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January 8, 2024
The Baptism of the Lord

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity **January 18 to 25, 2024**


To Clergy, Religious, & Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

During the week of January 18 to 25, our diocese joins with Christians around the world to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, asking the Holy Spirit to bring us together in ever-greater unity to give witness to the Gospel. On the night before he died, Jesus prayed that his followers “may all be one” as He and the Father are one, in order that the world might believe (John 17). Our witness to the world is especially powerful when Christians from many traditions join together in prayer, solidarity and action.

Praying for Christian unity is an ecumenical practice going back at least to the Lambeth Conference of 1867. Churches around the world began using the now established resources in 1968. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches have published the resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024.

The theme of the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is from Luke 10:27: **“You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself.”** This scripture passage calls upon all Christians and people of goodwill to reflect on the relationships in our lives of striving to love our Lord and God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind – and how this is lived out in how we *actually* love one another. In these times of large-scale political and social anxiety, anger, and mistrust, and increasing polarization and conflict, Jesus directs us to reflect on how the Greatest Commandments direct our allegiance to God in our commitment to live and act like Him. This is a call to bring to bear all *charity, mercy and forgiveness, justice*, and commitment to *unity*. We need to seek the impossible path of Jesus Christ, who renders what seems to be *impossible... possible!* (see Luke 18:27)

As we prepare to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we are asked to reflect on the following questions:

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,
in His desire to bring God’s love to all peoples.

- i) *How can we live our unity as Christians so as to confront the evils and injustices of our time?*
- ii) *How does Jesus Christ – who is the greatest Love the world has known – inspire and call each of us in the coming New Year to be a channel of His peace, love, and hope for the world?*
- iii) *How can we engage in dialogue - for the sake of increased awareness and insight about one another's experiences of the journey from brokenness to forgiveness and healing?*

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity not only reminds us that Jesus Christ is the one Saviour of all peoples and nations, but also that there is great blessing and new life when those of many families of faith come together in wonder, praise, and commitment to follow the One true Lord and Saviour.

For further information and resources, please see the attached resource jointly prepared and published by the Pontifical Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. You can also go to: <https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/WPCU%202024%20ENG.pdf>

Let us pray in the words of one of the resources available for this week:

*Lord Jesus, who prayed that all might be one,
we pray to you for the unity of all Christians,
according to your will, according to your means.*

*May your Spirit enable us to experience the suffering caused by
division, to see our sin and to hope beyond all hope. Amen.*

As we begin this New Year 2024, let us renew our commitment to educate ourselves and others regarding the goal and work of ecumenism.

Sincerely in Christ,

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✙ Most Rev. Mark A. Hagemoen