

# Building Hope for Community

December 6 Service 2012

*Written and distributed by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada*



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## WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL OF CANADA

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Prayer Service for  
the National Day of Remembrance and  
Action on Violence Against Women  
December 6, 2012

Building Hope for Community

**Call to Worship:** God be with you.

**And also with you.**

In a world of haves and have-nots, in a time of  
disparity and struggle,

**God is present to give life to one and all.**

In an age of uncertainty and upset, in an era of  
change and restructuring,

**Christ is present to give hope to one and all.**

In a time of shifting needs and undiscovered opportunity,  
in this place of shelter, community, promise and hope,

**The Spirit is present to give assurance to one and  
all.**

**Opening Prayer:** Open us, God to your word and your love, moving  
and living in our world. Help us to celebrate your  
presence in others and to respond to your invitation  
to live and act in community.

**Amen**

**Opening hymn:** *Come and Find the Quiet Centre, Voiced United, #374*  
(or another Hymn)

**Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 31: 12-13

**Reflection:** In this passage the prophet Jeremiah describes a beautiful  
picture of hope. Although God had punished his people  
because of their sin and wickedness, the Lord is merciful  
and compassionate. Judah's sins are forgiven. Ransomed

**Closing Prayer:** Dear God  
Hear our prayers for wholeness and reconciliation.  
Grant us courage  
Grant us wisdom  
Help us to find the steps for peace and justice,  
We ask in Jesus name.  
**Amen**

**Closing hymn:** *May the God of Hope Go with Us, Voices United, #424*  
(or other hymn)

**Blessing:** Go now in the comfort and joy of that God we call Love, go  
in peace.  
**Amen**

*(a boa)*

A thread of frivolity reminds us of the healing and uniting power of laughter; a gift to the soul that renews and revives.

Playfulness prompts us to recapture the innocence of youth and prevents us from taking ourselves too seriously. In appropriate measure it is a permission to embrace our inner child.

*(a linked chain)*

A thread that speaks of bondage calls us to stand vigilant against the systems and power inequities that continue to oppress the marginalized.

We strive to eradicate the injustices and the inequities that create division. We boldly face our own complicity and complacency which enable these destroyers of community.

*(a prayer stole, rosary, prayer beads)*

A sanctified thread testifies to who we are and whose we are.

We keep before our eyes the goal of a community where all will do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

*(a gold or silver necklace)*

A precious thread draws our mind to contemplate the true treasures that we store in our hearts.

We find our priorities and values challenged within a community that compels us to think beyond our own selfishness and turn our backs on the temptations of self-interest.

*(a long stem flower)*

A living thread recalls the sacredness of all life. The community that we envision is one that nurtures the beautiful potential inherent in each life.

We pause to remember the lives that have been cut short by violence and the potential that has been lost through hatred. In our time of reflection we covenant together to create communities in which such sorrows are no more.

from their enemies, they may look to a future with hope. They will return to their land and to the holy mountain of Zion. The Lord will bless them.

Judah may have wondered about this blessing. With what will the Lord bless them? Will it be a spiritual blessing? A new and contrite heart? This will certainly be part of God's blessing. But Jeremiah reveals that God's goodness includes material gifts as well. There will be plenty of grain, wine and oil. And their flocks will prosper. Their lives will be like well watered gardens. Never again will they become weak and feeble.

This is cause for great joy. The young women's joy will express itself in dancing. Young and old men together will be merry for the Lord will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. Their mourning will be transformed into joy and happiness.

*(For this ritual the appropriate threads will be needed although, if the suggested items are not available different coloured ribbons or threads could be used. The 'Loom' is created by using two poles. One can be placed on an edge of a table or held by two participants while the second is suspended below by wrapping kitchen twine around the two)*

**Leader:** From Roman antiquity through eastern philosophies, to contemporary pop songs, weaving has proven to be a very evocative metaphor for life. In this ritual we invite you to contemplate this metaphor as you weave together threads representing the diverse gifts and perspectives of a healthy community.

The warp (*permanent/vertical*) threads represent the inherent potential for community in our lives: bare and waiting to give a home to the weft (*added/horizontal*) threads that we add. For community is ours for the creating and we must carefully choose what threads to add: those that reflect the gifts, wisdom and experience that enhance community, protect its individual participants, and which ultimately create something unique and irreplaceable.

Fourteen threads will be added, each representing an attribute which encourages healthy relationships. While representing these desired attributes the fourteen threads also represent the fourteen lives cut short by violence on December 6, 1989. As each item is added to the frame a time of quiet meditation is encouraged.

*(Raffia)*

A thread from nature calls us to reflect upon the beautiful diversity of this Creation we embrace, our place within its loving embrace.

We recognize that we have been created to love and to be loved and thus seek connections with one another.

*(Ribbon)*

A thread which promises delight affirms that we are created to be and are indeed a gift to one another.

We ask that our hearts and minds embrace the beauty of being connected so that we find within our society the potential to create healthy sustaining community.

*(strip of old clothing)*

A thread from the past reminds us that the community that we create today is built upon the foundations of the past with all its challenges and triumphs.

We give thanks for the positive witness of those who have been a blessing in our past and commit to find the opportunity for insight and wisdom arising from the negative events in our individual and collective lives.

*(skipping rope)*

A thread reflecting youth humbles us with the truth that the community we create today will be the foundation upon which our children will build,

We take seriously our commitment to be positive role models for our youth knowing that the community we build today shall be either a blessing or a burden for them in the future.

*(multiple embroidery threads)*

A single thread can be vulnerable and monotonous. Multiple threads are stronger and create a vibrant beauty.

We undertake to build a community that embraces diversity acknowledging that every community is enriched by different perspectives, different experiences and different gifts.

*(fishing line)*

This invisible yet almost indestructible thread reminds us that the bonds that unite us may not always be obvious.

We ask for the faith to believe that what we do makes a difference and that our acts of kindness, support and love are providing life-lines of which we may not even be aware.

*(binder twine)*

A coarse and simple thread shames us from the temptation to judge and cautions us of the evils inherent in hierarchies.

Within a just and equitable community all are embraced, all are welcome, all are valued. Help us create such a community as this.

*(scarf)*

A thread evoking comfort, protection and warmth reminds us of how we are to be in right relationship with others.

We strive to create a safe community where any threat of emotional, physical, or spiritual harm is eliminated.

*(elastic)*

A flexible thread reminds us all that the goals to which we aspire in building a healthy community, may challenge, de-centre and confound us.

Let us express our better selves through patience hearts, open minds, compassionate acts and judicious words.