# ORDER OF SERVICE Black History Month Celebration “It Takes One Voice to Initiate Change”

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRITORY

## LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE (adapted words from the hymn “I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say,” lyrics by Horatius Bonar)

L: We heard the voice of Jesus say, “Come unto me and rest. Lay down, you weary one, lay down your head. With pitying eyes the Prince of Peace beheld our grief. He saw, and O amazing love! He came to our relief. And the light from the lighthouse shone on us and led us out of the storm safely to the shore.” It only takes one to initiate change.

(*Christ Candle is lit*)

## SCRIPTURE

2 Kings 2:1‒12  
Psalm 50:1‒6  
2 Corinthians 4:3‒6  
Mark 9:2‒9

### Opening Hymn: “This Little Light of Mine”

Waterloo Region Mass Choir: [www.youtube.com/embed/bYzbLEexK9I](https://www.youtube.com/embed/bYzbLEexK9I)

### Slavery in Canada

Slavery existed in Canada. It is estimated that more than 4,000 Black men, women, and children were held in slavery in what is now Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick as early as 1628. Upper Canada passed the limited Act Against Slavery in 1793, and in 1834 slavery was abolished in most of the British Empire, including the Canadian colonies.

Share stories of enslaved Blacks in Canada and the voices of people who worked toward initiating change. One such story could be that of John Graves Simcoe and John White, who introduced a law to limit slavery, instigated by Peter Martin and others in response to the horrific selling of Chloe Cooley.

**It only takes ONE voice to initiate change.**

### Music: “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen”

Sam Cooke: [www.youtube.com/embed/YEx5pLLTTDo](https://www.youtube.com/embed/YEx5pLLTTDo)

### The Underground Railway

In the early 1800s, Canada and the northern part of the United States gained a reputation for being a haven for the enslaved. Canada had the code name “Canaan.” Seeking freedom, many enslaved people travelled secretly to Canada (and other regions in North America where slavery was abolished) through a concealed network known as the Underground Railroad.

Share some stories about the Underground Railroad in Canada, and share some of the many stories and theories about how messages were communicated across the network. One common story is of the song “Wade in the Waters,” which many believe was sung as a warning to enslaved people to walk through the water so the slavecatchers’ dogs could not pick up their scent.

## CHOIR: “Wade in the Water”

Waterloo Region Mass Choir: [www.youtube.com/embed/A48J3nSyGRY](https://www.youtube.com/embed/A48J3nSyGRY)

### Segregation

Segregated schools (as well as other forms of legislated segregation) existed in Canada. The majority of segregated schools were located in Essex and Kent counties in Ontario, where Black communities had been established during the Underground Railway era.

Share stories of segregation in Canada and the voices of people who worked toward initiating change, such as Leonard Braithwaite, Canada’s first Black provincial legislator, or Father Dean T. Wagner, who initiated a hospital and school for Black children who were not welcomed in the community. **It only takes ONE voice to initiate change.**

## CHOIR: “Ain’t That Good News” or “Stand By Me”

Classical Roots Community Mass Choir: [www.youtube.com/embed/YaUQmTmW37A](https://www.youtube.com/embed/YaUQmTmW37A)  
orEthel Waters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY-hyju12To>

### Race Riots

Race riots existed in Canada. In fact, the first recorded race riot in North America was on July 26, 1784, in Nova Scotia. It lasted for about 10 days. The riot began when a group of White Loyalists stormed the home of David George, a Black Baptist preacher in Shelburne who was baptizing other White Loyalists. The rioting mob tore down the houses of 20 other free Black Loyalists living on the church’s property and physically attacked George.

Share stories of race riots in Canada and of the life of pastors like David George. **It only takes ONE voice to initiate change.**

## CHOIR: “Precious Lord”

Aeolians of Oakwood University: [www.youtube.com/embed/GcOs5kSFqvo](https://www.youtube.com/embed/GcOs5kSFqvo)

### Civil Right Activists

The story of Viola Desmond (a Black businesswoman who refused to sit in the “Blacks only” section of a movie theatre) pre-dates the story of Rosa Parks (a Black Civil Rights activist who refused to sit in the “Blacks only” section of the bus).

Share the story of Viola Desmond, or share the story of other Black civil rights activists in Canada.

**It only takes ONE voice to initiate change.** That voice, and then another added to it, creates a ripple effect and keeps the change going. Even if protests and court decisions don’t work, we can be sure that there will be judgment, so you better mind.

## CHOIR: “You Betta Mind”

The Stars of Hope: [www.youtube.com/embed/L\_TCHbletA0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/L_TCHbletA0)

### Invitation to Give

The struggle continues in different forms, but just like those before us, we will continue to work for equal rights and justice for all. When we see injustice, it is the prompting of the Spirit for us to do something about it. During the time of offering, consider having a free will offering in support of a local organization working toward anti-Black racism in Canada.

## OFFERTORY: “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”

Alex Boyé and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra: [www.youtube.com/embed/OSO2n\_AjG34](https://www.youtube.com/embed/OSO2n_AjG34)  
OR  
J Clef Chorale: [www.youtube.com/embed/J\_v44xsqIek](https://www.youtube.com/embed/J_v44xsqIek)

### Offertory Prayer

**Loving God, accept these gifts.   
Bless them and use them   
 to bring peace to places of unrest,   
 love to places of hate,   
 joy to places of fear,   
 hope to places of loss, and  
 equal rights and justice for all.   
In the name of Jesus we pray.   
Amen**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: “Standing in the Need of Prayer (It’s Me O Lord)”

Tennessee Gospel Society: [www.youtube.com/embed/u72gLOGr\_Jk](https://www.youtube.com/embed/u72gLOGr_Jk)

“Kumbayah” translates in English to “come by here Lord.” It is a word in the Gullah creole dialect from what is now Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. The Gullah had ties to enslaved West Africans. We use this song today to lift up our prayers of concern to God.

### Sung Response: “Kumbayah My Lord”

Rutendo Kaoru: [www.youtube.com/embed/1w3Lm\_gu-ZY](https://www.youtube.com/embed/1w3Lm_gu-ZY)

L: How good it is to sing praises of your goodness, God; even when we feel ashamed of our fellow humans who in past initiated, participated, sustained and perpetuated the forcible removal of over 10 million Africans from their homes for trade across the Atlantic?  
**P: We come with many names: terms of endearment that we cherish and labels that we seek to one day destroy.**

## CONGREGATIONAL SUNG REFRAIN: “Oh Freedom”

The Sojourners: [www.youtube.com/embed/Lc8DvicTmQo](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Lc8DvicTmQo)

L: But you call us by one name, Beloved. We remember your healing acts of salvation.  
**P: We remember how you gathered the dislocated and dispersed Black peoples in Nova Scotia and Ontario to build communities and relearn cultures that were torn away.**

L: We remember the Maroons, who with their hands built a mighty fortress on a hill.  
**P: We remember Viola Desmond, Carrie Best, John Freeman Walls, Harriet Tubman, Chloe Cooley, Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Leonard Braithwaite, Michaëlle Jean, Samuel Sharpe, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Nanny of the Maroons, and other heroes and she-roes, that their actions have brought freedom and equality closer to Black people in our society.**

L: We remember how your everlasting love healed the self-esteem and rebuilt the self-worth of Black peoples who were stripped of their human rights and dignity.  
**P: We remember that you continue to heal the brokenhearted and bind up the wounds of those who have been wounded, abused, and denied because of the shade of their skin, even today.**

## CONGREGATIONAL SUNG REFRAIN: “We Shall Overcome”

Morehouse College Glee Club: [www.youtube.com/embed/Aor6-DkzBJ0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Aor6-DkzBJ0)

L: Like Moses,   
**P: Give us the courage to confront the systems that hold people captive and prevent them achieving their full potential.**

L: Like Elijah,  
**P: Help us to be zealous in our calls for the deliverance of your people.**

L: Like Jesus,  
**P: Give us the grace to follow through on our plans to be an anti-racist denomination and make the sacrifices necessary to make this a reality.**

L: We offer to you all the things that we can no longer carry on our own: our burdens, our worries, and our concerns. We offer to you all the situations that we feel ill-equipped for. We pray specifically for… (*congregation-specific prayers*).

L: When we join with Habakkuk (1:1‒4) and complain, “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous—therefore judgment comes forth perverted.”  
**ALL: Help us to hear the words of the prophet (Habakkuk 2:3): “For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.”** **Strengthen our weary souls, and remind us once more that you fight with us and you will never leave us nor forsake us in the struggle. Give us a double share of your Spirit to carry out this calling.**

L: When we see injustice and unjust acts in our community, let the light of Christ that changed us through us change the world…  
**ALL: …and remind us that it takes ONE voice to initiate change. Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN: “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (James Weldon Johnson)

Stanford Talisman Alumni Virtual Choir: [www.youtube.com/embed/o8pGp7N9bG8](:%20https:/www.youtube.com/embed/o8pGp7N9bG8)  
Or  
First Plymouth Church: [www.youtube.com/embed/2riA8Y0IlNY](https://www.youtube.com/embed/2riA8Y0IlNY)

## COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION

L: Although the road is long and the journey is hard, although the mountains are too high and the valleys are too low,  
**ALL: By your grace, give us hope.  
By your power, give us strength.  
By your mercy, give us wisdom  
so that we may continue to go where you lead us, until all your children are safe from harm. May we go with your light shining in us, as we carry justice and equality into the world to bring about change with our voice. Amen.**

## CHORAL BLESSING (sung together)

“God Be with You” (Thomas A. Dorsey)  
Ella Fitzgerald: [www.youtube.com/embed/hK1GpgZMcs8](https://www.youtube.com/embed/hK1GpgZMcs8)

### African-American Spirituals in *Voices United*

43 “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”  
70 “There’s a Star in the East”  
141 “They Crucified My Lord”  
144 “Were You There”  
480 “Let Us Break Bread Together”  
575 “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”  
577 “I’ve Got Peace Like a River”  
606 “In Christ There Is No East or West”  
612 “There Is a Balm in Gilead”  
617 “I Love You, God, Who Heard My Cry”  
708 “My Lord, What a Morning”

### African-American Spirituals in *More Voices*

88 “Over My Head”  
167 “Hush! Hush!”

*―Rev. Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes is minister at Sharon-Hope United Church in Sharon, Ontario.*