WORLD COMMUNION OFFERING

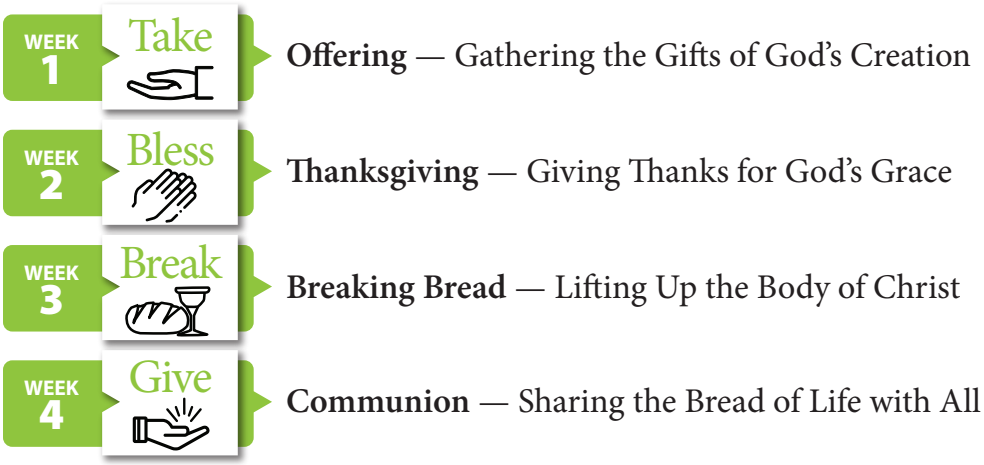
A Season of Preparation

WHAT IS A SEASON OF PREPARATION?

A season of preparation is a special period dedicated to getting ready for something significant, involving spiritual growth, skill-building and gathering the many ways to prepare. It is often characterized by challenges and anticipation that cause our faith to be tested, confirmed, and affirmed by God and the movement of the Holy Spirit. It's a time of active commitment to spiritual growth through prayer, study and discipline.

A Season of Preparation before congregations receive the World Communion Offering, created by the 226th General Assembly (2024), will invite members of the church community to learn more about the practice of communion and how it is a vital part of their congregation's worshiping life. It will also prepare the community for what happens after the sacrament is shared and the Offering is received by engaging in learning about and engaging in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s mission and ministry around the World Communion Offering cause areas identified by the General Assembly: racial justice, gender justice, peacemaking, global witness, and ecumenical and interfaith relations.

We have provided four weeks of resources.



A Season of Preparation –

WEEK 4

SEPT. 27

Give - **Communion** — Sharing the Bread of Life with All

Introduction

The logistical plan for the World Communion Offering echoes the liturgical rhythm of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in our Presbyterian tradition. Communion or the Eucharist is comprised of a fourfold pattern of

- Gathering
- Blessing/Thanksgiving
- Breaking
- Giving

So, too, is the World Communion Offering organized around those same four faithful exercises of

- Gathering
- Blessing/Thanksgiving
- Breaking/Dividing
- Giving

Perhaps these are, in fact, the immutable rhythms of the life of faith in Christ. These are the fourfold approaches to reconciliation and to the unity for which Jesus prayed "*May they be one…*". World Communion Sunday, with its special offering is, therefore, a unique opportunity to express in word and in deed our commitment to reconciliation and unity. As we approach and share in this meal alongside Christians around the world, sacramentally the day set aside for Christians throughout the world to participate in the Lord's Supper and in gratitude take up an offering intended to address the world's brokenness, it is well to reflect upon these four themes.

Giving

The communion elements are "given" by God but they are distributed by the pastor and/or elders. It is important to recall that the church is not the creator or originator of goodness and plenty but rather serves as a steward of God's goodness.

The manner in which the elements are shared varies from place to place and occasion to occasion. In some instances, intinction may be the manner of distribution. This is the practice in which individuals approach the table taking a portion of bread and dipping it into a common cup. On other occasions the elements may be distributed already prepared in individual portions by elders. The elements may be consumed as they are received or held to be consumed in unison with the whole congregation. Each of these practices gives important reminders of God's mercy and grace. Each of the practices variously emphasizes either God's attention to the individual or alternately accentuates God's favor and blessing of the community as a whole. Whatever practices are utilized to

distribute the communion elements, the careful selection of those practices gives close attention to the specific needs and circumstances of the people.

The World Communion Offering, like the communion elements, must be distributed in ways that respect and honor the circumstances of all the people. Again, the church, acting as steward, distributes the offering to individuals and organizations, including congregations with a joyful and generous spirit. Our gratitude for the manifold gifts of God's grace transforms into sharing those gifts, and the substance of our lives, with others. All distributions go to recipients accompanied by the ongoing prayers of the whole church.

Whether in the case of communion elements or allocation of proceeds from the World Communion Offering, the distribution is the culmination of the fourfold practice that is at the heart of the liturgical pattern — Gathering, Blessing, Breaking and Giving. In both cases the church, as steward, says "these are the gifts of God for the people of God."

Worship Resources

18th Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 17:1–7 or Ezekiel 18:1–4, 28-32
Psalm 78:1–4, 12-16 or Psalm 25:1–9
Philippians 2:1–13
Matthew 21:23–32

Call to Worship

Gather us in, the lost and the lonely, the broken and breaking, the tired and aching who long for the nourishment of the Bread of Life.
Gather us in.
The done and the doubting, the wishing and wondering, the puzzled and pondering who long for the company of the Body of Christ.
Gather us in.
The bright and the bursting, the stirrers, the shakers, the kind laughter makers who long for deeper joys found in the Beloved Community.
Gather us in!

Prayer of Confession

God of life, you are the source of all love and the satisfaction of all our desires.
Our understanding of you is small; increase it.
Our desire to do your will is weak; enliven it.
The seed you have planted has yet to bear fruit; ripen it.
But first, create in us clean hearts, as in your sight we unburden ourselves ….
Silent prayers
These are the words of Jesus. They are strong and true:
"I have come that you may have life in all its fullness. Go in peace; your sins are forgiven."

May we live as forgiven people, visibly different, gloriously free, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Suggested Hymns: I Will Come to You/You Are Mine (Glory to God #177)
Thuma Mina/Send Me, Jesus (Glory to God #746)
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (Glory to God #65)

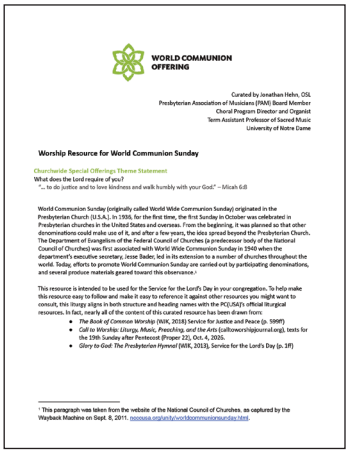
Activities

— If the young people have been collecting an offering in their coin banks, remind them to bring them to worship next week on World Communion Sunday.

— One of the ways that we share the Bread of Life is through communal prayer. During the pandemic, one church discovered that some of its older adults were intimidated by video conference platforms. In order to share together in prayer with those intimidated by technology, the church used a free conference call service and sent the dial-in number and meeting ID to all its members. The older adults were especially responsive. This form of midday prayer continues to be a meaningful way to share the Bread of Life with some of our most vulnerable members.

— Remind members to bring various kinds of baked or purchased bread to be used in a processional for World Communion Sunday next week. Consider using "Come All You People/Uyai Mose" as the processional hymn. This short gathering song is a favorite among children in Zimbabwe, and it is frequently used as a processional song for worship. The choir enters singing, the congregation picks up their excitement, and soon all are singing. (Glory to God #388)

— Download the Worship Resources for World Communion Sunday found on the Special Offerings website: pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2026-06/WCO26%20Worship-Resources.pdf.



WORLD COMMUNION OFFERING

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Worship Resource for World Communion Sunday

Churchwide Special Offerings Theme Statement
What does the Lord require of you?
"... to do justice and to love kindness and walk humbly with your God." – Micah 6:8

World Communion Sunday (originally called World Wide Communion Sunday) originated in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In 1935, for the first time, the first Sunday in October was celebrated in Presbyterian churches in the United States and overseas. From the beginning, it was planned so that other denominations could make use of it, and after a few years, the idea spread beyond the Presbyterian Church. The Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches (a predecessor body of the National Council of Churches) was first associated with World Wide Communion Sunday in 1940 when the department's executive secretary, Jesse Bader, led in its extension to a number of churches throughout the world. Today, efforts to promote World Communion Sunday are carried out by participating denominations, and several produce materials geared toward this observance.[1]

This resource is intended to be used for the Service for the Lord's Day in your congregation. To help make this resource easy to follow and make it easy to reference it against other resources you might want to consult, this liturgy aligns in both structure and heading names with the PC(USA)'s official liturgical resources. In fact, nearly all of the content of this curated resource has been drawn from:

- *The Book of Common Worship* (NJK, 2018) Service for Justice and Peace (p. 599ff)
- *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts* (calltoworshipjournal.org), texts for the 19th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 22), Oct. 4, 2025.
- *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (WJK, 2013), Service for the Lord's Day (p. 3ff)

[1] This paragraph was taken from the website of the National Council of Churches, as captured by the Wayback Machine on Sept. 8, 2011. nccusa.org/archive/worldcommunionsunday.html.

— Make plans to distribute the communion elements (with the assistance of elders) from World Communion Sunday to those who are home-centered or at assisted-living residences. You might even consider setting up a regular schedule of sharing communion with those individuals.

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Questions?
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pcusa.org/oghs/resources