

C O M M U N I T Y O F C H R I S T

HERITAGE DAY

CELEBRATE CHURCH HERITAGE IN YOUR CONGREGATION

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A HERITAGE DAY SERVICE

Prelude & Gathering

Congregational Life (Announcements)

Prayer for Peace

You either may use the Prayer for Peace materials as posted on the Community of Christ website (Samples of the daily Prayer for Peace may be found at www.cofchrist.org/prayerpeace) or adapt the prayer to reflect this special Heritage Day service.

Welcome and Call to Worship: D&C 161:6, 162:2

While welcoming the congregation, the worship leader should introduce the Heritage Day theme as well as explain to the congregation the historical significance of the items in the worship display. This will help set the heritage tone of the service. Likewise, the service contains two main components. One highlights the journey of the church as a whole. The other is designed to highlight the story of the congregation and its members. For it is through congregational life that the church lives out the mission of Christ.

Scriptural Reading:

“Be respectful of tradition. Do not fail to listen attentively to the telling of the sacred story, for the story of scripture and of faith empowers and illuminates.” - D&C, 161:5

“Listen to your own journey as a people, for it is a sacred journey and it has taught you many things you must know for the journey yet to come.” - D&C, 162:2

Responsive Reading: “We Write the Story”

Reader 1:

Let us remember the God of new beginnings. In the beginnings, God created heaven and earth and all things therein. And behold, all of God’s creation is very good.

Congregation: We are the children of God...

Reader 2:

...loved from the foundations of the world by a God who is constantly giving on our behalf.

Congregation: We are members of the Christian community.

Reader 1: We are joined by countless millions, present and past, who confess that Jesus is the Christ.

Congregation: We are the children of the Restoration.

Reader 2:

We knelt in Palmyra’s grove in upstate New York and heard the voice of God directing us to the Christ.

Reader 1:

We journeyed to Kirtland, Ohio, where we gave our precious possessions to build a House of the Lord.

Reader 2:

We heard God’s call to frontier living and journeyed to Independence, Missouri. Here we experienced both the joy of community and the bitterness of persecution.

Reader 1:

We resettled in Nauvoo, Illinois - the City Beautiful. Here, again, we experienced rich community and the bitterness of dissent.

Congregation: We are the children of a church reorganized...

Worship Display

Consider setting up a worship display at the front of the sanctuary. The display should include a variety of objects that are significant in the life and unique story of the local or worldwide church. Encourage congregational members to bring an object/item that represents their personal journey with Christ and connection to the church. Examples may include photographs of Community of Christ historic sites, images of past congregation and church leaders, artifacts and historic images from the congregation (church construction and dedication, congregational retreats, baptisms, etc.).



Historic Sites (L-R): Liberty Hall, Kirtland Temple, Plano Stone Church, Joseph and Emma's Homestead

Responsive Reading Continued...

Reader 1:

...journeying from Plano, Illinois, to Lamoni, Iowa, and once again returning to Independence. Our story is told, in part through the Smith family: Joseph Jr. and Emma; Joseph Smith III and Fred M.; Israel, W. Wallace, and Wallace B.

Reader 2:

But, our story is not confined to the vision and leadership of one family, it is based on the joy, hope, love, and peace expressed through the lives of countless men, women, girls, and boys who have served and continue to minister in Christ's community throughout the world.

Reader 1:

As we journey on our mission to proclaim the peace of Jesus Christ, we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those who began writing this story. Their faith laid the foundation for our ongoing service to God and His creation.

Congregation: We are children of God.

Reader 1:

We are believers in Christ Jesus.

Reader 2:

We are the children of the Restoration and Reorganization.

All: We are the Community of Christ in today's world. We will continue to write the story.

*-Adapted from Geoffrey Spencer's poem in *Prayers and Readings for Worship*. Vol. 1, Judy Judd, ed. (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1987), 78-79.*

Hymn: Now in this Moment, HS 58

Invocation

The Restoration Story

This section will walk the congregation through the Community of Christ story with a medley of readings and historic hymns. You also may add a hymn or story that holds a special significance in the life of the congregation.

The Early Years: Blessings of Community

Reading:

The story of Community of Christ is a history of attempts at building signal communities. In the earliest years of the movement, members of our faith traveled hundreds of miles to live close to one another in Kirtland, Ohio, Independence and Far West, Missouri, and Nauvoo, Illinois. In each of the gathered communities, we attempted to live out the lifestyle of the early Christians modeled in the New Testament Book of Acts. We experienced the presence of God and were empowered for missionary work. We also experienced tension with our neighbors and persecution. Lessons were learned from each of our attempts at building community. Powerful lessons that would shape and mold the leadership of Joseph Smith III and others in the Reorganization.

The hymn we now sing was written by W. W. Phelps and printed in the church's first printing office located in Independence, Missouri, in 1832. The hymn reflects our faith community's early attempts at building community and linking their struggles to those of the children of Israel in the Old Testament.

Hymn: Redeemer of Israel, HS 313

Reorganization: Invite People to Christ

Reading:

As our faith community grew under the leadership of Joseph Smith III, we were empowered to share the gospel of Christ at home and abroad. Missionaries were sent hundreds of miles from church headquarters in Plano, Illinois and later Lamoni, Iowa. Our printing presses churned out missionary pamphlets, new editions of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, and the latest hymnals. We had a powerful story to share that would not be contained by geographical boundaries and limited resources. Mark Forscutt was one of the many missionaries that traveled thousands of miles, including as far away as Tahiti and England, to share the mission of Christ with others. In many ways, we are a product of his commitment towards the mission initiative of "Invite People to Christ."

The hymn we now sing includes a tune written by Mark Forscutt during one of his many missionary trips. His daughter, Ruby Faunce, tells the story:

Ruby Faunce Story Continued...

In the year 1885 or 1886, Father was holding meetings at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was when he was alone in his room one night about ten o'clock, that he heard beautiful music. His room opened into the hall which led past the room where an hour before he had conducted a preaching service. And as he listened, he thought sure the lady of the house was playing on the piano in the church room.

The music continued, plainly, clearly, a few moments, father decided to go to the room and see who was playing. On his way he met the sister at whose house he was staying and who offered shelter for the meetings.

"I thought that was you playing, Brother Forscutt!" she gasped.

"And I thought it was you!"

Realizing that heavenly influences were about them, they entered the room, and father played the melody from memory, the sister verifying that this was what she had heard. This tune Father named "Norman," and to it we sing in our hymnal the words, "Blest Be Thou, O God of Israel."

-Ruby C. Faunce, "Biography of Mark Hill Forscutt, Arranged From His Diaries," *Saints' Herald* 81 (July 31, 1934)

Hymn: Blest Be Thou, O God of Israel, HS 24

A Return to Independence: Pursuit of Peace

Reading:

Throughout the 20th century, members of our faith community looked for ways to create tangible expressions of Christ's kingdom at work in the world. President Frederick M. Smith believed that our community could "demonstrate to the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a power in social betterment and salvation." For many, the physical needs of people and their spiritual needs were not separable. More than simply converting individuals, early church members acted boldly to make society itself better by creating models of Christian living. We built hospitals, schools, retirement homes, and support centers. Our focus on uplifting the poor and improving health and education reached outside North America by the 1960s, a ministry strengthened a decade later with the establishment of Outreach International.

The hymn we now sing reflects the passionate mission of our early faith community to share the gospel of Christ and to intentionally create Zion communities wherever they

are called to go. The hymn was written by Roy Cheville, a strong and enthusiastic minister known for his emphasis on "doing." Cheville served as campus minister and professor of religion at Graceland College before being called to the office of presiding patriarch/evangelist of the church in 1958.

Hymn: Send Forth Thy Light, O Zion, HS 317

A Worldwide Community of Christ: Unity in Diversity

Reading:

The story of our unique faith community has grown from a young boy seeking answers to life's difficult questions to a vibrant faith community that embraces nearly 250,000 members in over 50 countries throughout the world. Generations all over the world have worked tirelessly in building signal communities of joy, hope, love and peace. We have witnessed the blessings of continuing revelation and have been challenged to become a better people as expressed in *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 162:2e:

Again you are reminded that this community was divinely called into being. The spirit of the Restoration is not locked in one moment of time, but is instead the call to every generation to live the essential truths in its own language and form.

We end today's story of our faith community, now known as the Community of Christ, with a hymn written by Barbara Howard. This is one of many new hymns that will appear in the new Community of Christ hymnal. The hymn captures the inspiration of our shared past, acknowledges our present calling, and inspires us onward to continue writing our sacred story.

Hymn: God, Whose Grace Redeems Our Story

Hymn available at: www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org

The Stories We Write Together

Invite up to three members of the congregation from different generations to share a brief testimony about the importance of church heritage, emphasizing the story of your congregation. Encourage those giving testimonies to reflect on the words shared in the call to worship (D&C 161 and 162). Testimony content may include:

Our Congregation: Yesterday

What is the story of your congregation? Who were the founding members and what led to the creation of your unique community of believers?



Historic Games like "stick and hoop" and "graces" are fun activities for children on Heritage Day



Leona Hobbs and Sally Roth (L-R) led a Heritage Day Service at the Kingsville, Missouri congregation in 2013. The service included historical reproduction clothing, handmade wooden benches and pulpit, and a 19th century themed potluck.

Our Congregation: Yesterday Continued...

Tell the story of an object in the worship display that reminds you of the congregation's sacred journey.

Our Congregation: Today

Rejoice in the blessings that flow from where the congregation is today. Are there particular people in the congregation who have helped to strengthen and lead the community? How have they inspired you? What has happened within your faith community that has led you to where you are today?

Our Congregation: Tomorrow

As we stand on the "shoulders of giants" today, what would you like future historians to write about your congregation? How will the story of your local faith community inspire future generations? (This section may be presented by one individual or by a number of people from the congregation who each share a one-sentence vision of the future).

Disciples Generous Response

Both individuals and the congregation is invited to designate all or a portion of an offering for the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation in an effort to help preserve and share church heritage for future generations. Donations may be sent to: Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354. If individual donors wish to receive a receipt acknowledging their tax-deductible donation, please indicate as such when submitting the donation.

Offertory Reading:

Throughout Community of Christ history, we discover empowering examples of generosity. As we lift up the mission initiative of "abolish poverty, end suffering," we are called to help those who hurt, feed the hungry, support compassionate ministries, and respond in times of crisis.

An early example of such generosity happened on the streets of Nauvoo, Illinois, over 170 years ago. Andrew Workman remembered standing with Joseph Smith and several other men alongside a fence next to the Smith house. While the men conversed with one another they were interrupted by an approaching man who appeared very concerned. The man shared that a poor brother of the church had just lost his home and belongings in a house fire the night before. Immediately, the men gathered around and shared their sympathies and concern for their fellow friend. What a tragedy! Then, Brother Joseph reached into his pocket, pulled out five dollars and said, "I feel sorry for this brother to the amount of five dollars; how much do you all feel sorry?"

This story exemplifies Community of Christ's timeless calling to help those in need. Today, we have the opportunity, like those in Nauvoo 170 years ago, to model compassion and generosity for future generations.

Blessing and Receiving of Mission Tithes

Closing Hymn: *The Spirit of God, Like a Fire is Burning*, HS 33

Sending Forth/Benediction

In the benediction and/or sending forth, incorporate the service emphasis of church heritage and the theme of "We Write the Story."

Postlude

"A SACRED JOURNEY" **Historic Sites Bus Tour — October 8-17, 2013**

Experience firsthand our faith community's historic connections to the Mission Initiatives on a 10-day tour of Community of Christ historic sites!

Journey with an experienced guide through the prairies of the Midwest and into the rolling hills of upstate New York! *Step* into history at Liberty Hall! *Worship* in the Kirtland Temple! *Explore* the Sacred Grove in Palmyra, NY! *Rejoice* in a hymn festival in Nauvoo's Red Brick Store! *Grasp* the pulpit of the Plano Stone Church! Along the way, visit the National Baseball Hall of Fame, the Oneida Community's Mansion House, Hancock Shaker Village, Niagara Falls, and much, much more!

Our tour ends at the Temple just in time for the Peace Colloquy and the debut of the new Community of Christ hymnal!

For more package and pricing information, and to reserve your seat, go to

HistoricSitesFoundation.org

or call

(217) 453-2246



Community of Christ
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