

## **Liturgy for the Closing of Congregational Church of Westfield**

**Prelude**

**Call to Worship**

***Hymn: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee # 8***

**A Statement of Purpose**

**Litany of Thanksgiving**

**A brief statement, followed by a time of silent remembering, and then upon hearing "Loving God", the people respond.**

**.... Loving God,**

**People: We give you thanks.**

***Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth #66***

**A Time of Remembering**

**Prayer**

**A Statement: The Church Is Closed**

**Moving on in Faith**

**Leader:** When the chosen people left the land of Egypt for the uncertainty of the wilderness, You, O God, went with them. You inspired and directed Moses and the people to the Promised Land. You will be with us now as we move on.

When the prophets knew for certain that the old values and traditions would no longer serve your purpose, nor bring closer your realm, You, O God, showed the doubters a new way, and revealed fresh opportunities to the closed-minded.

**People: Ever-faithful God, you will be with us as we move on.**

***Hymn: This is My Father's World #485***

**(over, please)**

### **Benediction**

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we let go of our cherished place.

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we sing new songs and worship in new ways.

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we serve in different ways and pursue different causes.

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we find new friends in our new congregation.

**Leader:** God's love remains with us,

**People:** God's justice will inspire us,

God's realm will call us to action.

**Leader:** God is eternally for you and with you.

**ALL:** Thanks be to God! Amen.

**Hymn:** *We Plow the Fields and Scatter* #460

### **Postlude**



© 2010 The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include this notice.

## Liturgy for the Closing of Congregational Church of Westfield

**Prelude** — *Ringing of church bell*  
*Welcome/ Housekeeping*  
**Call to Worship**

**Leader:** Eternal God, God of the present time, of ages past and of all the ages that are to be, we worship you. Loving God, God of the compassionate act and of selfless caring, we welcome you. God of the church, who brings us together to worship, to learn, and to serve, we respond to you.

**Hymn: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee # 8**

### **A Statement of Purpose**

**Leader:** We are gathered today to leave this church building which has been a part of our faith community home for us for over 200 years. We are gathered in memory of, and gratitude for, past members and good works. We are gathered in faith....that this building will shelter its people and allow good works to flourish.

### **Litany of Thanksgiving**

**Leader:** The baptismal font, the communion table, the pulpit, this whole worship space, enable us to thankfully remember the countless services of worship and sacraments celebrated in this place, and to bring to mind the ministers and lay leaders who have led worship. *(time of silent remembering)*

For this worship space, Loving God,

**People: We give you thanks.**

**Leader:** These pews/chairs and the worshippers here today are reminders of the congregations who have gathered over the years for the Sunday services, funerals, weddings, and other celebrations that have taken place here. *(time of silent remembering)*

For worshippers over the years, Loving God,

**People: We give you thanks.**

**Leader:** The crafts and pictures, these curriculum books, the Christmas-pageant clothes are reminders of the many students who over the years have begun their Christian journey in this place. *(time of silent remembering)*

For wonder-full young persons, Loving God,

**People: We give you thanks.**

**Leader:** This fellowship food, this fellowship space, and these apple pies bring to mind the many happy times of eating, learning, and working together. *(time of silent remembering)*

For a caring and giving fellowship, Loving God,

**People: We give you thanks.**

**Leader:** This Bible and this study-group material remind us of much laughter, much earnest discussion, many good friendships forged as we met together. *(time of silent remembering)*  
For learning and for friendship around the table, Loving God,  
**People:** We give you thanks.

**Leader:** This music we hear and we sing today, reminds us of the congregation, the choir members, the organists, the pianists, and all the other musicians who have proclaimed their faith here in hymns and songs. *(time of silent remembering)*  
For voices in harmony, for voices united, Loving God,  
**People:** We give you thanks.

**Leader:** This hammer, these hands are symbols of the many hours dedicated men and women put in over the years to maintain this building. *(time of silent remembering)*  
For hard work inside and outside the church, Loving God,  
**People:** We give you thanks.

**Leader:** We come together with so many good and treasured memories, and also with a sense of sadness at saying farewell to this hallowed place.  
We come together, also, with great hope for continuing our life of faith, with great hope that this building and its people will continue good works and that the building's presence in our community will continue to inspire peace, faith, hope and joy in all people.  
For the life of this faith community which will continue on, Loving God,  
**People:** We give you thanks.

**Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth #66**

### **A Time of Remembering**

#### **Prayer**

Loving God,  
We offer you our memories of this Congregational Church of Westfield faith community, so dear to our hearts.  
We offer you the memories that we have heard.  
We offer you the memories that we have expressed.  
We offer you the memories that we keep deep within ourselves.  
As you have blessed us in the listening and in the telling,  
So you will bless us as we bring them to mind and share them in the coming days. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who told wonderful stories and shared his experience with his disciples. Amen.

#### **A Statement: The Church Is Closed**

**Leader:** Today we have celebrated with thanksgiving the life and work of the faith community of Congregational Church of Westfield. It has served as a witness to God's presence since its first

service was conducted here in 1812. It has provided refuge, comfort, and challenges for God's people. It has served for generations the faithful people of this community. This building, dedicated and named Congregational Church of Westfield, together with the land on which it stands, and all objects remaining in it, we now commend to other purposes. We declare that as of today, September 15, 2024, it is no longer the place of meeting of a congregation.

### **Moving on in Faith**

**Leader:** When the chosen people left the land of Egypt for the uncertainty of the wilderness, You, O God, went with them. You inspired and directed Moses and the people to the Promised Land.

You will be with us now as we move on.

When the prophets knew for certain that the old values and traditions would no longer serve your purpose, nor bring closer your realm, You, O God, showed the doubters a new way, and revealed fresh opportunities to the closed-minded.

**People:** Ever-faithful God, you will be with us as we move on.

### **Hymn: This is My Father's World #485**

#### **Benediction**

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we let go of our cherished place.

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we sing new songs and worship in new ways.

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we serve in different ways and pursue different causes.

**Leader:** God remains with us,

**People:** Though we find new friends in our new congregation.

**Leader:** God's love remains with us,

**People:** God's justice will inspire us,

God's realm will call us to action.

**Leader:** God is eternally for you and with you.

**ALL:** Thanks be to God! Amen.

### **Hymn: We Plow the Fields and Scatter #460**

*Ring of Church Bell*

Postlude