**Call to Worship**

*(based on Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16)*

LEADER We seek refuge in you, God: a granite cave for hiding, a high cliff sanctuary of safety.

**PEOPLE May we hide in the crevice of your peace and climb the heights of your love.**

**Lead us out of our fear to your light.**

LEADER Into your hands, commit our spirits, faithful Creator.

**PEOPLE Even as life leaks away from us, years fading out in sighs, our time is in your grasp.**

LEADER Hour by hour our days are placed into your presence, for you are our God!

**PEOPLE Incline your ear. See our longing to know righteousness. Face us as you deliver us to safety.**

LEADER All who wait for God, be strong, and let your heart take courage.

--Rev. Beth Long-Higgins, 2017

**Prayer of Invocation**

*(references to Acts 17:22-31)*

God of our ancestors and our God, you inhabited the earth with your people, providing the times for their existence and the boundaries of the places where they have lived. You provided the questions that would lead them to search for you. You presented curiosity in their hearts that they would grope for your hand and discover that you are never far. Even today, you have created us to live and move and have our being in you. We are your offspring, living and growing ever more fully into your likeness. We are your hands and your feet, returning praise and witness to the power of your love at work in this world and the next. Surround us this day that our lives may be inspired with your breath and refreshed with your love. Amen.

--Rev. Beth Long-Higgins, 2017

**Prayer of Confession**

**Call to Confession**

No matter who we are, where we have been or how long we have been travelling this journey of discipleship, God calls us again and again into the presence of wisdom and love. As we gather our hearts in this moment, may we be aware of the very help that is offered to weaken the grip of fear and embolden our trust in the source of our strength. Let us pray together:

**Prayer of Confession**

**Source of All Strength, we pause before you this day to release the fears which consume our imaginations and limit the reach of what is possible. We forget that you created the world out of chaos and that you continue to bring beauty to the most desolate of places. We fail to trust that you continue to bring goodness into being through your spoken word and give shape to companionship through the lives of others.**

**Help us receive what we need this day in order for wisdom to take root and grow. Water the seeds of compassion which have already been scattered at the ground of our being. And ripen the fruit of your harvest that our lives might reflect your purpose and share your meaning with those who share this journey with us. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.**

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

LEADER God has heard the plea of our hearts and received the weight of our fears in order that we might be enlightened to share the gladness of the good news: We are God’s people. Created in the image of our maker. Redeemed through the life of Christ. Sustained by the presence of the Spirit through all the days of our life.

**PEOPLE Thanks be to God! Amen.**

--Rev. Beth Long-Higgins, 2017

**Prayer of Dedication**

Still Speaking One,

We hear you saying to us, as you did to the ancestors of our faith so long ago, that you have come so that we may “have life, and have it abundantly.” As we open our hearts, hands and resources to those served by United Church Homes, may we share together what it truly means to have life in abundance.

 May our personal and communal experiences with the residents, families and staff be so transformative as to open our eyes to the Spirit of Abundant Living within our midst. And, may we be so changed by our experiences of connecting with, serving alongside, giving to and praying for our United Church Homes family that the words we hear about the promise of abundant living become the reality we live. Amen.

-Rev. Becky King, 2015

**Litany**

**Abundantly Whole** *(inspired by John 10:10)*

ONE I have come that you who knew scarcity may prosper with abounding joy.

**RESPONSE** **Where the Spirit abides, each thread weaves a tapestry, ever new.**

**ALL** **LIVING ABUNDANTLY, LET US CREATE A WHOLE AND HOLY COMMUNITY.**

ONE I have come that you who thirsted may be satisfied beyond your longing.

**RESPONSE** **Where the Spirit flows, life is restored in shared relationship.**

**ALL** **LIVING ABUNDANTLY, LET US CREATE A WHOLE AND HOLY COMMUNITY.**

ONE I have come that you who felt lost may be welcomed and fully accepted.

**RESPONSE Where the Spirit dwells, grace offers lavish care for all.**

**ALL** **LIVING ABUNDANTLY, LET US CREATE A WHOLE AND HOLY COMMUNITY**

ONE I have come that you who felt untended may know steadfast loving-kindness.

**RESPONSE** **Where the Spirit moves, no one is stranger to God’s ample provision.**

**ALL** **LIVING ABUNDANTLY, LET US CREATE A WHOLE AND HOLY COMMUNITY**

ONE I have come that you who have been down trodden may thrive in new ways.

**RESPONSE** **Where the Spirit resides:**

**hearts open, souls prosper, blessings transform.**

**ALL** **LIVING ABUNDANTLY, LET US CREATE A WHOLE AND HOLY COMMUNITY**

-Rev. Greta Wagner, 2015

**Affirmation of Aging**

LEADER Today, you and I are older than we were yesterday!

**PEOPLE We give thanks for life’s lessons in days now past, that have given us opportunity to delve deeper and reach further into the mysteries of God.**

LEADER Tomorrow will offer new possibility for life and love and challenge and joy.

**PEOPLE We give thanks for God’s presence as our faith continues to grow and form more fully into the likeness of God as through those faithful ancestors who have gone before:**

LEADER May the God of Noah, provide extended families the opportunity to serve faithfully when all else seems to be lost.

**PEOPLE** **May the God of Abraham and Sarah give us courage for new adventures in new territories even when our inclination is to laugh in God’s face.**

LEADER May the God of Naomi, inspire us to connect with families of our choosing instead of isolation in uncertain lands.

**PEOPLE** **May the God of Moses lead us through the wilderness to be satisfied with the journey which falls short of our destined goals.**

LEADER May the God of Zechariah help us to recognize when we are in the presence of the divine.

**PEOPLE** **And may the God of Lydia allow us to find ways to create beauty in the world.**

LEADER Even as you grow older with us, Gracious God, may our imaginations continue to expand, our creativity inspire the generations that follow, and our experience provide the groundwork for wisdom’s ripened grace in this time and place.

**PEOPLE** **As long as we have breath and life, may our being return thanks and praise to our God who connects us with all of creation! Amen.**

--Rev. Beth Long-Higgins, 2017

Litany of Gratitude *(based on 2 Corinthians 9:10-15)*

 ONE This Generous God who gives seed to the farmer that in turn becomes bread for your meal is more than extravagant with each of us.

 **PEOPLE We are enriched in every way to be generous in every way, so we can return thanks to God our whole lives through!**

 TWO These gifts of generosity which come from our Creator are what provide for the roof overhead and the safety and sustenance of our bodies--

 ONE This is the One who provides for the enrichment of our minds and the refreshment of our spirits from infancy to the moment of our last breath.

 **PEOPLE We are enriched in every way to be generous in every way, so we can return thanks to God our whole lives through!**

 ONE We give thanks for the abundant and bountiful gifts of life and for those who have led the way by example and deed.

 TWO We give thanks for the opportunity to participate in providing for those who once cared for and taught us, mothers and fathers, elders in the faith, teachers and disciples carrying the gospel to our generation.

 **PEOPLE We are enriched in every way to be generous in every way, so we can return thanks to God our whole lives through!**

 ONE We give thanks for those who chose to build homes of care and healing for our loved ones and for those who offer gifts of healing and wholeness for those who are must vulnerable and frail.

 TWO May your delight in giving, transform not only the lives of those who receive the benefits of care, but in turn, convert your life into endless praise.

 **PEOPLE We are enriched in every way to be generous in every way, so we can return thanks to God our whole lives through!**

 ONE May you glorify God through the witness to the good news of the risen Christ and by the generosity of your sharing that gospel in all you do. Amen.

**Hymns and Songs**

 **“We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky/Abundant Life”** ENDLESS SONG, TNCH #563

Verse 1 Ruth Duck, 1984;

verses 2-4 Beth Long-Higgins, 2016

We cannot own the sunlit sky, the moon, the wild-flowers growing,

For we are part of all that is within life’s river flowing.

With open hands receive and share the gifts of God’s creation,

That all may have abundant life in every earthly nation.

We age through life from birth to death, each breath a gift for blessing

To learn to share God’s love for all, our prideful will confessing.

 Each day we grow to see the world through eyes that blur divisions

 That we may live abundant life, love grounding each decision.

Transforming ways we think and act about life’s cycles, Aging!

We seek community through love. Wholeness the view we’re staging.

Through Christ we offer life in peace, for elders, wise yet lonesome

That all may live abundant life, their hearts to God are open.

Compassion, Hospitality are offered to each elder

With deep respect and honor given, integrity is shouldered.

As stewards careful of life’s gifts, we seek to be transparent

That all may have abundant life, with love for all inherent.

**Benediction**

 May you go with the infusion of Christ’s COMPASSION--

 Finding ways to share the gift of HOSPITALITY--

 May you celebrate with RESPECT the diversity of perspectives gathered in each place--

 Allowing INTEGRITY to provide you courage to live your convictions.

 May you be wise STEWARDS of the gifts God has entrusted to your care

 And may you be TRANSPARENT allowing others to see God’s love at work in you.

 We give thanks for your response to this divine calling as we strive to live into God’s vision

 of Abundant life even as we are woven together into community this day! Amen.

--Rev. Beth Long-Higgins, 2016