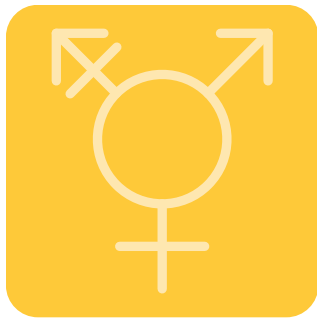




Advocacy *in* Worship

GUIDE

Advocacy & Witness 
A Ministry of Presbyterian Life & Witness

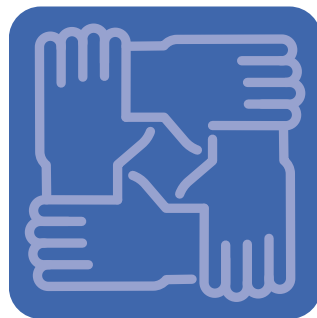


Table of Contents

Purpose of This Guide	3
Introduction — Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins	4
Advocacy and Worship Services and Liturgical Resources	
• Service for Election Season — Rev. Christina Cosby	7
• Service on Gun Violence Prevention — Dr. Andrew Peterson	10
• Service on Christian Nationalism — Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins	15
• Service on Affordable Housing and Homelessness — Rev. Christina Cosby	19
• Service on Gender Inclusion and LGBTQIA+ Concerns — Atticus Gore	22
• Service on Racial Justice — Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins	26
• Service on Environmental Justice — Rev. Christina Cosby	30
• Service on Immigration — Isabella Shutt	34
• Service on Public Education — Rev. Christina Cosby	40
• Service on International Diplomacy with the United Nations — Clare Balsan	43
• Service of Healing — Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins	48
• Service for Young Adults and Advocacy — Rev. Christina Cosby	52
Special Edition/Appendix: Advocacy in Children’s Sermons — Alex Pickell	57
Conclusion: From Worship to Action	60
Notes	62

Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to serve as a liturgical resource for faith leaders, clergy, congregations, and denominational bodies within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and beyond who seek to intentionally integrate themes of justice and advocacy into worship. It is designed for use in Sunday worship, prayer vigils, special services, and communal gatherings responding to moments of public concern or collective lament.

This guide includes several fully developed worship services with sermon starters, designed for use over the course of a full year, with the flexibility to be used monthly, as a sermon series, or through other creative integrations into worship. Each service centers on a specific justice theme, addressing a broad range of concerns — from racial and gender justice to immigration and beyond. These themes are woven throughout each element of worship, offering a holistic approach that unites prayer, proclamation, and action.

There is no single prescribed template for the services. Orders of worship and liturgical elements vary, allowing for adaptability and creativity. The services vary in tone, ranging from solemn and prophetic to reflective and contemplative, to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of diverse communities and contexts.

Recognizing the emotional and spiritual demands of advocacy, this guide also incorporates elements of healing and renewal. The PC(USA) has endorsed the healing services as opportunities for individuals and communities to gather for restoration and hope. These services may include anointing with oil, prayers, and litanies that address both personal and collective concerns, such as national lament and repentance, childhood illness, cancer, mental illness, spiritual disorientation, fear, and the realities of death and dying. Advocates and communities engaged in justice work are invited to find space here for healing, grounding, and renewal.

While written from a Presbyterian perspective, this resource is intentionally ecumenical and interfaith in its spirit. It seeks to reflect shared Reformed Christian convictions while remaining adaptable for use across diverse faith traditions and worshipping communities.

This manual affirms that worship is a gathering of the people of God to praise the triune God, and that justice is not an optional addition but an integral dimension of faithful worship. As we pray and sing, we trust in a just God who calls and empowers us to seek justice for all people. Worship that turns away from the realities of the world lacks focus and risks becoming detached from God's reconciling work in Creation.

Introduction

Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins, PC(USA) Advocacy and Witness Director

Worship is central to the Christian faith and to the life of the church. Through prayer, Scripture, preaching, music, and the sacraments — Baptism and the Lord's Supper — the people of God gather to glorify and respond to the triune God. In worship, we confess, receive assurance of pardon, lament, give thanks, intentionally invite God to be active in our lives, hear God's word read and proclaimed, and offer our gifts to God. These practices arise from the call of a just God who created a world of abundance meant to be shared with generosity, equitably, and with care. We worship a good God who created a good world and who calls us to seek the flourishing of every child of God, each made in God's image and likeness (imago Dei).

Within the Reformed and broader Christian tradition, worship and mission are inseparable. Mission does not exist apart from worship; rather, it begins in worship and flows from it. The mission of the church is to serve the local community and the wider world, often with the aim of nurturing a more just and equitable society. In contemporary Christian worship, the church regularly lifts up its mission through prayers, testimonies, and invitations to generosity. While these expressions have traditionally emphasized charity — meeting the immediate needs of God's people through acts of compassion and care — the Christian tradition also affirms the necessity of advocacy. Charity responds to suffering in the present moment; advocacy seeks to address the underlying systems and structures that allow such suffering to persist. Faithful discipleship requires both. To love one's neighbor is not only to offer relief, but also to labor for justice by challenging inequitable policies, practices, and powers. When held together, charity and advocacy become a tangible extension of worship, embodying the church's commitment to seek justice, love mercy, and participate in God's ongoing work of renewal in the world.



Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins

Worship cannot be confined to a single hour on a single day of the week. How we worship is inseparable from how we live our daily life. To worship a just God is to be formed into a people committed to justice. Worship entails a holistic way of life that honors God not only within the sanctuary but also in the world to which we are sent. The Book of Order affirms this deep connection between worship and mission: “Jesus’ mission and the church’s worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is mission. The church’s mission springs from its worship. ... The church’s mission flows back into worship as we bring to God the joy and suffering of the world” (W-5.030163).

Throughout Scripture, God is revealed as a God of justice, mercy, and compassion who acts decisively on behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the vulnerable. Through the prophets, God consistently linked acceptable worship with ethical faithfulness and social justice. Fasting, sacrifice, and tithing were rendered meaningless when divorced from acts of mercy and righteousness. Prophets such as Amos, Isaiah, and Micah condemned worship that was ritualistic yet disconnected from justice, speaking on behalf of a God who rejected religious observance performed without concern for the weak and marginalized. The prophetic

witness makes clear that there is no atonement for sins committed against the poor apart from repentance and a turning toward justice. As Norman Podhoretz notes in “The Prophets,” sacrifice was never sufficient to absolve injustice; forgiveness required a genuine return to righteousness and an end to oppressive practices.

Jesus’ life, teachings, and ministry further affirm that advocacy is integral to faithful worship. His preaching, healing, and parables consistently proclaimed good news to the poor and challenged systems that perpetuated exclusion and suffering (Luke 4:18–19; Luke 16:19; 31). Jesus taught that faithful obedience is demonstrated through acts of service and justice — feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and caring for the least among us (Matthew 25:31–46). He rebuked religious leaders who prioritized ritual precision over justice and mercy, reminding them that these were the “weightier matters of the law” (Matthew 23:23).

This understanding of worship has echoed throughout history. In his 1852 address, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?,” Frederick Douglass condemned forms of worship detached from justice, calling them empty ceremonies rather than expressions of living faith. Drawing upon the language of Scripture and the prophetic tradition, Douglass insisted that worship without mercy, justice, and love is not a blessing but a curse — a critique that continues to challenge the church in every generation.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that God commissions the church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to embody the mission of Christ in the world. This mission bears witness to God’s reign through the proclamation of the gospel, acts of compassion, the pursuit of justice and peace, and the care of Creation. As the Book of Order declares, “God sends the Church to work for justice in the world ... and to seek peace” (W-5.030466). These acts of justice and peacemaking are grounded in God’s reconciling work in Jesus Christ and participate in Christ’s ongoing intercession for the world.

Justice-centered worship, as John Cleghorn describes in “Resurrecting Church,” is not the responsibility of a single committee or ministry but the heartbeat of the entire congregation. It is the integration of righteousness into every aspect of congregational life — worship, formation, fellowship, outreach, and witness — so that active participation in God’s justice becomes a shared vocation.

This guide is grounded in the conviction that worship stands at the center of the church’s life and that advocacy is an essential expression of faithful worship. The following services invite communities to worship God in Spirit and in Truth while remaining attentive to the cries of the world God loves. May this resource help congregations bear faithful witness through worship that forms, sustains, and sends God’s people to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

Prophets of a Future Not Our Own (The Romero Prayer from the Archbishop Romero Trust)

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

[Click here for online resource](#)



Advocacy and Worship Services and Liturgical Resources

Service for Election Season

Rev. Christina Cosby, PC(USA) Representative for Domestic and Environmental Policy

Call to Worship

One: We're here to create a space that's welcoming to all, a sanctuary in the midst of a busy day, where we can pause, breathe, and center ourselves in God — the God who created each of us in the divine image, God who holds us close in all things, and God who loves us beyond all measures.

No matter where you come from (North, South, East, or West) (your living room, commute, office, or the chapel ...), no matter how you voted, or what weighs on your heart today, this worship is a place of unity and grace. We gather in faith as we move forward in hope, and our shared trust in God enables us to keep working for justice, equity, and transformation of the world.

In this spirit, let us worship God!

Opening Prayer

Gracious and living God, Creator of all and Sustainer of life, we gather in your presence this day, mindful that you have made us each in your image and called us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Genesis 1:27; Mark 12:31). In the midst of uncertainty, division, and the weight of civic responsibilities, be our refuge and our strength (Psalm 46:1).

Help us, O Lord, to embody the vision of your beloved community, where justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24), and where every voice is heard and honored. Guide our hearts to act faithfully, speak truthfully, and serve humbly, remembering the ways your Spirit calls us to seek the common good in our neighborhoods, our nation, and the world, as reflected in our PC(USA) commitments to equity, civic engagement, and the dignity of all people.

Bless this time of worship, that we might lay aside partisanship, embrace unity in Christ, and draw courage to follow your path of justice, mercy, and peace (Micah 6:8). May our prayers, our songs, and our reflections today strengthen us to live as faithful citizens and disciples, working for your transformative love in the world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

First Scripture Reading (Exodus 18:19– 23)

A Litany for Election Season

One: Come, people of God, and remember: we belong not to any one political system, but to the One who created all.

All: We gather in hope, trusting the God of justice and mercy.

One: God calls us to honor the dignity of every person, for all are made in God's image.

All: Teach us to see beyond division, and to act with compassion toward our neighbors.

One: God commands us to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our Creator. (Micah 6:8)

All: Give us courage to speak truth, to serve faithfully, and to stand for what is right.

One: God's Word reminds us that we are called to engage in public discourse and that our leaders are held accountable to the common good.



All: May we exercise our civic responsibilities with wisdom, prayer, and integrity.

One: God calls us to care for the vulnerable, to feed the hungry, to welcome the stranger. (Isaiah 1:17; Matthew 25:35)

All: Help us advocate for policies that protect the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed.

One: God brings light to those walking in darkness and guides our paths in righteousness. (Psalm 23:3; 119:105)

All: Illuminate our hearts with truth, and guide our votes toward justice and mercy.

One: In this season of decision, remind us that our ultimate hope is not in leaders or parties,

All: but in Christ, the one who rules with love, justice, and peace.

One: Therefore, we commit our discernment, our civic engagement, and our prayers into God's care.

All: Amen. Let our votes reflect our faith, and our actions reflect your love.

Second Scripture Reading (Ecclesiastes 3:1– 11)

Moment of Pause concluding with the Lord's Prayer (via Glory to God Recording)

Third Scripture Reading: (Isaiah 10:1– 2)

Final Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:35– 40

Closing Prayer

Gracious and Sovereign God,

You alone are our refuge and our strength. As we leave this place, guide our hearts, our minds, and our hands. Help us to participate in this season of civic discernment with integrity, courage, and compassion. May our votes reflect your justice, our words reflect your truth, and our actions reflect your love. Strengthen us to care for the vulnerable, to speak for the voiceless, and to seek the common good. Remind us that our ultimate hope is not in leaders or parties, but in Jesus Christ, the one who rules with mercy and peace. May your Spirit go before us, sustaining us in faithful witness until we gather again to serve you in joy and love.

Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Go forth in the assurance that God has called you to love your neighbor as yourself. Engage in the work of this world with courage, integrity, and compassion. Speak truth, seek justice, and act with mercy. Let your faith guide your decisions, your hope sustain your heart, and your love shape your actions. Remember that in all things — voting, serving, and advocating — you are Christ's hands and feet, instruments of God's peace and reconciliation in the world.

May the God of justice and mercy go before you, guiding your steps. May the Spirit of wisdom dwell within you, granting discernment in all decisions. May Jesus, who walked among us in humility and love, strengthen you to act boldly for the good of all. And may the blessing of Almighty God — Parent, Emmanuel, and Holy Spirit — be upon you now and forevermore.

Amen.





Advocacy and Worship Service on Gun Violence Prevention

Dr. Andrew Peterson, PC(USA) Representative for Peacemaking and Gun Violence Prevention

Suggested Timing:

June is Gun Violence Awareness Month;

September is Suicide Awareness Month (~60% of annual gun deaths)

Call to Worship (from Psalm 43)

One: We need you, God, to rescue us all.

All: Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us.

One: When will you come? We need you, O God.

All: Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us.

One: Our refuge and strength, where have you gone?

All: Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us.

One: Broken, we turn now to you, our exceeding joy.

All: Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us.

One: Bring us where you abide.

All: Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us.

One: We put our hope in you, Lord, so yet will we praise.

All: Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us.

Prayer of Invocation

Almighty and everlasting God,

You are always more ready to hear than we are to pray,

and to give more than we desire or deserve.

Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,

and fill this space with your holy presence.

Give us the courage to name the real tragedies

and evils that surround us.

Help us to look beyond easy answers and platitudes.

For you are generous and merciful,

giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask,

except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

Call to Confession

If anyone sins, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf — Jesus Christ, the righteous one. And Christ himself is the means by which our sins are forgiven, and not our sins only, but also the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1–2)

Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Prayer of Confession (in unison) by Dr. Willie Jennings

Most Merciful God, we confess we have been drawn to guns by our captivity to fear. We each have turned against your love and turned our neighbors into threats. We have made security an idol, the work of our hands, and have bowed our knees to the avenging angels we have made — the gun, the rifle, and the bomb. We have built our homes in anxiety to house guns, our communities, and our cities in fear as hospitable to weapons and inhospitable to the strangers, especially those in need of home. Deliver us, from the fear that clings so closely that we cannot imagine safety without bullets. By your Spirit, release in us and among us the joy of our salvation and the power of your peace to transform this world. Gather us in your renewing power to strengthen our witness to a life freed from fear and the desire for weapons. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Sisters and brothers, hear and believe in the good news. In the name of Christ Jesus, your sins are forgiven and remembered no more. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept your Word. Silence in us any voices but your own, so that we may hear your Word and also do it; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Suggested Scripture Reading

Isaiah 2:3–4

Affirmation of Faith (Phil. 2:5–11)

One: Let the same mind be in you
that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.

All: Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name



that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Prayers of the People by Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow

Let us pray —
God of every hue and every human,
Gun violence, fueled by hate, is not your will.
The depth of our sorrow cannot be measured
as groans of grief vibrate in our bones
and the needless loss of life surpasses understanding
But what can we expect when we live in a culture that justifies hatred
because of who one worships
because of who one loves
because of where one was born
because of what one looks like
because of what one does
because of one's passions
because of one's politics
because of how one simply moves through the world
... and, God, often this hatred is sown in your holy name.

And what can we expect when guns are so deeply embedded in our culture
when guns are gamified without discretion
when guns are glorified as tools of power
when our response to gun violence is more guns
when gun profit has more power than human potential
when guns are too easy to get
when global siblings have shown us a different way
when we have lost our ability to embody nuance, embrace sensibility, and mine wisdom.
when it feels like we have thrown up our hands and given up.

God, we have lost our way.
And yet, God, you have greater expectations for us
You expect us to choose a path of life over death
To choose possibility over profit
To choose acceptance over exclusion

To choose grace over retribution
To choose discernment over disregard
To Think
To Pray
To Act
And above all
To choose love over hate.
Amen.

Call to Offering/Doxology **(from Phil. 4:11–13)**

The apostle Paul writes,
“I have learned to be content with what I have.
I know what it is to have little,
and I know what it is to have plenty.
In any and all circumstances
I have learned the secret
of being well-fed and of going hungry,
of having plenty and of being in need.
I can do all things through Christ
who strengthens me.”
Let us share our gifts.
Offertory Prayer
Bountiful God,
All that we can offer you stems from your generosity.
May the gifts that we return to you
become a blessing for your whole community,
enriching and empowering us for the work to which you call us.
Amen.

Charge and Blessing (A Franciscan Blessing)

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for God’s justice, God’s freedom, and God’s peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and violence, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them, and to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.



And the blessing of God, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit be upon you, those you love, and those for whom you pray this day and forevermore. Amen.

Additional Scripture References:

- Genesis 4
- Exodus 20:13
- Leviticus 19
- Deuteronomy 21:1– 9
- Isaiah 11:1– 9; 58:12; 65:17– 25
- Jeremiah 29:1
- Psalm 46
- Matthew 5:1– 12
- Matthew 6:10
- Matthew 19:19
- Matthew 26:52
- Luke 10:25– 28
- Luke 22:47– 53
- Revelation 5:9– 13

Hymns

“When Will People Cease Their Fighting”

“O Lord of Life, Where’er They Be”

“O for a World”

“O Day of Peace”

“Abide with Me”



Advocacy and Worship Service on Christian Nationalism

Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins, PC(USA) Advocacy and Witness Director

Call to Worship

One: In life and in death, we belong to God.

All: Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

One: The Holy One stands above the nations and judges with righteousness.

All: God settles disputes among the peoples with justice and truth.

One: God calls us to turn weapons of death into instruments of life.

All: Swords are beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks.

One: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation.

All: Neither shall they learn war anymore.

One: Our hope is not in earthly power, but in the reign of God.

All: Let us worship the Lord our God.

Prayer of Invocation

Most gracious and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit sanctify this moment of worship as we come before you to worship in spirit and in truth. May your divine presence inspire all that we do in this hour, filling this sanctuary as we lift up your holy name. Focus our hearts and minds on you alone and remove every distraction that draws us away from your will and your way. We humbly ask that the words read and proclaimed among us be the words you would have us hear, receive, and live by. Let your truth take root within our hearts, so that what we profess this day is faithfully reflected in our lives in the days to come. Bring to our remembrance the ways you have been present in our lives and the prayers you have answered, and shape us as redeemed people, empowered by your Spirit to bear witness in word and deed, to live lives marked by justice, and to reflect the Beloved Kingdom you usher in through your abiding love.

Call to Confession

Because God is a just God, perfect in all ways and actions, we confess that our thoughts and acts are not those of God. Even in our most faithful moments, we sin and fall short of God's desires for us. Therefore, we come to a loving and grace-filled parent, confident that as we confess our shortcomings, we will not be rejected or humiliated. Let us confess our sins before God.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Most perfect God, we come before you with sorrowful and heavy hearts. We live in a world marked by suffering, pain, and deep injustice, and we confess that we are often complicit in the despair of others. We are citizens of one of the wealthiest and most militarily powerful nations in the world, yet we rarely question or challenge our government's actions toward others. In a world where not only hunger but starvation persists, we waste food and treat abundance as something owed to us. We measure greatness by military strength, though it is seldom used to liberate those held in captivity or bondage. Our foreign policies often fail to reflect the values we profess, yet we hesitate to question embargoes, sanctions, and tariffs imposed on nations, harming civilians because they pose no threat to us.



Most troubling of all, we confess that we glorify ourselves by equating our loyalty to you with our allegiance to the nation. We dare to place any earthly power above you, claiming national greatness while diminishing your sovereignty in our lives. Forgive us, O God, for the sins we commit daily, both knowingly and unknowingly. May your forgiveness be inseparable from our repentance, as we turn away from these patterns and toward your ways. Shape us into a people committed to your peace, willing to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. We pray this in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Sisters and brothers, hear and believe in the good news. In the name of Christ Jesus, your sins are forgiven and remembered no more. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Lord God, open our ears that we might hear clearly your word as it is read and preached. Help us to discern your actions in this church and for the world, that we might be hearers and doers of your will. Lord, help us to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture. In Christ Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture

Old Testament: Daniel 3:1 – 18

New Testament: Romans 13

A Brief Theological Framework/Sermon Starters

- Point 1: The teachings in the Bible, especially Paul's, "to obey governing authority," have been misused and misinterpreted.
- Point 2: Christian nationalism is not compatible with the teachings of Christ Jesus nor the doctrines of the Christian church. It is not based on Christian doctrine but rather is a political ideology that intertwines Christian identity with national identity. It asserts that Christian principles should govern a nation and that its culture should reflect Christian values.
- Point 3: Christian nationalism distorts the original meaning and context of biblical texts. It selectively interprets Scripture to support its political agenda. God is not the Lord of any one nation and has no favorites. No nation is more beloved, nor is its policy in concert with the teachings of Christ.
- Point 4: Christian nationalism promotes an "American Jesus." A Jesus aligned with specific political ideologies, rather than the Jesus of the Gospels, who is non partisan.
- Point 5: Christian nationalism conflates national identity with the Kingdom of God, suggesting that God is uniquely associated with a particular nation. Christian nationalists assert that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and that its laws should reflect Christian values.

Affirmation of Faith

One: Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God, which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death.

All: We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation,



apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.

One: We read in the Barmen Declaration of Faith in the section "Fear God. Honor the Emperor." (I Peter 2:17.) Scripture tells us that, in the yet unredeemed world in which the church also exists, the State has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace.

All: "[It fulfills this task] by means of the threat and exercise of force, according to the measure of human judgment and human ability.

One: The church acknowledges the benefit of this divine appointment in gratitude and reverence before [God].

All: It calls to mind the Kingdom of God, God's commandment and righteousness, and thereby the responsibility both of rulers and of the ruled. It trusts and obeys the power of the Word by which God upholds all things.

One: We reject the false doctrine, as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's vocation as well.

All: We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the State, thus itself becoming an organ of the State."

One: The church's commission, upon which its freedom is founded, consists in delivering the message of the free grace of God to all people in Christ's stead, and therefore in the ministry of [God's] own Word and work through sermon and Sacrament.

All: We reject the false doctrine, as though the church in human arrogance could place the Word and work of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans.

Prayers of the People

We come together on a weekly basis to pray for the church, its members, our nation and the world. Let us come before God in prayer:

Most Holy and Loving God, we come before you in this time of prayer, asking for a special dispensation. We are threatened with being overcome by the burdens of our lives and the troubles of this world. We pray for clarity and discernment in the paths we are to choose and the loyalties that are to be primary.

We lift up our members who are undergoing the pains of life. We remember those who have lost family members. We pray for all who are dealing with illness, caregivers, and families with children.

We pray for our nation that it may be a place where those seeking a home find an invitation to join us. We ask for your protection over those who are labeled as refugees, immigrants, and migrants, but in truth are your beloved children who need no other categories of being. We pray that our journey for racial justice, incomplete as it is, might be advanced through the acknowledgement that the United States' original sin of racism still exists today, but we challenge ourselves to be a nation where all are appreciated and embraced. We pray that the devastations of poverty that cripple so many might be eradicated forever.

We pray for the global family where so many are suffering in unimaginable ways, as starvation, war, famine, and neglect inflict pain and despair.

Bless this congregation to be a place where all are welcome, and the wounds of the world are bound by compassion, mercy, and love.



Call to Offering

God instructed Moses in the wilderness to “Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering; from all whose hearts prompt them to give, you shall receive the offering for me.” (Ex. 25:1) The people responded by giving more than was needed for the construction of the Tent of Meeting. As disciples of Christ, we continue to respond similarly as we offer our time, talent, and treasure for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God.

Offertory Prayer

O God, we ask that you bless and make use of all that has been provided for the ministry of your church so that the good news might be proclaimed around the world. Amen

Charge and Benediction

We enter to worship and exit to serve. May God be with you and may you know that you are a beloved child of God. As one, cherish the question of the prophet Micah, “What does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.” In the name of the God who created the heavens and the earth; God, who redeemed humanity; and God our sustainer. Amen.

Additional Scripture References

- Book of Exodus (Liberation of the Hebrew slaves)
- Joshua 2 (Rahab disobeys the King of Jericho)
- Joshua 24:14– 18 (Choose whom you will serve)
- I Kings 18 (Obadiah hides God’s Prophets)
- I Samuel 8 (Israel demands a King)
- I Samuel 14:45 (Army disobeys King Saul’s Order to kill his son Jonathan)
- Book of Daniel
- Acts 4:19– 20
- Acts 5:27– 29
- Romans 13:1– 7
- I Timothy 2:1– 3
- Titus 3:1 (Be subject to rulers)
- I Peter 2:13– 17

Hymns

“Didn’t my Lord Deliver Daniel”

“In Christ There is no East or West”

“He’s Got the Whole World in his Hands”

“Swing Low Sweet Chariot”

“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”



Advocacy and Worship Service on Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Rev. Christina Cosby, PC(USA) Representative for Domestic and Environmental Policy

Call to Worship

One: Come, all who seek shelter in God's steadfast love,

All: We come, longing for homes of safety, of dignity, of peace, and of affordability.

One: The Lord hears the cries of those with no roof over their heads;

All: The Spirit stirs in our hearts to act with mercy and justice.

One: God promises a place for everyone: a table, a room, a community.

All: We worship the God who provides, who calls us to provide, and who dwells with us. Let us worship God together.

Prayer of Confession

God of home and hearth,

We confess the ways we have turned away from your people in need.

We have ignored neighbors without shelter,

We have allowed walls and rules to divide us,

We have taken more than our share while others struggle for safety.

Forgive us, God of abundance.

Turn our hearts toward justice;

Turn our hands toward building homes and hope.

Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news:

God's love is not measured by our wealth or our walls;

God's grace is poured out freely,

And in Christ, we are forgiven, restored, and called to share.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Scripture Suggestions

- Isaiah 58:6– 11 – God calls us to loose the bonds of injustice and care for the oppressed.
- Psalm 107:1– 9 – God delivers the hungry and shelters the lost.
- Luke 14:12– 24 – Parable of the great banquet, inviting all, especially the marginalized.
- Matthew 25:31– 46 – When we welcome the stranger, we welcome Christ.
- 1 John 3:16– 18 – Love in action, not words alone.

A Brief Theological Framework for Sermon Starters

Theme: "Housing as Covenant Justice"



Four Points for Preaching or Reflection:

- Point 1: God's Shelter: God's promise is a refuge for all, which reflects the ideal that housing is more than structure; it is sacred.
- Point 2: Imago Dei and Human Dignity: Every person deserves a home because every person bears God's image.
- Point 3: Community Responsibility: Justice is lived collectively. Our faith calls us to act as neighbors, builders, and advocates.
- Point 4: Hope and Transformation: Faith in action brings tangible change by providing access to housing, advocating for systemic policy changes that promote housing for all, and offering compassionate presence that transforms lives.

A Brief Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, who calls us to share abundance with all people,
Who commands justice and mercy,
Who loves the poor and homeless,
And who calls us to act, so that every person may dwell in safety and peace.
Amen.

Prayers of the People

One: God of all homes, hear our prayers:

- For those who have no home tonight, grant shelter and comfort.
- For families facing eviction or uncertain housing, provide stability and hope.
- For communities and governments, grant wisdom and courage to create just housing policies.
- For our own hearts, make us advocates, neighbors, and builders of your kin-dom here on earth.

We pray in the Spirit who makes us one family, saying:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Offering

One: All that we have comes from God the roofs over our heads, the food on our tables, the warmth in our hearts.

Let us share generously, that others may find the homes and hope they need.

(Offering may be accompanied by a hymn such as "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" or a contemporary song of justice and hope.)

Charge

Go out into the world, carrying God's promise:

To welcome the stranger,

To protect the vulnerable,

To act with justice, mercy, and love.

Build homes, hearts, and hope — wherever God calls you.

Benediction

May the God of mercy be your shelter,

The Spirit of justice guides your hands and feet,

And Christ, the cornerstone of all Creation, blesses you with a home in God's heart forever.
Amen.



Hymn Suggestions Glory to God Hymn

“O for a World” (GTG 372)

“The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor” (GTG 763)

“Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples” (GTG 757)

“When the Poor Ones” (GTG 762)



Advocacy and Worship Service on Gender Inclusion and LGBTQIA+ Concerns

Atticus Gore, Office of Public Witness 2025 Summer Fellow

“You are fearfully and wonderfully made.” – Psalm 139:14

God’s love is wide, unshakable, and life-giving. Scripture teaches us that every person is made in the image of God, a reflection of divine creativity and care. Jesus embraced those on the margins, broke down systems of exclusion, and welcomed all to the table of grace.

This worship service invites your congregation to honor the beauty of LGBTQIA+ lives, to worship the God who delights in diversity, and to take bold steps toward justice, belonging, and advocacy for queer and trans siblings in Christ.

Resources and PC(USA) Policy (Note to design—make a box at bottom of page similar to the scripture or hymn boxes in other worship services)

Faith and Inclusion

The PC(USA) affirms the full participation of LGBTQIA+ people in all areas of the church and ministry. Our calling under the Matthew 25 initiative compels us to confront systemic injustice, including discrimination against queer communities. Advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights is not just political; it is a Gospel imperative rooted in God’s commandment to love all people as God loves us.

Key Actions

- Partner with More Light Presbyterians (mlp.org) and other inclusive ministries.
- Host a “Rainbow Table” conversation with local LGBTQIA+ organizations, families, and congregants to share stories and explore inclusion.
- Advocate for non-discrimination protections, affirming mental health services, and safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and adults.
- Observe Pride Month with worship services and community outreach.
- Support PC(USA) policies that affirm the dignity and equality of LGBTQIA+ people in church and society.

Special Offering

Consider dedicating an offering to support LGBTQIA+ organizations, youth shelters, or PC(USA) advocacy efforts around inclusion and justice.

Call to Worship

Option 1:

One: Come, beloved of God, fearfully and wonderfully made.

All: We are God’s image-bearers, each a reflection of divine love.

One: Come with your joy, your colors, your story.



All: We gather to celebrate God's presence in every life.

One: Come, for God calls us by name and claims us as beloved.

All: We come to worship the One who made us whole.

Option 2:

One: All who are weary, all who are joyful, all who are searching — come.

All: We are welcomed here, just as we are.

One: In Christ, every heart belongs, every voice is needed.

All: We come to celebrate the God whose love has no boundaries.

Prayer of Belonging

God of rainbow light and radiant love,
You created us in wonder and called us good.
Too often, we forget our own beauty or deny it in others.
Draw us back to your heart,
where every identity is cherished,
every love is sacred,
and every story belongs.
In your love, we are home.
Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

God of infinite creativity,
Open our hearts to hear your Word of love.
Let us see your reflection in every face
and your Spirit moving in every life.
Illuminate us with courage and joy
to live as witnesses of your welcome.
Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God whose love knows no boundaries,
who creates each person in beauty and diversity.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
who welcomed the outcast,
blessed the overlooked,
and loved without fear or condition.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
dancing through every life and every body,
calling us to justice, celebration, and peace.
We are God's beloved. We are enough. Amen.



Prayers of the People
God of expansive love,
we give thanks for the kaleidoscope of your Creation —
for queer joy, chosen families, and voices of courage.
We pray for those who long for acceptance,
for youth who wonder if they are loved,
for all who have been harmed by exclusion.
Strengthen us as advocates for safe schools,
inclusive policies, and affirming communities.
Fill your church with pride — not in ourselves,
but in the love you call us to embody.
May we bear witness to a world
where every heart knows its worth.
Amen.

Benediction

Go forth as beloved children of God —
fearfully, wonderfully, and joyfully made.
May the God of radiant colors
wrap you in hope,
Christ's boundless love guide your steps,
and the Spirit's dancing light
fill you with peace.
Amen.

Further Reading and Creative Resources

- More Light Presbyterians – Worship and Advocacy Resources: mlp.org
- “Queer Virtue: What LGBTQ People Know About Life and Love” by the Rev. Elizabeth Edman
- “Rainbow Theology: Bridging Communities of Faith” by Patrick S. Cheng
- A Brief Statement of Faith (PC[USA] resource on inclusion and justice)
- Reformed Worship Journal – Special LGBTQIA+ liturgical editions
- “We Were Baptized Too: Claiming God’s Grace for Lesbians and Gays” by Marilyn Bennett Alexander

Hymn Suggestions

Gathering/Opening Hymns

- For Everyone Born (Glory to God #769)
- God Welcomes All (Glory to God #399)
- In Christ There Is No East or West (Glory to God #317)
- All Are Welcome (Marty Haugen)
- There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy (Glory to God #435)



Response or Communion Hymns

- Draw the Circle Wide (Gordon Light)
- We Are One in the Spirit (They'll Know We Are Christians)
- Taste and See the Goodness of the Lord (Glory to God #520)
- I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table (African American Spiritual)
- Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (Glory to God #526)

Closing/Commissioning Hymns

- Called as Partners in Christ's Service (Glory to God #761)
- We Are Marching in the Light of God (Glory to God #853)
- Go Make a Difference (Steve Angrisano)
- Now Let Us From This Table Rise (Glory to God #540)

Additional Scripture and Sermon Resources

Old Testament

- Covenant for All Creation – Genesis 9:12–17
- God Looks at the Heart – 1 Samuel 16:7
- Chosen and Cherished – Isaiah 43:1–4
- Justice and Welcome – Isaiah 56:1–8
- Dancing with Joy – Psalm 30:11–12

New Testament

- A Family of Many Members – 1 Corinthians 12:12–27
- Love Without Fear – 1 John 4:7–21
- Radical Welcome – Luke 19:1–10 (Jesus welcomes Zacchaeus, a marginalized man.)
- Nothing Can Separate Us – Romans 8:38–39
- The Spirit Poured Out – Acts 2:1–21



Advocacy and Worship Service on Racial Justice

Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins, PC(USA) Advocacy and Witness Director

Call to Worship

One: We come to worship the Lord our God in spirit and in truth.

All: In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

One: While God's people were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had indeed married a Cushite woman).

All: For in the one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

One: Scripture says, now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

All: In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Let us worship God.

Prayer of Invocation

Most loving and accepting God, we come before you with bowed heads and humble hearts. We ask that you be in this place as you were with a wandering people in the wilderness for 40 years. They had only a tent to gather around, but you have blessed us with temples and churches that reflect our desire to worship you in one place. Confine our worship to you and you alone, and never on a building, or economic, social, or racial status. We come to worship in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Bless our gathering to be true to your intentions. In the name of Christ Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Call to Confession

Racial prejudice is a fairly recent phenomenon in human history. In antiquity, race did not impact relationships or determine one's acceptance. Religion, nationality, and culture had far more impact. We live in a world where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's dream has not been fulfilled. For so many are still judged by the color of their skin, and not by the content of their character. Therefore, we come before God to confess our complicity and failure to be prophetic voices for loving acceptance of all.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Gracious and righteous God, we come before you in confession, mindful of Frederick Douglass's words that the sins of the church are often sins of omission as well as commission. We see racial injustice around us each day, and too often we remain silent. We witness children's futures determined more by zip code than gifts, voting districts redrawn to silence communities of color, and inequities in resources that favor the already privileged. Harmful stereotypes are spoken publicly, and we fail to speak out. We see Black and brown neighbors living in fear of detention or deportation, and the most vulnerable struggling with poverty, unsafe housing, and homelessness, yet we do little to change these conditions.



Forgive us, O Lord, for allowing injustice to persist and for clinging to comfort out of fear that sharing might mean having less. Cleanse us of partiality and indifference and open our eyes to the full humanity of all your children. Turn us from silence to faithful action, from fear to courage, and from confession alone to lives shaped by justice and love. May your Spirit guide us to see, speak, and act for the well-being of all. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Lord God, speak, for we long to learn of your divine revelation. We long to be able to live a faithful life in the 21st century as disciples of all colors and nationalities, who desire relationships based on faith. Yet it is impossible without your guidance and grace. In Christ Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Old Testament: Song of Songs 1:6— 7

New Testament: Matthew 22:34— 40/Mark 12:28— 34/Luke 10:25— 28

A Brief Theological Framework/Sermon Starter

- Point 1: God created different races as an expression of God's love for diversity and to promote interaction between different races, nationalities, and ethnicities.
- Point 2: Often, dark skin is interpreted negatively as inferior, unintelligent, or criminally oriented (In Song of Songs, verse 6 is often interpreted as "Black but beautiful," rather than "Black and beautiful.")
- Point 3: The people on the African continent have been unfairly stereotyped and subjected to exploitation by wealthier nations, who left a legacy of poverty and ethnic hatred. The rich history of the continent's contributions to civilization have been largely ignored or ascribed to Western nations.
- Point 4: Criminality conjectures cannot be directed at a person due to race or any other biological reasons.

Affirmation of Faith (Unison)

One: God has called prophets in the past and in the present who have been bequeathed words of faith about racial justice that inspire us today.

All: Words that challenge our hearts as we dedicate ourselves to live by their charge to be racially just.

One: [Frederick Douglass](#) wrote a severe rebuke of American Christians who demonstrated levels of hypocrisy when it came to the brutal enslavement of African Americans.

All: "[American Christians] profess to believe 'that, of one blood, God made all nations of men to dwell on the face of all the earth,' and hath commanded all men, everywhere to love one another; yet you notoriously hate, (and glory in your hatred) all men whose skins are not colored like your own. You declare, before the world, and are understood by the world to declare, that you "hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; and are endowed by their Creator with certain, inalienable rights; and that, among these are, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; and yet, you hold securely, in a bondage, which according to your own Thomas Jefferson, 'is worse than ages of that which your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose,' a seventh part of the inhabitants of your country."

One: [Ida B. Wells-Barnett](#) stated that it was her Christian duty to shine light on the crime of racial hatred and to expose racial violence.

All: "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them. ... Virtue knows no color line, and the chivalry which



depends upon complexion of skin and texture of hair can command no honest respect.”

One: Eleanor Roosevelt responded in a letter to a criticism that she should not be an advocate for racial justice.

All: She proposed that every living person had the right to [“Four Basic Rights”](#) in a democracy: “[T]he right for equal education, the right to work for equal pay according to ability, the right to justice under the law, [and] the right to participate in the making of the laws by use of the ballot.”

Prayers of the People (“Shake Us From Our Slumber,” Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

One: When our eyes do not see the gravity of racial justice,

All: Shake us from our slumber and open our eyes, O Lord.

One: When out of fear we are frozen into inaction,

All: Give us a spirit of bravery, O Lord.

One: When we try our best but say the wrong things,

All: Give us a spirit of humility, O Lord.

One: When the chaos of this dies down,

All: Give us a lasting spirit of solidarity, O Lord.

One: When it becomes easier to point fingers outward,

All: Help us to examine our own hearts, O Lord.

One: God of truth, in your wisdom, Enlighten Us.

All: God of hope in your kindness, Heal Us.

One: Creator of All People, in your generosity, Guide Us.

All: Racism breaks your heart; break our hearts for what breaks yours, O Lord.

Ever-present God, you called us to be in relationship with one another and promised to dwell wherever two or three are gathered. In our community, we are many different people; we come from many different places; have many different cultures. Open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us. We pray in faith.

Call to Offering

Precious God, you are the originator of all we have. We offer graciously a portion of what you have so generously given to us as a token of our thankfulness and love.

Offertory Prayer

May these gifts be used to destroy all the harms and barriers that separate us from loving our God and experiencing unity with one another. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Go forward and let “justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” In the name of the God who created the heavens and the earth; God, who redeemed humanity; and God our sustainer. Amen.



Additional Scripture References:

- Genesis 11:1— 9 (Tower of Babel)
- Song of Songs 1:6— 7 (Black and beautiful)
- Matthew 21:28— 32 (Parable of the Two Sons)
- Matthew 22:34— 40/Mark 12:28— 34/Luke 10:25— 28 (Greatest Commandment)
- Mark 14:13— 14 (Impartiality of Jesus)
- Luke 10:29— 37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan)
- Romans 2:1— 5, 11 (God is impartial)

Hymns

“In Christ There Is No East or West

“When Israel was in Egypt’s Land”

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River”

“Go Down Moses”

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”



Advocacy and Worship Service on Environmental Justice

Rev. Christina Cosby, Representative for Domestic and Environmental Policy

Call to Worship

One: Come, all who long for rivers that run clear, for skies that shine bright,

All: We come, longing to honor God's Creation and care for the earth.

One: The Lord calls us to protect the land, the waters, the air, and every living thing.

All: The Spirit moves in forests, deserts, mountains, and rivers,
urging us to act with justice, wisdom, and courage.

One: God gives life to all Creation; let us worship the Creator,

All: whose love sustains the earth and invites us into faithful stewardship.

Let us worship God together.

Prayer of Confession

God of green grass, blue waters, and clear sky,

We confess the ways we have harmed your Creation.

We have poisoned rivers, consumed endlessly, and turned a blind eye to injustice.

We have ignored Indigenous voices and harmed sacred lands.

We have allowed environmental racism to scar communities of color.

Forgive us, God of mercy.

Open our eyes to your presence in every tree, every stone, every river.

Give us the courage to protect, restore, and advocate,
that our work may honor you and care for all living things.

Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news:

God's love is not exhausted, and Creation is not abandoned.

In Christ, we are reconciled to God, to one another, and to the earth.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Scripture Suggestions

- Genesis 1:26— 31 – Humans as stewards of Creation.
- Psalm 24:1-2 – The earth belongs to God; all Creation is sacred.
- Isaiah 24:4— 6 – The consequences of environmental harm.
- Luke 12:22— 31 – God provides; trust leads to care, not greed.
- Matthew 25:31— 46 – Care for the least includes care for those harmed by environmental injustice.
- Romans 8:18— 22 – Creation groans, longing for justice and restoration.
- James 2:14— 17 – Faith in action: advocacy and stewardship are signs of love.



A Brief Theological Framework for Sermon Starters

- Point 1: Creation as Sacred Trust: God entrusts humanity to tend to the land, waters, and air, meaning these are not ours to exploit but to steward.
- Point 2: Justice for Vulnerable Communities: Environmental racism and inequitable policies harm the poor and marginalized. Tending to the land and policies that protect people go hand and hand. This means advocacy is a moral imperative and a sacred responsibility.
- Point 3: Learning from Indigenous Wisdom: Indigenous peoples have long held sacred knowledge about living in harmony with the earth; we are called to listen and learn.
- Point 4: Hope, Restoration, and Policy Change: God calls us to act through personal stewardship, advocacy for renewable energy, protection of sacred sites, and sustainable policy.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God the Creator,

who made the heavens and the earth, the waters and the forests,
the wind and the soil, and every living creature.

All Creation belongs to God, and all that we share is sacred.

We trust in Jesus Christ, who calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves,
to seek justice, and to care for the least among us —

including those communities burdened by pollution, neglect, and environmental harm.

We follow Christ in resisting exploitation of land, water, and life
that profits a few at the expense of the many.

We affirm the Holy Spirit,

who moves within us toward healing, restoration, and reconciliation,
drawing us to sustainable ways of life and faithful stewardship.

We acknowledge that God's Creation groans for justice,
and we are called to join that groaning by transforming systems that harm Earth and people.

We denounce ways of living and economic structures
that rely on fossil fuels and extractive industries that damage air, water, and climate,
and that deepen inequality, threaten life, and harm those least responsible for ecological crisis.

We believe that our dependence on fossil energy has contributed to climate change
and heightened suffering for vulnerable communities.

We recognize with gratitude and humility
the sacred traditions, wisdom, and care of Indigenous peoples
who have long tended these lands, waters, and living systems with respect and reverence.

We commit to listening to and uplifting Indigenous voices,
honoring their stewardship, and protecting sacred sites from harm and desecration.

We acknowledge that environmental injustice and environmental racism
disproportionately harm low-income communities and communities of color,
leaving them with polluted air, contaminated water, and fewer resources for health and well-being.

We affirm that those most harmed have the strongest moral claim
to lead the decisions that shape their futures and restore their environments.



We commit ourselves — as individuals, congregations, and communities —
to advocate for public policies and practices that promote sustainability, equity, and flourishing for all.
We seek a just transition to energy, economic, and ecological systems
that honor the dignity of workers, protect Creation, and nurture life for future generations.
With gratitude for God's abundant gifts,
we live in hope for a renewed Creation —
a world where land is protected, air is clean, water is pure,
and all peoples enjoy the fullness of life promised in Christ.
Amen.

Prayers of the People

One: God of the land and sky, hear our prayers:

For communities affected by pollution, climate change, and environmental racism, grant justice, protection, and restoration.

Lord, have mercy

For Indigenous peoples, whose sacred sites and knowledge remind us of faithful stewardship, grant respect and listening hearts.

Lord, have mercy

For policymakers and world leaders, grant wisdom and courage to enact sustainable, just, and forward-looking environmental policies.

Lord, have mercy

For all of us, empower stewardship, advocacy, and daily choices that honor Creation.

Lord have mercy

All:

Lord, hear our prayer.

Offering

One: All that we have comes from God, the soil beneath our feet, the air in our lungs, the waters that sustain life. Let us give generously to support those who protect Creation, advocate for policy change, and sustain communities harmed by environmental injustice.

Charge

Go forth as stewards, advocates, and protectors.

Honor Creation in your words, actions, and choices.

Listen to the wisdom of Indigenous peoples, protect sacred sites, and work for just policies.

Care for the earth, care for the communities harmed by environmental neglect,

and carry hope for a healed and flourishing Creation.

Benediction

May the Creator bless the land beneath your feet,
the waters that sustain life, and the air that gives breath.

May Christ strengthen your advocacy,
and the Spirit guide your care for every living thing.

Go in peace to love and serve God's Creation.
Amen.



Hymn Suggestions from Glory to God

- “For the Beauty of the Earth” (GTG 14)
- “All Things Bright and Beautiful” (GTG 20)
- “God of the Earth, the Sky, the Sea” (GTG 20)
- “Let All Things Now Living” (GTG 37)



Advocacy and Worship Service on Immigration

Isabella Shutt, Office of Public Witness 2025 Summer Fellow

“A Christian perspective on immigration challenges us above all to love immigrants, to establish justice for them, and to seek to be reconciled with them in a new and transformed community” (216th GA Resolution, p. 15).

For more information on the work and witness of the PC(USA), consult the Office of Immigration Issues: pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/immigration-issues

Ideas for a Call to Action

(invitation to be included in the bulletin, shared during collection of the offering, or proclaimed during the benediction)

- Donate to Migration Accompaniment Ministries - pcusa.org/disaster-assistance/migration-accompaniment-ministry
- Participate in [Transformed Community](#) Bible Study
- Sign up for Church World Service newsletters

Scripture and Sermon Resources

Old Testament Migration Experiences

- Abraham Called to Leave his Homeland – Genesis 12:1– 9
- Jacob’s Sons Migrate in Search of Food – Genesis 42: 1– 2
- Israelites Escape Egypt – Exodus
- God’s Commandment of Hospitality – Deuteronomy 10:19
- Ruth and Naomi
- Exile of the Israelites – Psalm 137:1– 3

The following lists of New Testament Scripture are motifs and citations used in Peter C. Phan’s work “Deus Migrator — God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration.” Consider two of Phan’s claims as you craft your sermon:

“What is distinctive and unique about the migrant is that he or she is the imago Dei migratoris, the privileged, visible, and public face of the God who chooses, freely and out of love, to migrate from the safety of God’s eternal home to the strange and risky land of the human family, in which God is a foreigner needing embrace, protection, and love” (861).¹

“A migrant and border-crosser at the very roots of his being, Jesus performed his ministry of announcing and ushering in the kingdom of God always at the places where borders...What is new about his message about the kingdom of God, which is good news to some and scandal to others, is that for him it removes all borders serving as barriers, both natural and man-made, and is absolutely all-inclusive” (862).

Jesus as Migrant

- Foreign Ancestry – Matthew 1:1– 17 (also Ruth)
- Birth Far From Home – Luke 2:1– 7



- Refugee Escaping Egypt – Matthew 2:13– 14
- Traveling Preacher – Luke 9:58
- Identification with the Stranger - Matthew 25:35
- Unwelcome Stranger in His Own Country - John 1:11

Jesus and Hospitality

- Guest of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary – Luke 10:38– 42
- Guest of Andrea and Simon – Mark 1:29
- Guest of Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1– 10
- Shared Table with Sinners and Tax Collectors – Mark 2:15
- Parable of Kingdom as Banquet – Luke 14:21
- Hosted Breakfast for Disciples – John 21:4– 13

Theological Themes

- Gifts of the Stranger – Acts 10 and 11: Cornelius opening Peter’s eyes to the promise of gentile believers
 - Importance of Diversity – 1 Corinthians 12
 - Universal Citizenship in God’s Kindom – Ephesians 2:11– 19, Galatians 3:28
- “The church is called to witness to the reconciliation that Christ brings to the world. This is no cheap covering of divisions and differences. Instead, reconciliation points to a dynamic unity of richly diverse humankind in which justice is established and each one is treasured as a gift of the Creator” (216th General Assembly Resolution, p. 10).

Connecting Biblical Tales to Present-Day Stories

- [“To Breathe Free”](#) Short Documentary
- The following quote is by a man named Francisco who was interviewed by Daniel Groody in Mexico in 2003: “Sometimes my kids come to me and say, ‘Daddy, I’m hungry.’ And I don’t have enough money to buy them food. And I can’t tell them I don’t have any money, but we don’t. I can barely put beans, potatoes, and tortillas on the table with what I make. But I feel so bad that I sometimes will go into a store, even if it is two or three blocks away, or even three or four kilometers away, or even another country in order to get food for my family. I feel awful, but nothing is worse than seeing your hungry child look you in the eyes, knowing you don’t have enough to give them. The reason why I’m migrating is not because I want to get rich but because my family is hungry.” (emphasis added)²
- [Look Each Other in the Eyes Experiment](#)
- [Bi-National Border Mass](#)
- [“Teeter-Totter Wall”](#)
- Oral Histories – [Ruth Delgado](#)
- See also the [animated series of stories](#) from the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

Further Reading

Life in transit: Theological and ethical contributions on migration

A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration

Workshop with the Taizé Community: youtu.be/ipQW59kPUwk



Call to Worship

One: We gather to worship together

All: Different people from different places with different journeys,

One: Like the apostles, forming a network of worshiping communities across long distances,

All: we join our siblings across the world in praising you.

One: Like those who welcomed Jesus with food and shelter,

All: we see God's image reflected in visitors and new neighbors.

One: May we open ourselves to hearing your voice, Lord,

All: in the voices of each other. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

One: God who lived amongst us as a traveler, born without proper shelter because of the whims of a government, forced to flee the bloodthirst of a king, who relied on the hospitality of strangers on your mission,

All: Have mercy on us. We have ignored the hardships of others.

One: We have neglected to keep your people fed. We have refused refuge to those escaping natural disasters, war, famine, and political persecution.

All: Have mercy on us.

We have been distracted by our leaders' definitions of right and wrong.

One: We have replaced our Heavenly citizenship with national identity. We have divided your people into separate classes based on their documentation.

All: Have mercy on us.

All: God we apologize for refusing you when we refuse the poor, homeless, and vulnerable.

One: Lord, have mercy. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Through Christ we have been reconciled to God, our sins witnessed and rejection felt in Jesus's body – but overwhelmed by God's love. In response to our forgiveness we continue the work of reconciliation, learning from one another and looking upon this world with wonder.

We thank God for the renewal offered at the cross and the freedom to change in response to the Word. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Time with Children

Consider using [this video](#), [this one](#), or another from the [animated series of stories](#) from the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

Prayer for Illumination (in unison)

Gracious God, soften our hearts,

so that we may fully experience your love

and receive the Spirit

as we hear your Word today. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Option 1: From The Belhar Confession

We believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that God, in a world full of injustice and hostility, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged; that God calls the church to follow in this, for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

Option 2: From A Brief Statement of Faith – Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments.
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem Creation. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of life and freedom,

When Abraham's family wandered, when Moses took refuge in the desert, when the Hebrew people fled into the wilderness, when the Israelites lived in exile, you called them, and gave them words of comfort, promises of hope, and shelter under your everlasting arms.

In Christ you crossed the border. You put on frail flesh, were born and lived your life always on the move in a dangerous world.

From your first night you slept in a bed and a place that was not your own. You and your family fled terror and found refuge in foreign lands. You were not always sure of your next meal.

We remember before you the millions of people whose lives are more like yours than we can imagine or care to acknowledge: those who are without homes, who have been uprooted from their communities and countries, who have had to flee for





their lives, who have left families and friends, who live precarious lives.

We pray for your protection and care for those who suffer and must take refuge because of war, politics, natural disaster, status, race, gender, sexuality, and faith.

We remember before you those separated from their families: children removed from their parents, siblings lost to one another, spouses and friends separated.

We mourn and we are angered by the loss that marks the lives of so many: the loss of dignity, of respect, of security, of community, of family, and of stability.

We pray for the people of this country and of the church, that we may not be indifferent or naïve, afraid or overwhelmed, discouraged or blind to hope and options to help or silent in the call for justice.

You have made us citizens of your kingdom, open our hearts and our doors to receive the stranger, the widow and the orphan and all who are dear to you, and strengthen us to witness to the love of God for all people; and open our mouths to call for justice.

In the name of Jesus, we pray.

Source: The Presbyterian Church of Canada: A Prayer for Migrants and Refugees: presbyterian.ca/2018/06/20/prayerfor-migrants-and-refugees/

Benediction

Adapted from “Give Us the Blessing” from “Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the End of the World” by Cláudio Carvalhaes

Give us the blessing of an open mind,
without imposed borders, without acquired prejudices.
Give us the grace of deep breath,
able to inhale all the pains and all the hopes of your suffering people
and exhale new life that is shared, generous, supportive ...
Give us the certainty of a just earth with space and opportunity,
food and dignity, work and rights,
for each human being ... Amen.

Hymn Suggestions

Opening

- Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary
- Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

Response of Praise

- There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
- Nada te turbe (from the Taizé Community)

Sermon Hymn

- In Christ There is No East or West #317
- Will You Let Me Be Your Servant (The Servant Song) #727
- Jesus Entered Egypt #154
- [Abraham Journeyed to a New Country](#)

Closing

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth by Pedro Infante

What Does the Lord Require of You?

Alternative: Poem

“For One Who Suffers” by Howard Thurman

I know I cannot enter all you feel
Nor bear with you the burden of your pain
I can but offer what my love does give –
The strength of caring
The warmth of one who seeks to understand
This I do in quiet ways –
That on your lonely path you may not walk alone.



Advocacy and Worship Service on Public Education

Rev. Christina Cosby, PC(USA) Representative for Domestic and Environmental Policy

Call to Worship

One: Come, all who seek wisdom and justice,

All: We come, longing for knowledge and understanding for every child.

One: The Lord opens eyes to see the gifts in every student,

All: The Spirit moves us to nurture, protect, and teach.

One: God calls us to be stewards of minds, hearts, and communities,

All: We worship the God who enlightens, equips, and empowers us all.

Let us worship God together.

Prayer of Confession

God of wisdom and learning,

We confess the ways we have failed to nurture your children.

We have ignored under-resourced schools,

We have allowed inequality to divide learners,

We have measured success by test scores rather than human dignity.

Forgive us, God of insight.

Open our hearts and hands to advocate for education that is fair, inspiring, and life-giving.

Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news:

God's love teaches without ceasing;

God's grace lifts the least and the lost;

And in Christ, we are forgiven and called to share knowledge, hope, and justice.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Scripture Suggestions

- Proverbs 1:7 – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”
- Jeremiah 29:11-14 – God has plans to prosper and give hope, especially to the young.
- Luke 2:41-52 – Jesus’ growth in wisdom and stature; valuing learning and curiosity.
- Matthew 18:1-5 – Jesus welcomes the child and teaches us humility, care, and attention to learners.
- Colossians 3:16 – Let the word of Christ dwell richly; teaching and admonishing in wisdom.
- James 1:5 – God gives wisdom generously to all who ask.



Brief Theological Framework for Sermon Starters

1. God's Gift of Learning: Education is a sacred opportunity to nurture God-given gifts.
2. Imago Dei in Every Student: Every child and learner bears the image of God; inequality is an affront to God's Creation.
3. Communal Responsibility: Just as communities nurture children, the church is called to advocate for equitable education.
4. Hope and Transformation: Faith and learning together empower communities and bring holistic transformation.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, who gifts knowledge, curiosity, and discernment.

We trust in Christ, teacher and guide, who calls all people to learning and justice.

We live by the Spirit, who nurtures wisdom, compassion, and courage in every generation.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

One: God of all learners, hear our prayers:

- For students in under-resourced schools, give access, encouragement, and hope.
- For teachers and mentors, grant strength, patience, and inspiration.
- For communities and governments, grant vision and courage to invest in equitable education.
- For our own hearts, make us advocates, tutors, listeners, and cheerleaders for justice in learning.

We pray in the Spirit who inspires curiosity and courage, saying:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Offering

One: All that we have — our minds, our skills, our gifts — comes from God.

Let us give generously so that every child may learn, every school may thrive, and every mind may be illuminated by justice and love.

(Offering may be accompanied by a hymn emphasizing learning, guidance, or service.)

Optional Blessing of the Backpacks

One: Let us bless these backpacks,
symbols of learning, growth, and possibility.

All: May they carry books and pencils,
but also curiosity and courage.

May they bear kindness, patience, and hope,
and remind us that each child is beloved by God.

One : Bless the students who carry them,
the teachers who guide them,
and the communities that nurture them.

All: May God's Spirit go with these backpacks and all who use them,
today and every day,
as we learn, grow, and serve together.

Amen.



Optional Prayer Over Backpacks

One: God of curiosity, protection, and care, we lift up all students and teachers to you today.

All: Watch over every student as they journey to school,

Grant them curiosity. Keep them safe in classrooms, on playgrounds, and on streets. Energize them with your love.

Give teachers wisdom, patience, and vigilance

They guide, protect, and nurture young hearts and minds.

One: Let your Spirit surround every backpack, every hand, and every heart,
that learning, safety, peace, and courage may accompany each step of learning.

All: Amen.

Charge

Go into the world as advocates, mentors, and learners.

Protect the children, resource the schools, and inspire minds.

Live your faith through teaching, listening, and building communities of hope.

Benediction

May the God of wisdom guide your steps,

Christ the Teacher, inspire your words,

And the Spirit of understanding bless every classroom, every home, and every heart you touch.

Hymn Suggestions from “Glory to God”

- “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending” (GTG 716)
- “Open My Eyes, That I May See” (GTG 451)
- “Let All Things Now Living” (GTG 37)



Advocacy and Worship Service on International Diplomacy with the United Nations

Clare Balsan, PC(USA) United Nations Advocacy Associate



Call to Worship

(Psalm 85:8 and 10)

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other

Opening Prayer

God of Creation and God of peace, we come before you today to worship you — to speak your praises, to proclaim your mercies, to feel your peace, and to live out your boundless love. Guide our hearts and minds today so we may bring you glory and make this space one in which love and faith, righteousness and peace, come together.

Let us worship God with joyful hearts!

A Prayer of Confession¹

God of life,
Creator of all people in every clime
As equal in dignity and humanity,
You have called us to be one:
To live in unity and harmony;
To build faith and realize community.
Yet we are divided:

Race from race,
Class from class
Rich from poor,
Gender from gender,
Old from young,
Neighbor from neighbor.

O God, by whose cross all enmity is brought to an end:

Break down the walls that separate us,
Forgive the sins that divide us,
Free us from pride and prejudice

O God, give us the courage to honestly repent;

Give us the power to change our lives,
That we may be dead to sin and alive to Christ.



Assurance of Pardon²

The mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting.
As the dove gently settles on the tree, receive the gift of peace.
As the flame rises free with light and warmth, receive the gift of life.
As the wind moves and dances around the earth,
Receive the gracious gift of the Spirit.
Come, O Holy Spirit.
Come as Holy Fire and burn in us,
Come as Holy Wind and cleanse us,
Come as Holy Light and lead us,
Come as Holy Life and dwell within us.
Convict us, convert us, consecrate us,
Until we are set free from the service of ourselves,
To be your servants to the world. Amen.

Prayer of Invocation³

Spirit of God – all knowing and everlasting,
Spirit, which calls us into community,
Spirit, which loves us into fullness of life,
Come and fill each of us here and now
Restore us with you divine power
That this time may be made holy –
Blessed, Sanctified, Consecrated –
By your gracious presence. Amen.

Scripture References⁴

Scripture from which an appropriate sermon may be developed include:

- Isaiah 9:2– 7
- Isaiah 65:17– 25
- Micah 4:1– 5
- Matthew 25:31– 40
- Romans 12:1– 21
- 1 Corinthians 12:12– 31
- 2 Corinthians 5:16– 20
- Revelation 21:1– 7

A Brief Theological Framework⁵

“our basic faith that God is the Lord of history and that in Jesus Christ God has revealed God’s redemptive purpose for all. ... We believe God’s will is a creative spiritual and social grace and power that make for the total salvation of people in community. ... Our immediate task is to maintain and extend freedom, to increase justice, and to build and secure those structures – legal, social, political, economic, and cultural – which make for community both at home and abroad.” (Minutes, PC[USA], 1948, Part I, p. 201)

Responsive Prayers of the People

One: God for the whole world,
We pray for our broken world

With people held in prisons, jails, and detention centers,
At the border where families are separated and children held,
Amid the refugee camps in Bangladesh, Jordan, Poland, Turkey, and Gaza
Within the Uighur community
All: May we move with hope, shape peace, and pursue justice.

One: In places of war and conflict,
Along the Horn of Africa, Cameroon, Congo, Sahel, Sudan, and South Sudan,
In Gaza and the West Bank,
In Ukraine
In Haiti, Colombia and Venezuela
On the divided Korean peninsula,
And those who have been forever scarred by gun violence.
All: May we move with hope, shape peace, and pursue justice.

One: Around the tables where peace and justice are debated,
In the chambers of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice,
Between the seats of the Security Council and the General Assembly,
Over the ledgers of the World Bank and the IMF,
All: May we move with hope, shape peace, and pursue justice.

One: Where hunger pangs torment,
On convoys of the World Food Program,
With the homeless of Manila and of Manhattan

Facing climate change, caring for Creation, challenging our reliance on fossil fuel,
Supporting those impacted by natural disasters,
Challenging the exploitation and neglect of the people of Puerto Rico,
On the Navajo Nation, in Flint, in Delhi, where safe water is unavailable,
With all Indigenous Peoples whose land has been taken and on which we live,
All: May we move with hope, shape peace, and pursue justice.

As women wait and work for equality,
As LGBTQIA+ siblings fight for rights and privileges that others have long enjoyed,
Supporting trans women and all who have experienced gender-based violence,
All: May we move with hope, shape peace, and pursue justice.





One: Welcoming the stranger, the immigrant and the migrant, the refugee, the person with disabilities, the woman, the LGBTQIA+ neighbor, and all in need of love,
Working to dismantle structural racism, white supremacy and white privilege,
Seeking to eradicate systemic poverty
All: May we move with hope, shape peace, and pursue justice.

One: For places we live and places we know,
For places we do not know and places we ignore,
We pray— Come Jesus, come! Fill us with the Holy Spirit!

All: Guide us as we move with hope, shape peace, pursue justice.
And proclaim the miracle. That even in this broken world,
miracles are possible, expected, awaited, and born out of deep hope.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Nonresponsive Prayers of the People

“Prayer for The Cries of Our Earth”⁶

Loving Creator who holds the universe together,

We come before you as a living body. Open our hearts, so we may listen to the cries of the earth and all beings that dwell within it. Let us be a church that tends to your Creation, in harmony with all who inhabit it. In the sacred harmony, may the shadows that seek to divide us be gently dispelled by the light of grace. As we close our eyes to rest, may we drift into dreams where the weary find refuge and the light of justice guides our every step through the night. And as we awaken, may our spirits rise above the veils that cloud our vision, untangling the threads that weave hatred where unity should prosper.

O God, who dwells in the hum of the wind, we come before you not as a building, but as a breath. May we find God in every breath we take. With each inhale, a gasp of anticipation; with each release, a sigh of hope. Let us be more than a fleeting gathering, more than a Sunday morning. Let us be wind, speaking words of life into Creation; let us be soil, nourishing life unseen; let us be fire, igniting warmth in the darkest corners. Let us be a church, mirroring the rhythm of the earth itself, shifting like the tide. The church is alive because we are alive — because your spirit is alive in us. For we are yours, and we are here.

The church is the wind, it is the soil, it is the fire that warms us. In a world filled with division, may the church be a place where the sun's warmth reaches all, where the rain nourishes equally. Justice lies in our capacity to respond — to be hands deep in the soil, tending to both people and planet; to be voices in the wind, carrying messages of hope; to be feet that walk in solidarity with the oppressed; and to be hearts that beat with love for all Creation.

In a world fractured by walls and borders, you stand as the sun, casting light on all; the rain, falling without question. As the earth groans for renewal, so does the world ache for healing. Let us respond with grace and humility. Let our feet walk beside those who came before us, and let us wash the feet of those who walk after.

May we strive to find God in every simple thing, for in simplicity lies the beauty of the divine, ever-present, ever-giving, ever-loving. Amen.



Charge and Benediction²

“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto God’s self and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” Christ charges us to practice God’s shalom and seek like in all its fullness for all God’s people everywhere.

And the courage of Christ, the peace of God, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit will be with us always. Amen.

Resources

1. September/October 1994 PC(USA) Church and Society “Towards an Ethos of World Community,” p . 103– 104
2. September/October 1994 PC(USA) Church and Society “Towards an Ethos of World Community,” p . 104
3. Adapted from September/October 1994 PC(USA) Church and Society “Towards an Ethos of World Community,” p . 103
4. Adapted from September/October 1994 PC(USA) Church and Society “Towards an Ethos of World Community,” p . 106
5. Minutes, PC(USA), 1948, Part I, p. 201
6. Written by Bella Ramos, Presbyterian Ministry at the U.N. YAV 2024– 2025
7. September/October 1994 PC(USA) Church and Society “Towards an Ethos of World Community,” p . 106



Service of Healing

Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins, PC(USA) Advocacy and Witness Director

Call to Worship

One: You are a God of healing, comfort, and power

All: Heal all who are in pain and forgive us our neglect.

One: You are slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and merciful.

All: Heal all who are in pain and move us from neglect.

One: Jesus came as a healer as he proclaimed the “Year of the Lord’s favor” being one wherein the blind would see, and the poor would have good news preached to them.

All: Heal all who are in pain and redeem us from our neglect.

Let us worship God.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Great God of justice and righteousness, you call us as your people into a covenant relationship of love and compassion. We acknowledge the alarming degree of brokenness all around us. We acknowledge that trust has been broken and the role we play through our neglect of those hurting all around us. It is your will for all to experience justice and righteousness, love and peace, joy and mutuality. Sadly, those already hurting face violence and jealousy, control and anger, manipulation and abuse in their daily lives. Forgive us, O Lord, for our silence when others suffer. Grant that our actions may be led by Christ’s love and peace. We pray in Christ’s name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Be assured that in the name of the creator of all that is, a benevolent and gracious God, your confession has been heard and your forgiveness assured. In the name of our God who forgives us our sin and remembers them no more, you are forgiven. Amen.

A Litany of Blessing for Healing: (Derived from The Lord’s Prayer)

One: Our Parent, which art in heaven:

All: Sustain the one in every four women who experience domestic violence in her lifetime. Almost one-third of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner. One of the tragic legacies of war and domestic violence is that witnessing violence is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their partners and children when they become adults.

One: Hallowed be thy name:

All: We bless the parents who lack the resources to properly care for their children and provide for their families, even in wealthy and developed nations.

One: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done:

All: We pray that we might care for children before they are born and after they are delivered into this hostile world.

One: In earth as it is in heaven:



All: In the U.S., millions suffer from mental illness yet lack the means to pursue adequate care.

One: Give us this day our daily bread:

All: Help us to feed the millions globally who starve while millions in developed nations overeat and waste food.

One: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:

All: Teach us that to be in relation with God means to be in relationship with one another. James asked, “How can we say we love God whom we have never seen and hate our brother whom we see each day?”

One: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

All: Globally, millions of children do not have access to education, schools, or books, especially girls. In the U.S., public education is being dismantled for the opportunity for profit and greed.

One: For thine is the kingdom:

All: The sharing of the kingdom begins with sharing bread for the hungry, medicine for the sick, and hope for those in despair.

One: The power, and the glory:

All: O God, empower us to be witnesses of hope to all who suffer and are victimized as we reflect your glory and love.

One: Forever and Ever:

All: Amen.

Scripture References

Old Testament: 2 Kings 5:1–14

New Testament: Matthew 9:2–8/Mark 2:3–12; Luke 5:18–26

A Brief Theological Framework/Sermon Starter

- Point 1: Emotional and mental wounds never heal as we often learn to live with the pain.
- Point 2: Those engaged actively in advocacy can suffer from burnout and frustration and can benefit from a service of restoration.
- Point 3: A service of healing calls upon the grace of God to intervene in the lives of individuals to provide strength and faith.

Anointing and Blessing (derived from “The Book of Occasional Services”)

Invite all who desire to be anointed on the forehead with oil to come forward. A minister and/or elder will anoint all who come forward. The sign of the cross is marked with oil as the words are said: “Child of redemption, just as your sins are forgiven, your wounds are bound.”

One: Let us name before God those for whom we offer our prayers.

God the Parent, your will for all people is health and salvation:

All: We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

One: God With US, you came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly.

All: We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

One: God the Holy Spirit, you make our bodies the temple of your presence;

All: We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

One: Lord, grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured, or disabled, that they may be made whole;



All: Hear us, O Lord of life.

One: Grant to all who seek your guidance, and to all who are lonely, anxious or despondent, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence.

All: Hear us, O Lord of life.

One: Mend broken relationships, and restore those in emotional distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit;

All: Hear us, O Lord of life.

Bless physicians, nurses, and all others who minister to the suffering, granting them wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience.

All: Hear us, O Lord of life.

One: Grant to the dying peace and a holy death and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit those who are bereaved.

All: Hear us, O Lord of life.

One: Restore to wholeness whatever is broken by human sin, in our lives, in our nation, and in the world.

All: Hear us, O Lord of life.

One: You are the Lord who does wonders:

All: You have declared your power among the peoples.

One: With you, O Lord, is the well of life:

All: And in your light, we see light.

One: Hear us, O Lord of life:

All: Heal us and make us whole.

Prayer for Healing

A prayer is lifted up for the healing of the individual, local communities, the nation, and the world.

One: Let all desiring anointing and the laying on of hands, please come forward.

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us. Almighty God, you are a strong tower to all who put their trust in you, to whom all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth bow and obey.

By the laying on of hands and the anointing of oil, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we beseech our Lord Christ Jesus to sustain you with his presence, to drive away all sickness of body and spirit, and to give your wholeness and peace with will enable you to live a blessed life.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (optional)

Charge and Benediction

One: May God bless you; God heal you; God's Spirit give you strength. May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard your body, save your soul, and bring you safely to God's heavenly kingdom, where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Scripture

- Exodus 16:13– 15 (Manna in the wilderness)
- 1 Kings 17:17– 24 (Elijah raises the widow's son)



- Isaiah 42:1– 7 (The suffering servant)
- Mark 1:21– 28 (Jesus heals the man with the unclean spirit)
- Mark 1:29– 34a (Jesus heals Peter’s mother-in-law)
- Mark 5:22– 24 (Healing of Jairus’ daughter)
- Mark 6:7, 12– 13 (They anointed with oil those who were sick)
- John 9:1– 11 (Healing the man born blind)
- Acts 3:1– 10 (Peter and John heal the lame man)
- 2 Corinthians 1:3– 5 (God comforts us)

Hymns

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

“God of Great and God of Small”



Advocacy and Worship Service for Young Adults Engaged in Advocacy

Rev. Christina Cosby, PC(USA) Representative for Domestic and Environmental Policy

Call to Worship

One: We have come from different campuses, different cities, carrying different stories and many needs. We have come with one shared hope: to meet God, and to move with God. We have come to remember that God has already found us and meets us where we are.

All: We have gathered not to perform faith, but to respond to the grace we have received. Not simply to receive, but to live our faith through action. Not just to witness, but to worship with our whole selves.

One: God has drawn us together, so what does God desire in this moment? Not empty rituals. Not hollow words. But lives turned toward love, hands open in service, and feet ready to follow.

All: We are here. We are ready to seek justice, to practice mercy, to walk humbly, together with our God. Let us worship God!

Opening Prayer

God of love, thank you for showing up again and again even when we're distracted, even when we wonder if you're still near. You are and we are grateful. Be among us now, in this space, in this moment. We come to worship you not just with words, but with hearts that long to believe in what is possible through faith, and lives that long to matter.

On this particular night, we give thanks for the hospitality [insert location]. For their pastoral leadership and members who serve with love and lead with faith. Grant them energy, imagination, intelligence, and love. Let their life together reflect your justice for our world, and their worship bear witness to your grace in our lives.

We pray for [name of colleges and universities in attendance], where so many live, learn, work, and grow. Be with all who make this place thrive: professors and students, staff and administration, tech teams, food workers, custodians, and councilors. Bless the learning. Bless the questions. Bless the relationships taking root here.

God, for those who have traveled countless miles to gather with us this [insert time frame], we give thanks. We give thanks for the students and their faithful leaders at [university that traveled the farthest] who have traveled year after year to be with us at this annual conference. We give thanks for the new leadership of former leaders and the participation of curious minds seeking to walk with you, O God, and to share your love and justice with our world

God of Creation and calling, this world can feel fractured and heavy. But still you have called us by name, and that means something. You have called, and we are here.

So, create in us once more. Shape our hearts toward love and truth. Let something spoken, sung, or experienced tonight remind us that our stories matter, that our lives belong to you, and that we are part of your redeeming work in the world.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.



Prayer of Confession

God of justice, you call us to rise, to move, to speak but fear grips us, and silence becomes our shield. We tremble at misunderstanding, unsure of the way, hesitant to act when the path feels unclear. Yet your Word reminds us: doing nothing can wound as deeply as doing wrong. Forgive us, O Lord, for the times we turned our eyes from pain, our hearts from need, our ears from listening to others' lived experiences, and for when we choose comfort over compassion. Stir our hearts again — rekindle our courage, renew our love for justice, as now, in silence, we confess what weighs us down.

Time for Silent Reflection

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, hear this good news: God does not wait for us to be unafraid to speak, nor does grace demand clarity before it flows. Where we have turned away, God turns toward. Where we have chosen silence, Christ speaks peace. Where we have shrunk back, the Spirit breathes courage.

You are not bound by your hesitation. You are not defined by what you failed to do. In Christ, you are met with mercy — stronger than your fear, wider than your silence, deeper than your shame.

Believe the Good News of the Gospel: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Passing of the Peace

In Christ, we are forgiven and made new — not for ourselves alone, but so that the joy we share in community might sustain us for the work of justice in the world; let us now pass the peace with glad and generous hearts.

Scripture

Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV) “... Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

A Brief Theological Framework/Sermon Starter

- Point 1: Young Adults Called to Faithful Witness
 - Scriptural anchors: Nehemiah 8:1–12; Galatians 5:22–23
 - Theological perspective: Young adults are not onlookers; they are active participants in God's work. Scripture calls all believers, regardless of age, to witness faithfully, live by God's Word, and embody the fruit of the Spirit.
 - Reformed reflection: Calvin emphasized that God equips ordinary people to participate in God's mission. Faithfulness is not measured by age or experience, but by trust in God's Spirit.
 - Practical application: Young adults are uniquely positioned to navigate modern challenges — social, political, and environmental — and to act as faithful witnesses through community engagement, advocacy, and ethical leadership.
- Point 2: Young Adults as Advocates for Justice and Equity
 - Scriptural anchors: Luke 15:7; Isaiah 61:1–3; Psalms 82:3–4
 - Theological perspective: Advocacy is central to faithful discipleship. Young adults are called to recognize systemic injustice, speak truth to power, and work for the flourishing of marginalized communities.
 - Modern voices: Lisa Sharon Harper, Esau McCaulley, and Kate Bowler emphasize that young adults' engagement in justice is a spiritual practice embodying God's love through resistance to oppression.



- Practical application: Voting, organizing, volunteering, and amplifying marginalized voices are ways young adults live out God's call to justice. Activism is not extra — it is integral to discipleship.
- Point 3: Young Adults Cultivating Resilience and Spiritual Formation
 - Scriptural anchors: James 1:2–3; 1 Peter 1:8–9; Psalm 16:11
 - Theological perspective: Young adults face unique pressures — secondhand trauma, social and economic instability, and constant change. Spiritual practices like prayer, worship, study, and communal support cultivate resilience for both life and advocacy.
 - Reformed reflection: Calvin and Barth affirm that God's grace equips believers to persevere in trials. Resilience is not simply toughness — it is reliance on God and the sustaining power of the Spirit.
 - Practical application: Daily grounding, honest reflection, and spiritual community help young adults navigate complexity while staying faithful, compassionate, and spiritually alive.
- Point 4: Young Adults as Bearers of Hope and Transformation
 - Scriptural anchors: Psalm 100:1–2; Isaiah 61:10; Luke 15:7
 - Theological perspective: Young adults have energy, creativity, and vision that can shape the world. Their faithfulness and advocacy are expressions of hope, transforming communities and embodying God's promise of shalom.
 - Modern voices: N.T. Wright and Kate Bowler emphasize that hope is active; it fuels courage, advocacy, and love even in broken systems. Dorothy Day and Audre Lorde model how hope and joy sustain action for the marginalized.
 - Practical application: Young adults can lead movements, foster inclusive communities, and inspire intergenerational change, bearing witness to God's transformative presence in a world that desperately needs it.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God. They will come from north and south, from east and west, from dorm rooms and city buses, from churches and protests — to sit at this table in the kingdom of God.

This is not the table of a denomination, or a single campus ministry, but the table of Jesus Christ — a table where fear has no final word, where justice is more than an idea, and where even the weary are welcomed with joy.

Here, there is room for your questions, your fear, your tired hope. If you long for deeper belonging, if you are hungry for wholeness — come.

Christ invites us — not because we are sure, but because we are loved.

Great Thanksgiving

Pastor Two: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor Two: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor Two: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor Two: It is truly right, and our greatest joy, to give you thanks and praise, O God — not because the world is easy, but because your grace is real. You created a world of beauty and truth. You shaped us in your image, called us good, and



when fear distorted our vision, you did not abandon us. You sent prophets to speak against injustice, to sing freedom songs in strange lands, to remind your people that fear is not the final story.

In Jesus Christ, you came yourself — Love made visible, Joy made flesh. He shared meals with outcasts and enemies, stood up to the powerful, broke silence with truth, and met suffering with healing. Even when death closed in, he did not run. Jesus embraced the cross so that hope may never leave us and our joy may be complete.

So, with the saints of every age, with those who have held on in hope and walked toward justice with trembling feet, we lift our voices in praise:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Words of Institution

Pastor One: On the night of his arrest — when uncertainty filled the room and fear was thick in the air — Jesus still took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his friends, saying: “Take, eat. This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Pastor Two: In the same way, he took the cup, saying: “This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

Pastors One and Two in Unison: For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the saving death of our risen Lord, until he comes again.

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Pastor One: Come, Holy Spirit — breathe on these ordinary gifts that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ. And breathe on us — ordinary and uncertain as we are — that we may become your body in the world. Nourish us with courage. Sustain us with joy that persists. Strengthen our hands for justice and keep our hearts soft enough to love. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, O God, now and forever. Amen.

Communion Is Served

Come not because you must, but because you may.

Come not because you are whole, but because you are hungry.

Come — taste and see that the Lord is good.

Prayer After Communion

Pastor Two: Gracious God, you have fed us at this table with the bread of life and the cup of blessing. You have met us in mystery and reminded us that we belong. Let what we have received here nourish our courage, deepen our joy, and strengthen us for the days ahead. Amen.



Charge and Benediction

Beloved of God, you were not made to drift through this world or to carry its weight alone. You were made in the image of a creating, redeeming, justice-seeking God. So, as you go from this place tonight:

Choose courage over comfort. Choose presence over perfection. Choose love and joy over fear.

Let the stories you carry find space to heal. Let the questions you hold be holy ground. And let this community remind you: you do not need to have it all figured out to be faithful. Just be willing to listen, to learn, to grow, and to go.

And as you go:

May the God who called you into being, who knows your name and your worth, go before you to guide your way, walk beside you as your companion, and dwell within you to give you peace.

May Christ Jesus, our healer, our teacher, our liberator, sustain you with grace that runs deeper than fear and joy that outlasts the night.

And may the Spirit wild and wise set your feet toward justice, your heart toward joy, and your life toward love.

Additional Scripture suggestions

- Galatians 5:22– 23 (ESV): “ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness ...”
- Psalm 16:11 (NIV): “ You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”
- Isaiah 61:10 (ESV): “ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation ...”
- Luke 15:7 (NIV): “ There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”
- James 1:2– 3 (NIV): “ Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”
- 1 Peter 1:8– 9 (NIV): “ Though you have not seen him, you love him ... you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy ...”
- Psalm 100:1– 2 (NIV): “ Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.”

Hymn Suggestions from Glory to God

- “ Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore” (#420)
- “For the Healing of the Nations” (#346)
- “Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather” (#532) .
- “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” (#526)
- “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing” (#748)

Special Edition/Appendix: Advocacy in Children's Sermons

Alex Pickell, Office of Public Witness 2025 Summer Fellow

The following outlines offer resources, prayers, and themes to help plan a children's time during worship or in children's church. Feel free to pick resources that work best for your context. Depending on the age range of children, you may choose to use concrete or theoretical language to talk about these important advocacy issues with kids.

War and Peacemaking

Introduction: Children often hear about conflict on the news, in school, and even in their own neighborhoods. But they also understand fairness and kindness deeply. Teaching about peace through Scripture helps children understand that God doesn't want us to hurt one another, but to build a world where everyone can flourish. In Advent, we prepare not just for Jesus' birth, but for the peace he brings.

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1–5

Lectionary Date: Year – Advent 1

Social focus: God calls us to peace

Metaphor: Tools; how we use them makes all the difference.

Book suggestion: "Peace is an Offering" by Annette Le Box

Activity: Show toy tools (or real ones, depending on age range) and talk about building peace with our hands and hearts.

Prayer: God of peace, help us use our hands to build, not to hurt. Teach us to listen, to forgive, and to work for peace in our world. May your peace grow in us like a seed. Amen.

Disability and Belonging

Introduction: Belonging is a basic need, and yet many children with disabilities feel left out in school, on the playground, and even in church. Jesus teaches us not just to include, but to make space for all people, even if it takes tearing the roof off! Kids understand fairness and inclusion, and this story helps them imagine the kind of radical hospitality Jesus invites us into.

Scripture: Mark 2:1–12

Lectionary Date: Year B, Epiphany 7

Social focus: Radical inclusion and making space for everyone.

Metaphor: Sometimes, we have to break through barriers (like a roof!) to make space for others.

Book Suggestions: "Susan Laughs" by Jeanne Willis

Activity: Build a simple wall with blocks or paper between two figures. Have the children help "break down" the wall and say, "Jesus helps us break down anything that keeps people apart."

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for loving every person. Help us notice when someone is left out, and give us the courage to make space for everyone. We want our church and our world to be a place where everyone belongs. Amen.

Healthcare and Healing

Introduction: Children know what it's like to feel sick or scared, and many know people who are hurting. Jesus cared deeply for those who were sick or ignored. When we teach children that healing and compassion are part of God's love, they begin to see that caring for others – through prayer, kindness, or even medical care – is a holy thing.

Scripture: Luke 8:43– 48

Lectionary date: Year C, Proper 8 (13th Sunday after Pentecost)

Social focus: God cares for the sick, and so should we.

Metaphor: A first aid kit, God's healing love in action.

Book suggestion: "Come with Me" by Holly M. McGhee

Activity: Display bandages, pray for the sick, and talk about being helpers in times of need.

Prayer: Healing God, thank you for doctors, nurses, medicine, and prayers. When we are sick or scared, be close to us. Help us to care for others with your gentle love. Amen.

Immigration and Welcoming the Stranger

Introduction: Many children have experienced being the "new kid" at school or church. That feeling of being welcomed (or not) stays with them. Immigration can be a hard topic, but Jesus makes it simple: when we welcome others, we welcome him. Teaching hospitality in church reminds children that God's welcome is wide and we are called to reflect that welcome.

Scripture: Matthew 25:35– 40

Lectionary Date: Year A, Reign of Christ/Christ the King Sunday

Social focus: Hospitality and Justice

Metaphor: A suitcase, what we carry when we move.

Book Suggestion: "The Name Jar" by Yangsook Choi

Activity: Show a suitcase and ask what kids would take if they had to leave home. Emphasize welcoming new friends and neighbors.

Prayer: Welcoming God, thank you for loving people from every place. Help us open our hearts and homes to others. Show us how to make new friends and be kind neighbors. Amen.

Creation Care and Environmental Justice

Kids are often natural caretakers of the Earth. They love animals, flowers, rivers, and trees. Helping them connect that care to their faith teaches them that protecting Creation is part of loving God. Especially in a time of environmental crisis, churches have a responsibility to encourage kids to see the world as a gift they are trusted to tend.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26– 31

Lectionary Date: Trinity Sunday, year A

Social focus: Stewardship of the earth

Metaphor: A watering can, helping things grow

Book suggestion: "We Are Water Protectors" by Carole Lindstrom

Activity: Give each child a seed. Encourage them to plant and care for it as part of honoring God's Creation.

Prayer: Creator God, thank you for the Earth, our home. Help us to take care of plants, animals, and water. Show us how to be protectors of the world you love. Amen.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Introduction: Every child wants to know they matter. DEI is about making sure everyone has what they need to belong and thrive. Scripture reminds us that the body of Christ needs every part, and that God's fairness doesn't always look like human fairness. In worship, we can help children imagine a world where everyone is included, valued, and celebrated.

Scriptures: Matthew 20:1– 16 (Year A, Proper 20), 1 Corinthians 12:12– 26 (Year B, Pentecost 16)

Social focus: celebrating our differences, ensuring everyone is seen, heard, and valued

Metaphor: A tapestry or quilt, many different pieces woven together into a stronger whole.

Book suggestion: “The Colors of Us” by Karen Katz or “A Crayon’s Story” by Michael Hall

Activity: Lay out colored fabric pieces or paper squares. Let children pick one and talk about what makes them unique. Assemble pieces into a tapestry or mural titled “God’s beautiful quilt.”

Prayer: Fair and loving God, thank you for making us all different and all important. Help us to treat others with kindness and fairness. May our church be a place where every person feels safe, loved, and included. Amen.

Conclusion: From Worship to Action

Rev. Christina Cosby, PC(USA) Representative for Domestic and Environmental Policy

As we conclude this advocacy and worship guide, we are reminded that worship is not simply something we do within the walls of a congregation. Worship shapes how we see the world, our neighbors, and the needs and injustices around us. Throughout this guide, we have been invited to listen, learn, pray, reflect, advocate, and engage with our communities in meaningful ways. These practices remind us that our faith calls us not only to worship God, but also to love and serve our neighbors.

At the heart of this guide is a simple question: What does our faith call us to do when we encounter suffering, injustice, division, or the needs of our neighbors?

Each worship experience invites us to approach that question through prayer, reflection, and action. We do not pray to avoid the realities of the world, but to become more attentive to them. We listen to stories and experiences different from our own. We name grief, injustice, uncertainty, and hope. And we are reminded of the dignity of every person and our call to seek the flourishing of our neighbors and communities.

The issues explored in this guide including housing, Christian Nationalism, public education, immigration advocacy, and others are not merely social concerns. They touch the lives, dignity, and well-being of real people. When we bring the biblical story into conversation with the stories of our neighbors through worship, our awareness deepens and we are invited to respond with compassion, courage, and a willingness to act.

Advocacy is one way we live out that calling. To advocate is to use our voices, relationships, resources, and influence while centering the voices of those most impacted by decisions affecting their lives. It means speaking truth to power, standing together across differences, and paying attention to those who may be unheard or overlooked. Advocacy may take many forms: building community partnerships, strengthening existing relationships, writing to elected officials, supporting public education, helping ensure access to the ballot, or mobilizing collective action. What matters is that our worship leads us beyond awareness and toward faithful participation.

Meaningful community engagement begins with humility. We do not enter communities assuming that we have all the answers. We listen, learn, build relationships, and work alongside those who have already been doing this work. Advocacy is not about speaking for others when we can instead create opportunities to listen to and stand with them. In doing so, we deepen our understanding of what it means to be a neighbor.

The work of justice can feel overwhelming. The challenges before us rarely have simple solutions, and change often takes time. This is why hope is essential. Christian hope does not mean ignoring difficult realities or assuming that everything will work out on its own. Hope gives us courage to believe that our actions matter and that we are not working alone. Every prayer, conversation, relationship, act of service, and effort toward justice can become part of something larger than ourselves.

As this guide comes to an end, the invitation is not to return to ministry as usual, but to continue the journey. Let these worship experiences be a beginning rather than an ending. Continue asking questions. Continue asking God for guidance. Continue listening to your community. Continue building relationships. Continue praying for wisdom and courage. And continue looking for opportunities to turn faith into action.

Perhaps the most important question we can carry forward is: What is the next faithful step?

For some, that step may be learning more. For others, it may be building a new relationship, participating in community efforts, or inviting others within the congregation to become involved. For the congregation as a whole, it may mean making advocacy and community engagement an ongoing part of its ministry and worship.

We do not have to do everything. We are called to do something faithful with what we have been given. We can begin where we are by listening to those around us and taking the next step together.

Ultimately, this guide calls us to a faith that is deeply rooted in worship and actively engaged in the world. Our prayers should shape our actions, and our actions should continually lead us back to prayer. When we worship, we are reminded of who we are and whose we are. When we engage our communities, we have the opportunity to live out that identity through compassion, justice, service, love and offer hope to a hurting world.

May the conversations begun through this guide continue. May the relationships formed grow deeper. May our prayers lead to courageous action, and may our advocacy be grounded in humility and hope. May our communities experience, through our presence and participation, something of the love we proclaim in worship.

As we go forward, may we be people who listen deeply, love generously, advocate courageously, and serve faithfully. May we have the courage to see what needs to change, the humility to learn from others, and the persistence to remain engaged when change takes time.

May we go forth from this guide knowing that the work before us continues. May we go forth certain that God guides the way, and may we go seeking to better know and serve our neighbor.

May our worship send us into the world.

May our faith move us to action.

May our action be rooted in love.

And may our work together contribute to a more just, compassionate, and connected community.

Notes

Advocacy & Witness

A Ministry of Presbyterian Life & Witness

pcusa.org/opw