feedback. Send us your coordinates at ms@united-church.ca.

Questions/feedback? We'd love to hear from you! Drop us a line at ms@united-church.ca.

Contents

Welcome to <i>Your Generosity Matters 2022!</i>	5
Every Child Has a Right to Learn: Meshack’s Story	6
You Give Skills for Success: Kathleen’s Story	9
Knowledge for Life: Habtamu’s Story	12
Rebuilding after Loss: Lisa’s Story	15
Your Generosity Inspires Purpose: Nicole’s Story	18
Nourishing Bodies and Hearts: Ashrafi’s Story	21
Bridging Financial Divides: Lynn’s Story	24
Your Gifts Help Overcome Discrimination: Petrona’s Story	27
Morning and Evening Prayers	30

Writer: Trisha Elliott

Design and layout: Diane Renault-Collicott

Cover images: front: Paul Jeffrey/ACT Alliance, back: The United Church of Canada



Copyright © 2021
The United Church of Canada
L’Église Unie du Canada



The content of this resource is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include the United Church copyright notice and the Creative Commons licence.

All biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*Together we help transform
and save lives, inspire meaning
and purpose, and build a better world.*



Photo: Catie Futhy

*“I have to tell
you last week
we started*

*using the new Mission & Service booklet
for Bible study. The candid, heartfelt
conversations have been incredible.*

*The stories, reflections, and prompts have taken
us to really unexpected places. We really grew.
You need to do this again please!!!!”*

—Rev. Wanda Stride

Welcome to *Your Generosity Matters 2022!*

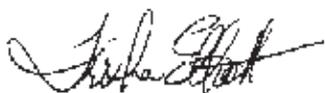
Friends,

As Christians, God's mission and our service are an orientation to life that should permeate everything we think, say, and do. That's why this booklet is written to be used in a variety of ways by individuals and communities of faith as stories shared during worship, meeting openers, faith studies, and personal devotions.

Honestly, I used to hate inviting people to give financially, especially from the pulpit. But when I know that 690,000,000 people around the world will go to bed hungry tonight and our call as a church is to care like Jesus did, I have no problem inviting those who can make a financial difference to give generously.

I truly believe generosity is an expression of discipleship and a spiritual practice. Thank you for all the ways you live into God's mission and inspire others to help transform and save lives, inspire meaning and purpose, and build a better world, too.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trisha Elliott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Trisha Elliott



Every Child Has a Right to Learn: **Meshack's Story**

Where would you be if you had no education?

Every child has the right to learn.

Your generous support through Mission & Service means that children around the world can go to school thanks to partnerships with organizations like the Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAARC).

School fees, violence, child labour, and discrimination mean that too many children can't go to or stay in school. KAARC brings together child rights organizations to share information about child protection and safeguarding and to support children who are in schools.

Thanks to your support, KAARC has established over 300 child rights clubs in schools. One of these clubs helped Meshack through primary school. A bursary program helps him

“They give us role models to teach us what is bad and help us be confident in whatever we are doing. I’m very happy.”

—Meshack



Photo: The United Church of Canada

pay his high school fees, and the child rights club at his school is teaching him how to be a positive role model.

“To start [going to] school was a problem. KAARC has helped me. They encouraged me a lot. They enabled me to start my primary school. Now I’m in high school,” Meshack says. “The club is helping us a lot, too. They give us role models to teach us what is bad and help us be confident in whatever we are doing. I’m very happy.”

Thank you for helping to break down barriers so that every child can go to school, regardless of who they are, where they live, or how much money they have.

School fees, violence, child labour, and discrimination mean that too many children can't go to or stay in school.

Listen

Isaiah 11:6

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion . . .

Sing

"Jesus, Friend of Little Children,"

Voices United 340

"Tell Me the Stories of Jesus," VU 357

"Jesus Loves Me," VU 365

Reflect

- Where would you be with no education?
- What key life learnings were instilled in you as a child?
- Where do you see children leading today?

Pray

At a Gathering

O God, each time we gather, there is opportunity to learn.

Make us learners as much as teachers, listeners as much as leaders.

Help us join your sacred mission with our whole mind and heart.

Open us to be receptive to the wisdom that delivers us from narrowness into the wide-open, compassionate spaces created by your love.

Amen.

For Personal Devotion

What have I learned so far today, O God?

Where have I drawn nearer to you?

When have I felt more distant, and why?

I ask myself these questions as I strive to be faithful.

Keep me striving for justice, kindness, and humility.

Bless me with your wisdom.

Amen.

Thank you for helping to break down barriers so every child can go to school.



Photo: Kathleen White

You Give Skills for Success: **Kathleen's Story**

Camp is more than a holiday. It gives young people skills that last a lifetime.

Kathleen is a special education teacher, a busy mom of three children under the age of five, and a youth and young adults coordinator at her church. She says her early summer church camp experience continues to impact her approach to each of these important roles.

“Camp taught me that children are precious and we’re there to help them and guide them. Vespers taught me to take a deep breath in times of stress. Chaplains showed me how to bring out the best in children and draw out their talents. All those things I learned from camp I now apply to my everyday world, including motherhood,” says Kathleen.

Kathleen grew up in very formal churches where she felt she had to be perfect all the time. Outdoors, in an informal setting, her faith blossomed.

“Today, because I learned to connect with God in nature, I can take time to reflect and I can show God’s love.” —Kathleen

“I never felt really connected to God before going to camp. It opened up my perspective of what church is. My relationship with God expanded. I learned to pray, to reflect, and to experience God in nature.”

Those early lessons continue to ground Kathleen in trying moments.

“Today, because I learned to connect with God in nature, I can take time to reflect and I can show God’s love. When I’m too stressed, I can take a quick look at a bird or tree and remember that God is with me when a student is expressing their frustration. Staying calm and showing God’s love is huge. It goes a long way. I remind my own children that God is with them, even in the hardest times too,” she says.

Before COVID, approximately 20,000 children attended a United Church camp every year. During the pandemic, many camps provided virtual support to young people during lockdown.

“I just want to say a huge thank you to Mission & Service donors for their support of camps,” says Kathleen. “I wouldn’t be where I am today if it weren’t for their support. Thank you.”



Listen

Job 12:7–9

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?”

Sing

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River,” VU 577

“I Can Feel You Near Me God,” *More*

Voices 48

“O Beautiful Gaya,” MV 41

Reflect

- What lessons have you learned from nature?
- When has your faith blossomed, and what prompted your spiritual growth?
- When do you feel most connected to God’s mission now?

Pray

At a Gathering

As we gather, O God,
make our ideas as expansive as mountains,
our thoughts as deep as valleys,
our mutual regard as gentle as rain,
our words encouraging as sunshine.
Bless us, Holy One,
that we may be a blessing.
Amen.

For Personal Devotion

In the mountains that humble me,
in the thunder that quiets me,
in the trees that shade me,
in the lakes that soothe me,
in the gardens that inspire me,
there you are, O God,
ministering to my body and soul,
orienting my life,
alive in every season.
Amen.

***“I just want to say a huge thank you to Mission & Service donors. . . .
I wouldn’t be where I am today if it weren’t for their support.”
—Kathleen***



Knowledge for Life: **Habtamu's Story**

Habtamu and his family live in Ethiopia, where Habtamu farms the land he inherited from his father. Unfortunately, when the land was passed on to him, it wasn't fertile. Teams of oxen used for agriculture had eroded the soil, and the harsh sunlight meant that anything planted in it died.

Thanks to a conservation agriculture program supported by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank,* a Mission & Service partner, Habtamu and his family learned farming techniques that reduce soil erosion, improve soil fertility, and increase productivity. For example, they are using crop by-products as a cover for their soil, preventing it from being exposed to sunlight and rainwater. The impact is incredible.

“Earlier, we were hungry and the land was infertile, but now for the last eight years we have been harvesting a good crop. I am happy we are trying to alleviate our problem, change

“I would really like to express my deepest gratitude... for giving us knowledge and insights. I am really grateful to you for all the kindness you have shown me.”
—Habtamu



our lives, and feed our children,” explains Yitayish, Habtamu’s wife, while he proudly shows a barn full of grain.

“Before, we only had one or two grain stocks. I used to feed my children with maize I bought at the market, but now I can satisfy the needs of my family and supply the market,” Habtamu says.

Your generosity through Mission & Service supports the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This is one of the many ways your gifts help end hunger.

“I would really like to express my deepest gratitude...for giving us knowledge and insights. I am really grateful to you for all the kindness you have shown me,” Habtamu says.

*The United Church of Canada provided funding to the Scaling-Up Conservation Agriculture program of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, funded by the Government of Canada. This story is one example of a project from that program. Program partners include the Mennonite Central Committee and the Migbare Senay Children and Family Support Organization (MSCFSO).

Listen

2 Peter 1:5

For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge. . . .

Sing

"Wellspring of Wisdom," VU 287

"It Only Takes a Spark," VU 289

"Bless the Lord," MV 46

Reflect

- What is the connection between faith and goodness, and goodness and knowledge?
- Who have been and are your greatest teachers?
- When have you been given the gift of knowledge?

Pray

At a Gathering

When we are uncertain where or how to start living out our mission, O God, remind us of our purpose to create peace, to extend compassion, to express love so that we have the courage to take the next small or bold step, not knowing all the plans ahead of time but trusting that your Spirit will reveal the path as we go. Amen.

For Personal Devotion

I admit that sometimes I want to know every twist and turn on the discipleship journey. I want to see the whole road you lay out in front of me, O God, before I venture down it. But deep down, I know that I'll never regret love, and love will never lead me astray. Help me trust that love will lead me where I need to go, and that wherever I end up, you will meet me there. Amen.

"I am happy we are trying to alleviate our problem, change our lives, and feed our children." —Yitayish



Rebuilding after Loss: **Lisa's Story**

Nothing prepares us to lose the people we love most in the world. Lisa's husband Steve was in and out of palliative care for years.

"It was a difficult journey. He wasn't ready to leave this life," Lisa says. "The week before he died he said, 'I'll surprise you yet. You'll see me walking around that circle with my cane.' But that didn't happen."

After Steve died, Lisa attended a widows' support circle facilitated by ORA, a Mission & Service partner. ORA, named after a Maori word meaning "life," helps people move through grief and loss using workshops and support circles.

"Hearing the stories and wisdom shared, the laughter and the tears, brought me to a place where I felt comfortable in sharing a bit of my own pain and my own journey. And there was this sense of solidarity in

"At one of the most difficult times of my life, your generosity through Mission & Service provided care, love, and comfort. Indeed, we are not alone." —Lisa

our pain. Because being a widow is a different kind of loss than losing a parent, a child, or a friend,” Lisa says.

In the widows’ group, there was an understanding that surpassed words.

“The support helped me work through things like ‘What do I do with the wedding ring now?’ Do you still wear it? Do you not wear it? And on a practical level, do you change the sheets because you can still smell your partner on the sheets? The first time you have to check that box on the government form, that you are no longer a Mrs. but a widow, I just burst into tears. ORA, just like other outreach ministries we have, is a tangible way of showing faith in action.”

Your gifts through Mission & Service help people like Lisa rebuild their lives after loss.

“At one of the most difficult times of my life, your generosity through Mission & Service provided care, love, and comfort. Indeed, we are not alone. We live in God’s world. Thank you for your support,” says Lisa.



Listen

Matthew 11:28–30

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Sing

“Blest Are They,” VU 896

“On Eagle’s Wings,” VU 808

“When the Wind of Winter Blows,” MV 71

Reflect

- When have you experienced loss?
- Who or what played a supportive role in your life at that time?
- How does generosity help us move forward after loss?

Pray

At a Gathering

What losses do we carry here, O God?
 What challenges?
 What insecurities?
 What doubts?
 What fears?
 What burdens?
 None of us can ever know the complexity of another’s heart,
 but we do know that we are entrusted to hold it.
 Bless us to hold each other’s hearts with care.
 Amen.

For Personal Devotion

When grief waves over me
 and profound loneliness washes me up on
 a moment’s shore,
 pick me up, O God.
 Unfold my burdens beneath
 the gaze of your loving light.
 Tenderly fold my heart in yours,
 and carry me into whatever comes next,
 whispering all the while,
 “My child, you are not alone.”
 Amen.

“Hearing the stories and wisdom shared, the laughter and the tears, brought me to a place where I felt comfortable in sharing a bit of my own pain and my own journey.” —Lisa



Your Generosity Inspires Purpose: **Nicole's Story**

Nicole was in crisis. Her mental health had taken a turn for the worse. She hit rock bottom and turned to 1JustCity, a Winnipeg-based Mission & Service partner that supports three drop-in centres, for support.

Before long, Nicole was not only attending programs but also started volunteering. She carried boxes, made coffee, and ran the dishwasher. She laughs as she talks about how trucking boxes up stairs is a good way to get in shape.

It's been seven years since Nicole first walked through 1JustCity's doors. She's never looked back.

Last year, Nicole applied to enter a job-training program. Now, she is staff at 1JustCity.

"I love being staff. I feel respected. Working gives me a reason to get up in the morning. I feel mentally better about myself. It gives me a routine.

"Helping people feels awesome. Every single day you are there you are helping people." —Nicole

Having something to do each day improves your mental health,” she says, smiling.

Above all, what warms Nicole’s heart most is making a difference in someone else’s life.

“Helping people feels awesome. Every single day you are there you are helping people. Giving them food. Giving them hygiene. Sometimes we have clothes. We help with emergencies. People meet in groups to support each other. It makes a difference.”

Your Mission & Service gifts help people like Nicole not only find support but also discover what is meaningful to them.

“1JustCity has been my rock, and without it I would be all over the place,” she says. “The Mission & Service of the United Church has changed my life because it gives me purpose every day.”

Thank you for your generous support.

“The Mission & Service of the United Church has changed my life because it gives me purpose every day.” —Nicole



Listen

Proverbs 19:21

The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.

Sing

"I Can Feel You Near Me God," MV 48

"Lord, Speak to Me," VU 589

"Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love," VU 593

Reflect

- When has receiving inspired you to give?
- When do you feel most aligned with your life purpose?
- What brings meaning to your life?

Pray

At a Gathering

O God, make the call to join your mission—
the call that gathers each of us here—
so completely compelling and inspiring
that we can't help but respond with
the deep quality of grace and love
that gives way to justice.
Amen.

For Personal Devotion

Every day, you call me to help
in big and small ways
wherever I am and wherever I go.
When I'm tempted to think
of help as a one-way street,
remind me of all I receive
when I'm at my generous best.
Amen.

"Working gives me a reason to get up in the morning. I feel mentally better about myself."—Nicole

Nourishing Bodies and Hearts: **Ashrafi's Story**



Photo: The United Church of Canada

One in nine people around the world are going hungry

according to the United Nations. Since the pandemic struck, 40 percent more people in need of a nutritious meal have turned to the Fred Victor Centre, a Mission & Service partner, for help. That's one of the reasons why the 240 community gardens it runs are so important.

“Every day, we'll see 250–300 people standing outside for food. That is all the encouragement we need to keep growing and cooking. We donate most of the fruits and vegetables to our kitchen, and our participants get fresh veggies and support from us,” says Ashrafi, Fred Victor's garden centre coordinator.

Today, over 200 families, many living in poverty, grow their own nutritious food at Fred Victor's gardens thanks to generous supporters like you.

“Every day, we'll see 250–300 people standing outside for food. That is all the encouragement we need to keep growing and cooking.” —Ashrafi

But there's more to the gardens than the food.

Ashrafi says children learn where food comes from by gardening, and participants tell her they feel less stress and pain, have more energy, and meet new friends because of the gardens.

“People from different cultural backgrounds share their vegetables and herbs with each other. Through sharing, they come to appreciate each other. At the core, we are all the same,” she says.

The garden has changed Ashrafi's life, too.

“As an immigrant, I came here feeling isolated. My family didn't know where to start. But now I feel I'm standing on my own feet and I know the community. Every day when I walk home from work everyone says, ‘Hi Ashrafi, how are you?’ They make my day happier. I feel belonging because of the garden. It has changed my life. Thank you for your support.”



Photo: The United Church of Canada

Listen

Galatians 6:9

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

Sing

"In the Bulb There Is a Flower," VU 703

"For the Beauty of the Earth," VU 226

"Praise God for This Holy Ground," MV 42

Reflect

- Aside from addressing hunger, what other good comes from food programs?
- When has something totally unexpected and good grown in your life?
- On what occasions and in what ways do you share food?

"I feel belonging because of the garden. It has changed my life. Thank you for your support."
—Ashrafi

Pray

At a Gathering

Patience to wait

Caring to tend

Perseverance to weed

Nurture to protect

Generosity to share

O God, thank you for the spiritual teachings you bestow through earthly gardens and everything else that brings sustenance and beauty to life.

As we gather, make us mindful of the spiritual teachings that grow in our midst and enable our community to flourish.

Amen.

For Personal Devotion

In the fresh morning, your Spirit rises in me to greet the day, and it is indeed a good morning.

In the quiet evening, when the rush of life subsides, your Spirit once again rises in me to greet the evening, and it is indeed a good evening.

Good because you are there, a light in my days and a calm in my nights. I am eternally grateful.

Amen.

A portrait of Lynn Smith-Reeve, a woman with short, curly grey hair, smiling. She is wearing a black top and a red and black patterned scarf. The background is a dark, neutral color.

Bridging Financial Divides: **Lynn's Story**

The Rev. Lynn Smith-Reeve knows what it's like to live in poverty. As a child, she grew up without financial advantages. Later, as an adult, when her husband became ill, was hospitalized, and entered long-term care, she raised their five children. Her family relied on financial support from the government to squeak by.

“When you are living in poverty, there's this attitude you feel all the time that what you have to offer isn't anything or of any value. You don't fit well with middle-class people because they have a different value system. You think and live differently. You have a different set of hidden rules,” Lynn explains.

What's different? “For one thing, middle-class people are oriented to achieve, to get promotions and education. Living in poverty, the orientation isn't achievement—it's relationship. Because it's relationship that keeps people alive. It's through relationship that you can find help when the world falls apart,” she says.

“When you are living in poverty, there's this attitude you feel all the time that what you have to offer isn't anything or of any value.” —Lynn

Facets of life are more closely connected, too. “If my car breaks down, it threatens my job, my home, so many different things. Whereas in middle-class life, things are a little bit more isolated,” Lynn says.

After her husband died, Lynn studied to become a diaconal minister.

Now, through her work at Bridges Peterborough, Lynn brings together volunteers from across economic spectrums. She just founded an innovative program called Bridging Teams supported through your generous Mission & Service gifts. The goal is to build understanding, open social and economic doors, and change the conversation about poverty.

“Sitting together and listening to each other’s stories, judgment kind of starts falling away. Middle-class participants gain more respect for how far others have gotten when the cards are so stacked against them. Low-income people realize that life for middle-class participants isn’t perfect and they have struggles, too,” she says.

For Lynn, the work is a culmination of her life’s experience and a call God has placed on her life, one that Lynn says you help bring to fruition by giving to Mission & Service.

“Thank you for giving to Mission & Service. You have had a huge impact on my life and ministry, and you continue to have an impact on the work we are doing. Thank you.”



Listen

Philippians 2:3–4

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Sing

“O for a World,” VU 697

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace,”

VU 684

“When Hands Reach Out Beyond Divides,”

MV 169

Reflect

- How do you think your socio-economic status affects your outlook on life?
- Do you have more relationships with those living on lower incomes or those with middle- and upper-income levels? Why?
- How did Jesus work to bridge financial divides?

“You have had a huge impact on my life and ministry, and you continue to have an impact on the work we are doing.” —Lynn

Pray

At a Gathering

When we gather together, may it be for those we serve.

When we take time to deliberate, may it be because we want to be faithful.

When we make a decision, may it be for the least and the lost.

When we say a prayer, may it be for those who feel forsaken.

When we share our offering, may it be for creating a more equitable world.

When we speak out, may it be for those who don't feel heard.

When we listen, may it be for greater understanding.

When we experience blessing, may it be for living out compassion.

When we join our hearts with yours, may it be for love.

Amen.

For Personal Devotion

Challenge my assumptions, loving God.

Deliver me from stereotypes,

break open my prejudice,

reveal my privilege,

so that I can confront the parts of myself that I need to change.

So that I can love

as you love.

Amen.



Photo: The United Church of Canada

Your Gifts Help Overcome Discrimination: **Petrona's Story**

Everyone has a right to express their beliefs, find good work, have a safe place to live, speak freely, love who they want to, and meet their basic needs. Discrimination strikes at the heart of these core human rights.

Although Indigenous people living in Guatemala make up nearly half the population, they face discrimination in all facets of their lives. Because of this discrimination, accessing health care and education and becoming financially stable is extremely hard. Especially for women. According to the Guatemala Conference of Evangelical Churches, 43 percent of Indigenous women living in Guatemala are unable to read and write compared to 19 percent of non-Indigenous women.

That's why your gifts through Mission & Service support the Conference in providing human rights education as well as business and agricultural training skills for women farmers.

Petrona is one of hundreds of women who have changed their lives after receiving training through the Conference.

She is a member of a gardening group of six women. Thanks to your generosity, these women receive seeds, tools, and agricultural training. Today, instead of making the long walk to the market to buy costly produce, Petrona grows tomatoes and chili peppers a stone's throw from her home.

Today, 43 percent of Indigenous women living in Guatemala are unable to read and write compared to 19 percent of non-Indigenous women.

“When we need anything, we just get it from our greenhouse,” she says.

Catarina, another member of the group, says the greenhouse means children in the community are healthier.

“If we plant tomatoes, radishes, and chard, these are very good vitamins for our children. We don't see malnourished kids anymore,” she says.

The gifts you give have a lasting impact on the lives of hard-working Indigenous women and their families, who face discrimination simply for being who they are. A better world is possible! Thank you for helping to make it happen.



Photo: The United Church of Canada

Listen

Proverbs 31:8–9

Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.

Speak out, judge righteously, defend
the rights of the poor and needy.

Sing

"We Shall Go Out with Hope of
Resurrection," VU 586

"Live into Hope," VU 699

"Christ Has No Body Now but Yours,"
MV 171

Reflect

- Have you ever experienced discrimination? If so, what impact did it have? If not, why not?
- Has someone ever advocated with/for you? What difference did they make?
- Who did Jesus advocate for? When did he challenge discrimination?

***"If we plant tomatoes, radishes,
and chard, these are very good
vitamins for our children. We
don't see malnourished kids
anymore." —Catarina***

Pray

At a Gathering

Encourage us, O God.

Encourage us to follow Jesus' lead into life's
difficult places.

Encourage us to speak up for what's just
and to act for what's right.

Encourage us to stand in solidarity with all
those who face discrimination.

Encourage us to bold discipleship and
daring justice rooted in deep spirituality.

Encourage us when morale is low and we
feel like giving up.

Encourage us when our spirit is flying high
and the difference we make is obvious.

Encourage us, O God.

Strengthen us to serve you.

Amen.

For Personal Devotion

I am just one person.

What difference can I really make?

I confess, my God, that I ask myself
this question

especially when the pain of the world feels
overwhelming.

I turn that question over to you now.

What difference can I make, O God?

Reveal my purpose.

Show me how I can best use my life.

Amen.

Morning Prayer

As the sun rises
and a new day unfolds
with all of its promise and hope,
I recommit myself to join
your divine mission:
to advocate for justice
to exercise compassion
to love without reserve
to work toward peace
to extend understanding
to afford second chances
to offer my generous best
to witness blessing
to seize opportunities for gratitude
to change and be changed
to regard myself with grace
to embody Jesus
in whose spirit I live, move, and have
my being
in whose love I am made whole
in whose compassion I rise
to greet this day
and every day
for all my days.
Amen.

Evening Prayer

As the sun makes its descent
and the glorious black of night
wraps its ebony arms around me
I give you thanks, O God,
for today's moments of grace:
for the beauty I encountered
for the relationships that
nurtured me
for the strength that energized me
for the insights that challenged me
for the thoughts that enlivened me
for the conviction that propels me
for the community that grounds me
for the world that sustains me.
Let me sink into your heart
breathing in time with its divine beat
drifting into the great expanse of
your love.
Amen.



Photo: Thomas Noreille/ACT Alliance

Haiti: How Your Generosity Is Helping

Your gifts mean the world in times of emergency.

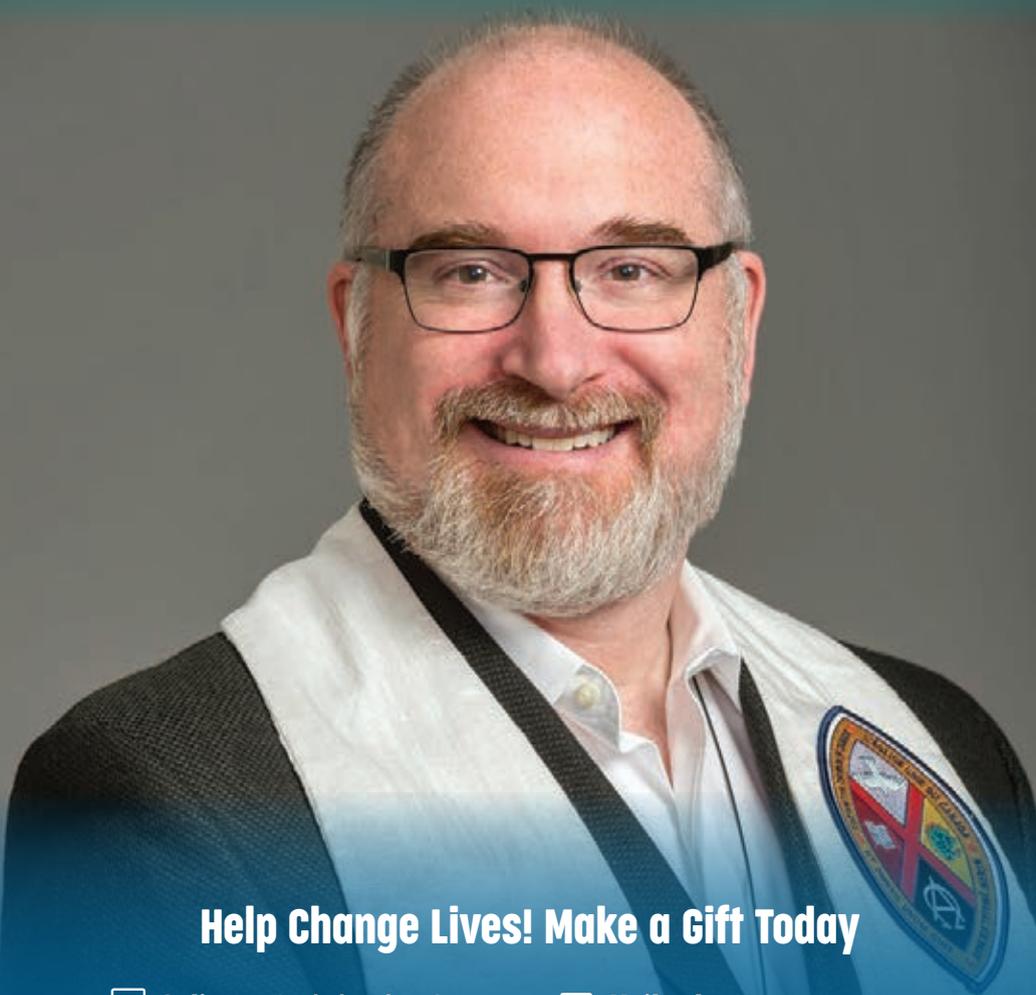
Since the devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti on August 14, 2021, your support has provided

- medical supplies and first aid kits
- water treatment tablets
- temporary shelters
- food packages of rice, beans, and cooking oil
- tools, seeds, and livestock for families and farmers
- hygiene and sanitation services
- access to safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene
- rehabilitated or reconstructed earthquake- and hurricane-resistant houses
- psychological support

Thank you
for being there
when you are needed most!

*“We give to make a difference.
Thank you for the difference you make
through Mission & Service.”*

—Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, Moderator



Help Change Lives! Make a Gift Today

 **Online:** [united-church.ca/
donate](https://united-church.ca/donate)

 **Phone:** 1-800-268-3781
or 416-231-5931, ext. 2738

 **Mail a cheque to:**
Mission & Service
The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4