

Youth Ministry Sunday Liturgy  
March 9, 2008

**Background:**

*In an effort to connect youth in ANW Conference more closely with the pastoral charges of ANW Conference, and in an effort to share some aspects of our conference sponsored youth rallies with pastoral charges throughout the conference, YAYAM and the Y2MT Steering Committee have teamed to revive YOUTH SUNDAY. This is an opportunity for pastoral charges to be intentional about including youth in leadership of worship, and to offer prayer support for the youth and leaders at youth rally.*

**What is Youth Sunday?**

Youth Sunday is the Sunday in March that is also the weekend of ANW Conference junior high rally (most often the second Sunday in March). It is an opportunity to engage in aspects of the theme that the youth gathered will have explored, and opportunity to connect youth with the wider church, and the wider church with youth. It is also an opportunity for pastoral charges to be intentional about the involvement of youth in worship, and the inclusion of youth needs in liturgy.

On March 9, 2008, approximately 100 junior high youth, their leaders, and event organizers will gather with the congregation of St. Paul's United Church, Edmonton to worship together. This will be the conclusion of a weekend spent in small group discussion, interest-based workshops, plenary time, swimming, dancing, and singing. The theme for rallies in the 2007/08 program year is "Everybody Needs A Rock". We hope that you might consider including some or all of the following liturgy as a means of support for those youth gathered together to become a more united and uniting church! We hope you will join your spirits with ours in a common voice of praise, community, and renewal!

**Liturgy**

It seems appropriate that the lectionary readings are pointing to new life, as many folk experience new life as a result of attending rally. The liturgy, in part, reflects the lectionary although the Scriptures used for the event will be different.

**Announcements:** *In addition to your regular community news, please include an announcement about Youth Sunday: that this morning, at St. Paul's United Church, Edmonton, there are many youth and leaders from across ANW Conference who are gathering as a part of our church body to explore their faith in the context of the theme "Everybody Needs A Rock".*

*If you have youth and/or leaders attending from your pastoral charge, you might name them at this time.*

**Call To Worship: (modified from Matthew 7:24-25, The Message)**

Leader: We come to this place as people seeking new life and a firm foundation.

**All: The words we hear are not incidental additions to our lives**

Leader: Our gathering is not like homeowner improvements to our standard of living.

**All: We welcome foundational words that inspire action**

Leader: We share with one another in word, song, silence, and prayer

**All: And our sharing is like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock.**

Leader: Rain poured down,

**All: The river flooded,**

Leader: A tornado hit,

**All: but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock!**

Leader: This is why we gather,

**All: Thanks be to God!**

**Hymn: Voices United 222 “Come Let Us Sing”**

**Prayer:**

**God, You are our rock and our foundation. Upon Your Grace and Wisdom we set our heart, mind, and spirit. Be present in our worship today. Fill us with inspiration for renewed life in Christ. Help us listen to words that call us into deeper relationship with You and all of Creation. Ground us in Your Love, so that we might experience Your presence, even in the depths of Lent. In Jesus’ name we pray, AMEN.**

**Children’s Time:**

(Have a large rock, or several small rocks prepared)

Read the Story “Everybody Needs A Rock” As reflection, as the children to notice the large rock, or to choose a small rock. Talk about the details of this rock: its texture, smell, appearance, and why it might be special. Then ask the children why they think our ancestors would talk about God being like a rock: How are a rock and God similar?

*As part of the theme, and in small group conversations, the youth at rally will be asked to share with one another about how they find their way in the world: How does faith impact their decisions in life? How is God present in the path(s) they choose to follow? How might one listen for God’s call in the midst of the distractions and power-games of the world, school, and life? Depending on your relationship with the children in your pastoral charge, you might consider asking these questions of the children as part of the reflection.*

**Hymn: Like A Rock (Linnea Good)**

**Sermon Starters:** *Here are some questions that the planning team has explored, adapted for the lectionary readings for today.*

What are modern symbols that act as metaphor for the path that God calls us to?

What prevents us from following that path?

For what do we thirst?

How do we find our way when we are lost? What grounding do we need before we set out on life’s journey? In the midst of it?

How is the story of Lazarus transformative in my life?

Where are the dry bones that need God's breath in my life? In the life of my community?

What are the things, and where are the places that new life in Christ calls us to let go of? What is dead and gone, and what is dead in need of new life? How do we tell the difference?

*Hopefully these questions might help you engage in both the theme "Everybody Needs a Rock" and the lectionary! Thanks for your support!*

**Offering:**

*There are two bursary funds that directly support youth, young adults, and leaders in Alberta and Northwest Conference: YAYAM bursary fund and YMT bursary fund. The YAYAM bursary fund supports youth and youth groups who struggle financially to attend either senior high rally (grades 10-12) in the fall, or junior high rally (grades 7-9) in March. The YMT bursary supports students and participants who are leaders of youth and/or young adults receive specific and specialized training in youth and young adult ministry. If your pastoral charge would like to donate a portion of your offering to either or both of these funds, we would be most grateful!*

**Prayers of the People:**

God, who is the foundation upon whom we build and rebuild our lives, hear us as we pray. We ask your presence in our global community, that all might find peace, grace, and respect. Help us to be faithful stewards of Creation.

*Specific prayers for current events*

God, in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

In our country and community, we recognize the need for renewal, for new life. May you breathe into our systems of government, justice, and peace-keeping so that as Canadians we might follow the path you have called us to. We pray for our church, those who struggle in isolated ministries, those who celebrate new life, those who work tirelessly and faithfully to do Your work in the world. God, on this Youth Sunday, we pray most deeply for the youth who have gathered at St. Paul's United Church, Edmonton. We ask Your guidance upon them as they close their time together this afternoon. We ask that you continue to guide and support them as they return to their home congregations and to their daily routines. Remind them of Your Love which they have experienced this weekend. We ask, also, your presence on the leaders of this rally. For the home group leaders, chaplains, music team, technology team, theme team, local arrangements team, and the YAYAM committee who oversees the event. May your Grace remind them that it is You who fill in the cracks of organization, and You who dances in the celebration of good ministry performed through good people.

*Specific prayers for any members of your pastoral charge who are attending or leading at rally.*

Guide all safely on their journey home today, be ever present on the road, and in their lives.

God, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

God who breathes new life into us, bring your healing presence into this faith community.  
We ask You to comfort those who grieve, sit with those who are lonely, and heal those who are sick.

*Specific prayers of pastoral presence for individuals.*

God, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Like a rock, you are under our feet. In trust we call out to You, O God, that we might once again find our way into meaningful relationships and actions that are filled with integrity and Your Spirit.

*The Lord's Prayer.*

Closing Hymn: Lord of the Dance: Voices United 352

Commissioning: (Adapted from The Studio-alternative worship leaders, Texas)

May God go before you to show you the path,  
Beside you as an ever-present friend,  
Behind you to nudge you where you may not want to go,  
And Inside you so that you may know that you are loved beyond all measure.  
AMEN.