

*Immanuel United Church  
March 28th, 2021  
Palm Sunday Service*

A History in Song (Inspired by A History in Song by Alydia Rae Smith, UCCanada)

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**Welcome**

**Lighting the Christ Candle** (Thank you, Aiden, Emery, Contessa and Phil, for the video!)

**Waving Scarves/Palms** (Liturgical dance would be great!)

*Hymns: VU 123 Hosanna, Loud Hosanna*

**Call to Worship**

God, you taught our ancestors to sing with their souls while in a foreign land.

**Through music, you taught Black peoples to persevere and trust in you,  
even as their hearts and bodies were broken.**

Your power God, moved through our ancestors,  
as the rhythm and cadence of music moves through our bodies.

**There would be no Underground Railroad or Civil Rights Movement without a song,  
and there would be no song without you.**

**Let everything that has breath, praise you!** (Psalm 150:6)

**Hymn:** MV 2 Come All You People

<https://youtu.be/gAy9f1pjdYU>

***Come all you people, come and praise your Maker,  
Come all you people, come and praise your Maker,  
Come all you people, come and praise your Maker,  
Come now and worship the Lord.\* (your God)***

**Words of Welcome:**

God's hope is like "a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul."

In God, we find the rock on which we stand.

Every time we feel the Spirit moving in our heart

We will pray.

**Unison Prayer** (Inspired by I'm a Rollin' Stone through an unfriendly world)

**We journey and travel in a world that does not treat everyone as a friend.**

**A world that does not respect, care, and value each person equally.**

**Oh God, please help us to pray and work toward a new world; your world. Amen.**

**Nancy Oliver, Union United, Montreal** <https://youtu.be/MID-mFnE-D4>

## **Building Quilt Belonging**

[https://youtu.be/7\\_-Nn5mX0QE](https://youtu.be/7_-Nn5mX0QE)

Patricia Watson, Bedford United Church, Nova Scotia, shares ways the wider church can learn from the Black communities of faith in Canada's Atlantic region.

<https://united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/building-quilt-belonging>

## Hymn: ***Lift Every Voice and Sing***

Life Every Voice and Sing is often referred to as the “Black national anthem” in the United States and written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson in 1900.

<https://youtu.be/5NZ6aftOorE>

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won  
Stony the road we trod  
Bitter the chastening rod  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died  
Yet with a steady beat  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered  
Out from the gloomy past  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast  
God of our weary years  
God of our silent tears  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way  
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand  
May we forever stand  
True to our God  
True to our native land

Our native land

Scripture reading: John 12:12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

The Choir Anthem: VU 124 ***He Came Riding on a Donkey***

**(Judy Gierys, Connie Kryschuk, Cathy Haining,  
George Stevens, Eileen Metcalfe, Ron Metcalfe)**

He came riding on a donkey, he came riding into town;  
Slow and easy kind of lowly he came riding with the dawn.  
His disciples walked beside him, staying close, a little shy;  
Not too sure where he would guide them onto live or onto die.  
But all the morning sang his praises; waking birds and dancing wind;  
Here he is, the Son of David; riding on to take his throne.

Then the children gathered singing shouts of laughter, bursting cheer;  
In the streets their song was riding, "Hosannas" filled the morning air.  
Timid adults trained to see him, caught the Spirit, joined the song;  
Spread their cloaks along before him, branches flashing in the sun.  
So all city sang his praises; Waking streetings and dancing crowd;  
Here he is, the son of David; our Messiah, Son of God.

In our fasting, and our feasting, called to follow in his way;  
Called to walk his road to Easter, called to live his cross today.  
Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna in the heavens above;  
Blessed is he who comes to save us, Blessed is he who brings his love.  
Let us join to sing his praises; open hearts and souls to God;  
He is with us, Son of David; God's Messiah, Christ the Lord.

Minutes for Mission 2017: <https://youtu.be/LqHH9Tm63R8>

An introduction to the little-known history of Black peoples in The United Church of Canada, from 100 years of Union United in Montreal to the present day across Canada.

### Small Group Reflections together:

- **How do you celebrate Black History/Heritage?**
  - **How can the wider church learn from the history of Black Communities of Faith?**
  - **What can Immanuel United Church learn from the Black history/heritage and the voices of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour)?**
- Identify people in your local communities that they can highlight and celebrate their accomplishments not only during Black History Month but throughout the year.
  - Ponder ways to share stories through videos, magazines and articles, and suggestions for Sunday morning worship.
  - Encourage churches to incorporate more gospel type songs in their services and to use videos possibly of Black folks singing or preaching or making it a part of the service.
  - Name the underlying spiritual principles that undergird anti-racism.
  - Brainstorm the ideas that look at ways to implement different activities that celebrate Black Canadians.

### Prayers of the People

(Based on the spirituals “Give Me Your Hand” and “Beams of Heaven”—you may wish to sing the chorus of either song before or after the prayer.)

<https://youtu.be/QeNRy0kYTtM>

Your feet, your feet.

Give us your feet, dear God, to dance! For we need to celebrate your goodness.

**When we love at your command...**

**When the captives are made free...**

**When we celebrate “who-we-be”...**

**When we attempt to understand...**

Your feet, God, your feet; thanks for your feet to dance.

Your hand, your hand.

Give us your hand, dear God, to hold. For we need to feel your presence.

**When burdens crash us down...**

**When right yields painfully to might...**

**When sorrow blinds our sight...**

**When disappointment’s all around...**

Your hand, God, your hand; thanks for your hand to hold.

Your eyes, your eyes.

Give us your eyes, dear God, to see. For we need a vision of hope.

**When the journey seems too long...**

**When swords and shields are lifted high...**

**When we see your children cry...**

**When it seems even the angels have forgotten their song...**

Your eyes, God, your eyes; thanks for your eyes to see.

Lastly, give us faith.

For faith always sees a star of hope

May that star lead us, God, to where you want us to be. Amen, amen, and again we say: Amen!

**The Sankofa bird: Young Adults Lead Church to Become Anti-Racist: Minute for Mission, Feb. 21. In 2021**

**Six young Black adults will collect stories to help us understand Black experiences in our churches.**

*(Credit: Logo for the Sankofa Global Project, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)*

It isn't hard to rhyme off statistics that show racism is alive and well. For example, third-generation Black Canadians make about \$32,000 a year compared with the \$48,000 earned by those who aren't a visible minority. While 94 percent of young Black Canadians want to complete a university degree, just 60 percent think it is possible. And Black Canadians are more likely than any other racial group in Canada to be the victims of hate crime, perhaps not surprising considering the last segregated school in Canada didn't shut its doors until 1983. February is Black History Month. Since 1996, Canadians have set aside this time to recognize the realities faced by people of African descent and honour their contributions.

It's the perfect month to make this announcement:

This week, thanks to support through Mission & Service and the United Church Foundation, six young Black adults will begin to collect stories from Black church members about their experiences in the church as well as their knowledge of Black church history. This fall, they will facilitate online gatherings to share learnings. The project runs through December 2021.

"Hopefully, the young adults will gather prophetic stories that help us understand Black experiences in our churches. The aim isn't so much to identify what we do wrong. It's not about blame. It's about hearing the experiences and asking ourselves 'Where do we go from here?'" says Emo Yango, who works in the United Church's Communities in Mission unit. Yango adds that one of the aspects of the project he finds exciting is building leaders. "We lack resources from Black voices, especially younger ones. We are building leaders. These leaders will help us live into our commitment to become an anti-racist church."

*Becoming anti-racist is an ongoing journey of transformation. Your gifts through Mission & Service help us take vital steps forward. Thank you for helping to build stronger Christian communities and a better world.*

Hymn: VU 586 ***We Shall Go Out with Hope of Resurrection***

Benediction: (By Bruce Harding)

**May the blessings of the great Composer, Creator of sound and silence,  
And the Singer of God's melody,  
And the Mystery of the song,  
Echo always within us,  
And resound through us to all. Amen.**