

**A Service of Apology and Appreciation to Women in Ministry
Affected by the Disjoining Rule
The Executive of the General Council
April 30, 2006**

Presider: The Very Rev. Marion Pardy

Call to Worship:

We have gathered to worship God.

**We have come seeking comfort,
inspiration, community and insight.**

We have come to open ourselves
to the power of God's presence in our midst.

**We have come to offer up the seasons
and turnings of our lives,
and to ask God's help
in our learning and our growing.**

Celebrate God's Presence

Hymn 387 Loving Spirit

Opening Prayer:

In your image, O God, we are created.
Be with us as we reflect that image
in our work and play, as we sing and pray,
study and learn, laugh and cry together.
Help us accept our responsibility
as members of this church
and as followers of the Way of Jesus Christ.
We ask for the encouragement of your Spirit
and the energy of your love.
Amen.

*Susan Lukey
from Celebrate God's Presence (as adapted)*

Hymn 16: Mary, Woman of Promise

Hebrew Scripture: 2 Kings 22:14-20 – *The Prophet Huldah* Marion Kirkwood

The Wisdom: 893 *Wisest One, Radiant One*

The Acts 9:36-42 – *The Raising of Tabitha*

Wilma Cade

The Gospel: Matthew 26:6-13 – *The Faithful One*

Reflection:

Elizabeth Eberhart-Moffat

Hymn 590: *A Prophet-Woman Broke a Jar*

Prayer for Repentance and Forgiveness

God of grace and God of history
in your image we are created
and by Your mercy, we are responsible for our actions.
We come before you, as the United Church of Canada
to publicly repent for our wrongdoings
to the Deaconesses and Ordained women of our denomination.

O God, we call.
O God we call.
From deep inside we yearn.
From deep inside we yearn for you.
(sung prayer, Voices United #411)

We grieve over our limited and culturally conditioned vision of the women's call to serve You.
We are sorry for the policies and practices which denied their ministry and gifts.
We repent of the injustices that left many women unemployed, in poverty, and shut out from the courts.
We recant the sexism that continues to creep quietly and steadily into our views and practices towards women generally and women in ministry.

O God, we call.
O God we call.
From deep inside we yearn.
From deep inside we yearn for you.

Open your church to the truths of its past in regard to "women in ministry".
Heal the individual and corporate wounds of our practices.
Pour out your wisdom to understand a better way.
Empower the church to create policies and live practices that are just, respectful and celebrative of women.

O God, we call.
O God we call.
From deep inside we yearn.
From deep inside we yearn for you.

God is a God of grace and a God of history.
We are created in God's image and we are responsible.
By God's mercy the church is forgiven.

By God's mercy we are able to be transformed
By God's mercy we are committed
to honour all women's ministries
and to policies and practices of justice towards all people.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Joan K. McMurtry

Woman's Creed

I BELIEVE IN GOD who created woman and man in God's own image
who created the world and gave both sexes the care of the earth.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS child of God, chosen of God, born of the woman Mary
who listened to women and liked them who stayed in their homes who
discussed justice with them who was followed and financed by woman
disciples.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who discussed theology with a woman at a well
and first confided in her his messiahship
who motivated her to go and tell her great news to the city.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who received anointing from a woman who rebuked
the men guests who scorned her who said this woman will be remembered
for what she did to minister to Jesus.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who healed a woman on the Sabbath and made her
whole because she was a human being.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who spoke of God as a woman seeking the lost coin
as a woman who swept, seeking the lost.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who thought of pregnancy and birth with reverence
not as punishment but a wrenching event
a metaphor for transformation born again anguish-into-joy.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who spoke of himself as a mother hen who would
gather her chicks under her wing.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS who appeared first to Mary Magdalene who sent her
with the bursting message. GO AND TELL.

I BELIEVE IN THE WHOLENESS OF THE SAVIOR in whom there is
neither Jew nor Greek slave nor free male nor female
for we are all one in salvation.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT as she moves over the waters of creation
and over the earth.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT the woman spirit of God
who like a hen created us and gave us birth
and covers us with her wings.

*Rachel C. Wahlberg from Prayers & Poems, Songs & Stories Ecumenical Decade: Churches in
Solidarity With Women*

Words of Appreciation and Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Right Rev. Peter Short

Words of Response: Wilma Cade

Hymn 899: *My Soul Gives Glory to My God*

The Blessing:

Return now to our world with its pain and wonder,
remembering the words of the prophets,
the faithfulness of Mary,
and the longing of all
who yearn for a sign of hope.
And may the blessing of God who is ever faithful,
the blessing of Christ who still comes to us,
and the blessing of the Holy Spirit who moves within us
and throughout our world,
rest upon us and abide with us, this day and forevermore.
Amen.

*Marion Pardy
from Worship For All Seasons, Volume 1, CGP*