



# WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2017

*Reconciliation – The love of Christ compels us (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-20)*

## What is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

Every year, between January 18 (the Feast of the Confession of Saint Peter) and January 25 (the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul), Christians around the world are invited to celebrate a week of prayer for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in jointly-organized ecumenical services, and to share fellowship.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was first proposed in 1908 as an observance within the Roman Catholic Church by Fr Paul Wattson, founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement in Graymoor, New York. In November of 2014, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed the cause for Fr Wattson's canonization.

Since the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948, many other Christian denominations around the world have come to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and since 1968, the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity have collaborated to produce materials for use over this eight-day period. Every year, the Commission on Faith and Witness of the Canadian Council of Churches assembles an ecumenical writing team to adapt these materials for the Canadian context, and to create additional resources in both English and French. We are delighted to do this work in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism and the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism.

This year's resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by an ecumenical team in Germany, representing various churches and religious organizations. They have chosen as their theme "Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us," inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:14-20. They invite Christians around the world to celebrate God's reconciling grace, call us to recognize the pain of the deep divisions which afflict the Church, and urge us to become ambassadors of Christ's message of reconciliation.

**More detailed information, and online versions of the Canadian resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2017, can be found at [weekofprayer.ca](http://weekofprayer.ca) / [semainedepriere.ca](http://semainedepriere.ca).**