

Liturgy for Regional Covenanting Service Antler River Watershed

(Presider would be one of the following: minister, pastoral charge supervisor, or Community of faith regional representative.)

Presider: The communities of faith and Regional Council of Antler River Watershed share ministry in mutual respect as part of The United Church of Canada. Together we celebrate God's presence, seek justice, and love and serve others. A covenantal relationship, intentionally and willingly entered into between a community of faith and the Regional Council, is an important symbol of our commitment to one another.

"Covenant" is a term with deep roots in the Christian tradition. In scripture it is frequently used to describe a relationship. For example the covenant at Sinai joined God and the people together in an expression of gratitude and mutual commitment with the Ten Commandments serving as the foundation for their relationship with God and one another. In Jesus, we are given a "new covenant" to love one another as we are loved by Christ. And in our personal relationships, marriage is a covenant that draws two people together into a partnership based on love, mutual respect and promises to care for one another.

This covenant between _____ and Antler River Watershed Regional Council, is an expression of our gratitude and commitment to one another, promises to share the ministry entrusted to us as members of the United Church of Canada, and our gratitude for the gifts we have been given by God for this work.

Words of Covenant:

Representative Appointed by the Region:

Antler River Watershed Regional Council covenants to fulfill the responsibilities of a regional council as outlined in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and its accompanying handbooks with a vision toward holding and encouraging communities of faith. In so doing, the regional council will:

- *make decisions concerning communities of faith with, not for, the community of faith*
- *offer staff resources to assist communities of faith in strengthening their understanding of themselves and to equip them to be partners in God's mission;*
- *support the community of faith through prayer and encouragement*

Representative of the Community of Faith:

_____ (name of community of faith) covenants to fulfill the responsibilities of a community of faith as outlined in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and its accompanying handbooks and will:

- *respect and follow the policies set out by the region*

- *participate in the work of Antler River Watershed Region by electing representatives to the Region,*
- *share information about the Region with their community*
- *support the Region through prayer and engagement in Regional ministries.*

Presentation of Symbols:

Presider: Just as the bread and cup, or a wedding ring, are familiar symbols of covenant, our relationship is also represented with tangible symbols of our promises to one another.

Representative Appointed by the Region:

The following symbols represent the spirit with which the regional council enters this covenantal relationship and represent our desire to connect, support and transform:

We offer this Stole: to mark our shared worship life

We offer the Basin and Towel to serve in practical ways with respect, compassion and love.

We offer the Loaf and Cup to remember our unity as the church, the body of Christ.

We offer a Bible to ground our relationship and ministries in scripture and the teachings of Jesus

Representative of the Community of Faith:

The following symbols represent the spirit with which the community of faith enters this covenantal relationship and represents our desire to be in ministry with the regional council of Antler River Watershed.

We offer ...

- *Name symbol and what it represents*
-
-

All Present (In Unison):

We are committed to working together in positive ways.

We commit to a code of conduct that is uplifting and supportive and all take responsibility to stand against bullying and harassment.

We recognize that there may be times when, through misunderstanding, inattention, or poor judgement, we may cause harm to the covenant between us. In such moments, we commit to drawing closer even when tempted to create distance and to seeking ways to restore our relationship, using whatever resources might help, until we reach agreement on the way forward.

Presider: Let us pray. God of relationship, we give thanks for the opportunities to work together as we live out our faith; holding and encouraging one another and all that is around us. Guide us as we seek to serve our communities and the world, walking in love and faith.

Keep us mindful of all that dwells on this earth and our responsibility to caring for it.
We pray this in the name of the one who showed us by example. Amen