

SDOP Sunday, March 14, 2021

CELEBRATING



YEARS

Presbyterian Committee on the
Self-Development of People

People Investing in People





Presbyterian Committee on the
Self-Development of People
People Investing in People



Top: VA League for Safer Street project, Richmond, VA

Middle: Black Women's Blueprint project, Bronx, NY

Bottom: Urban Farmers to Entrepreneurs Project, Cleveland, OH

Front cover: Church Sellers Assistance Program project, Washington, DC



In Matthew 25, Jesus asks his disciples the profound question, “Where have you seen me?” In doing so, Jesus makes a profound statement about the importance of being able to see that God has a preferential option and redeeming love for the poor. As disciples of Jesus Christ, Matthew 25 also shows us that we are implored to recognize that Jesus’ ministry was one of poverty eradication in which he promoted justice, encouraged the building of relationships and established economic equity. These are also the pillars on which SDOP stands.

Last year, COVID-19 presented all of us with great challenges in an unprecedented time. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to compound the manifold issues of poverty in an amalgam of diverse communities both in our nation and across the globe. Included in this resource are the many projects from community partners who have either directly or indirectly risen to the challenge of addressing poverty issues compounded by a pandemic that continues to fundamentally change how we live. Even in the throes of a pandemic, our community partners continued through resilience and great care to make poverty eradication a top priority. These community partners remind us of the great adaptability and concern that we, as God’s people, are to have for all of our neighbors in all times.

Last year also marked our 50th anniversary, which was scheduled to be celebrated in September in Rochester, New York. However, the devastation and necessary safety protocols brought on by the pandemic led us to postpone our event. As a result of this, we thought it prudent and right to use the funds originally reserved for our anniversary event to help equip community partners to do the most important work of responding in love. We are proud to have been able to walk alongside our communities as they found new ways to be present, diligent and compassionate in taking care of one another. As powerful expressions of faith, your giving has allowed us to be able to continue to walk alongside our communities to do the work of justice and love despite the challenges of a pandemic.

We pray that this resource will serve as a guide for you and your congregation to become better familiar with the ways that SDOP engages in its work through the church and in communities. We pray that this resource inspires you to support this continuous redemptive work through the One Great Hour of Sharing collected on Easter Sunday.

Through this resource, we invite you to recognize what the Lord is doing through the great transformative work of Jesus Christ through the witness of SDOP. It also serves to invite and share SDOP’s works and words into your worship space. We encourage you to use this resource in your Bible studies, Sunday school classes, youth group lessons and any other opportunity where you learn and grow together. The following vignettes lift up the powerful witness that exemplifies the love and justice of Christ, which is alive, active and transformative in our communities.

In Christ,
Rev. Dr. Alonzo T. Johnson



Reflection

Many years ago, gospel hymn writer Thomas Dorsey wrote a hymn that contained these words: “If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now. We need him every day and every hour.”

These words are as true today in 2021 as they were when Dorsey wrote them. If there ever was a time when we needed the ministry of the Self-Development of People, it is now. Now is the time for the Church of Jesus Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to do what she was called to do: to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help people gain economic empowerment and give God’s people a hand up. “If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now.”

Since February 2020, we have been experiencing a pandemic that is beyond human understanding and it has affected people of color to a very large degree. People are sick. People are hungry. Cars line up for miles with people seeking food. People are depressed. People are discouraged. “If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now.”

SDOP was formed more than 50 years ago in response to injustices within our society perpetrated upon people of color. Today, as then, racism, classism, bigotry and white privilege exist as never before. “If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now.”

The only institution capable of speaking against the evils that we are facing is the Church. We Presbyterians and all people of goodwill must continue to declare through our words and deeds that “justice must roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” We must truly be a Matthew 25 people.

Thank God for the 50-year ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through SDOP. Let us continue to give so that others may have a sense of dignity, self-worth and economic empowerment in the name of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Dr. Johnnie Monroe, Honorably Retired

Pittsburgh

Former Vice Chairperson, National Self-Development of People Committee



Presbyterian Committee on the
**Self-Development
of People**

WHAT DOES SDOP DO?

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) is a ministry that affirms God's concern for humankind. We are Presbyterians and ecumenical partners, dissatisfied with poverty and oppression, united in faith and action through sharing, confronting and enabling. We participate in the empowerment of economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice.

SUGGESTED USES FOR THIS RESOURCE

- If your presbytery/synod has a SDOP committee, invite one of its members to speak during your worship service. Call the national office at **800-728-7228, ext. 5781, 5782, 5790 or 5792** to learn if there are national committee members in your area who could be invited to speak to your congregation.
- SDOP committee members or others can promote the resource (i.e., Social Justice Committee, Mission Committee, etc.); you do not have to be a pastor to do so. It is, however, always encouraged to bring the resource to your pastor's attention.
- SDOP committee members can share their own experiences as they promote the resource.

If you are a national or mid council SDOP committee member:

- Take pictures if you are meeting with local groups or if you are present at SDOP events. We encourage you to also take pictures if possible when a local group or a representative of SDOP speaks in a congregation, presbytery or other venue. Send us copies of those pictures so that we too can lift up what you are doing for SDOP Sunday.

HERE IS HOW YOUR CONGREGATION CAN HELP

- Invite participants of a nearby SDOP project to offer a "Minute for Mission" during your Sunday worship service. Contact the national SDOP office to learn about community partners in your area at **800-728-7228, ext. 5781, 5782, 5790 or 5792**.
- Or visit our website at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/funded-partnership-grants> to find out a map and list of our current and past funded projects in the last decade.
- We encourage you to include this resource in newsletters, articles, etc.
- You can call pastors and other church leaders to remind them of SDOP Sunday and the materials available.



NATIVE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

1 | **Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), Barrow, Alaska**

In 1971 the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) was awarded a grant to assist the native people of Alaska in a land rights case. This was among the first grants made by the newly constituted National Committee on the Self-Development of People of the United Presbyterian Church. Edith Nageak, who also worked for ASRC, said, “Self-Development of People really helped in our people’s self-determination. Keep doing what you’re doing, helping in people’s self-development and determination.”

2 | **Ekvn-Yefolecv Indigenous Maskoke Ecovillage, Weogufka, Alabama**

Ekvn-Yefolecv (pronounced “ee-gun-ye-e-full-lee-juh”) is creating an ecovillage community that provides the opportunity for project members to efficaciously revitalize the Maskoke (pronounced “mus-ko-gee”) language, traditions and worldview while embodying a collective commitment to environmental sustainability, and to serve as a replicable archetype for other indigenous communities to manifest similar models. The ecovillage has a trifold focus: language and cultural preservation; ecological living; and sustainable economic development.

LIVING WAGE/ADVOCACY/SOCIAL JUSTICE/HOMELESSNESS/HOUSING

3 | **Youth Advisory Board, Detroit, Michigan**

This project focuses on providing training in leadership development and civic engagement, including speaking with politicians and education enrichment for 15 youth. The project helps them better understand the political forces that shape their community, improve the project members’ learning capacity and enable them to serve as quality leaders to their peers and families.

4 | **Chadsey Condon Community Organization, Detroit, Michigan**

This project is an anti-displacement/neighborhood inclusion task force through training and the creation of a community benefits agreement request to offer to all of the developers who will enter their neighborhood. Group members live near an area that is being developed and will be impacted by the economic investment in the neighborhood. They want to empower themselves with the knowledge and tools necessary to ensure gentrification without displacement. They work and train themselves to promote policies that support both their neighbors and themselves for the long term while staying in their homes. They need extensive training on advocacy, community engagement, gentrification and creating community benefit agreements.



5 | National Day Laborer Organizing Network, Pasadena, California

This project is Radio Jornalera (“jornalera” translates to “day laborer”), a community radio station focused on defending low-wage workers and migrant rights, bringing awareness of the barriers and injustices existing in these communities. There is a need to create an inclusive communication and informative space by and for migrant and jornalera communities. The radio station also educates community members on issues like labor abuses and wage theft. The community radio station was formed by day laborer leaders from different countries. The Jornaleros Communicator’s training model is innovative in the sense that the first cohort of Jornalero Communicators will train a group of community communicators and they then will train other new members of the community who want to be Jornaleros Communicators.



6 | Alianza Agricola, Rochester, New York, New York

Alianza Agricola is an organization of farmworkers in rural Rochester, New York. Its main goal is to work in collaboration with the statewide Green Light NY: Driving Together campaign to attain access to driver’s licenses for all New York residents regardless of their immigration status.



7 | A Brighter Day Youth Program, Belmont, California

The Brighter Day Anti-Vaping Youth Team was organized recently and was drawn from the larger “Brighter Day” program. The project’s focus is supporting youth and providing opportunities to overcome the problematic circumstances of their young lives. The teens themselves have identified vaping as a major problem in their own communities, which adds yet another barrier to becoming productive citizens and adults and may cause lifelong health problems and early death.



8 | Panamanian Women’s Center (CEMP), Panama City, Panama

This project involves the planning and launching of microbusinesses for and by 20 Afro-Panamanian women. The direct beneficiaries of the project have been directly involved in all stages from planning, training activities and preparing their business plan. They participated in workshops of Self-esteem and Personal Strengthening and Leadership, Personal development, and teamwork. They participated in XIII Conference of Afro-Central African American Women.



FOOD JUSTICE

9 | Sandy Beach, Stann Creek District, Belize

This project consists of a group of women trying to restore a restaurant and re-employ themselves. They have added cabanas to complete a bed and breakfast service, and expanded, remodeled, and equipped the restaurant kitchen. The project increases the group's capacity to successfully operate the cooperative within the developing tourism industry.



10 | The Geiger Live Well Faith Community, Emelle, Alabama

The overall goal of this project is to increase the number of families who are engaging in healthy dietary behaviors and improved physical activity efforts to reduce incidences of child and adult obesity. The goals include: (1) Health — Teaching community members how to eat healthy food, working in the garden and orchard with community members and developing an office and operations building. (2) Wellness — Providing easy access to wellness equipment and the walking facility for residents of Geiger and neighboring towns as well as outdoor exercise equipment, slides and a basketball court for students.



11 | Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The mission of La Cosecha, a project of the Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network, is to ensure that low-income families have adequate and sustainable access to healthy and affordable locally grown food and nutrition education, strengthening the local economy by providing a stable market for local farmers and connecting them with families struggling with hunger and poor nutrition.



IMMIGRATION/REFUGEE ISSUES/REFUGEE CRISIS

12 | Tenant Coalition Training of Fargo-Moorhead Area, Moorhead, Minnesota

This group of low-income refugees seeks to become economically self-sufficient and to improve their financial skills. They receive training in facilities management, business plans, tenants' rights and microenterprise. Long-term goals are aimed at sustaining their financial security, workforce development and cultural marketing by preventing conditions that perpetuate joblessness, homelessness and poverty. The project helps reduce poverty among the group members and their dependency on public assistance and make the transition of living in a new country less frightening and somewhat easier for them as new refugees.



13 | Proyecto Faro (The Lighthouse Project), Stony Point, New York

This project consists of a group of low-income, undocumented people seeking safety and sufficiency in communities of trust. Group members plan to hold community gatherings and other peaceful actions for immigration justice and to teach and equip fellow group members.

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POVERTY

14 | **Group of Women of Value, S.A., Panama City, Panama**

This project is a catering service that provides high-quality products at affordable prices. The project also provides employment and training to group members, thus helping to provide an income and improve their standard of living. Additional funds were awarded to this group of women to buy a Food truck to allow them to continue their services in times of COVID-19.

15 | **Goat Herd Expansion, Tuscaloosa, Alabama**

The project involves expanding the raising and selling of goats, which helps get them a better price at market and increase the group's income.

16 | **Craft Art and Beauty, Las Tablas, Panama**

This project is comprised of a group of artisans who partnered to create a workshop and a warehouse for the preparation and sale of traditional Panamanian clothing. Project members seek to create a workplace for craftswomen and a selling site for handicrafts, which will also be a location where people can find their traditional garments and information about their traditions and customs. The group is also dedicated to training new generations and passing on their traditions as well as to improving their incomes and thereby creating a better quality of life.

17 | **VEGGI Farmers Cooperative, New Orleans, Louisiana**

This project is a multi-ethnic farmer's cooperative growing fresh vegetables to sell to the public as well as grocers in East New Orleans. The cooperative members share equally in the work, liability and distribution of profits. The grant assists the cooperative by creating sustainable income for the members through sustainable agriculture. Daniel Nguyen of the VEGGI Farmers Cooperative said, "With funding from SDOP, VEGGI Farmers Cooperative will be able to continue our mission of providing jobs to community members through urban farming and increasing local, healthy food access. The funds will also allow us to complete several projects on our site, including a processing facility, and help us buy seeds to plant for the coming year."

18



18 | Presbyterian Church of Rwanda Project, Rwanda

An intermediary partnership supporting agriculture, handicrafts, saving and loan associations, income-generating activities, water supply and electricity projects. The beneficiaries of these projects are from the poorest and most undeveloped regions in Rwanda.

19



19 | Centro de Solidaridad Para el Desarrollo de la Mujer, Inc. (CE-MUJER) — Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

An intermediary partner committed to improving the quality of life of those living in economically poor communities by assisting in their empowerment through self-management, education, training in technical skills, income generation, health and public politics with influence on both the national and local level.

RACE AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

20



20 | Damayan Workers Cooperative, New York City, New York

This is a Filipino domestic workers business cooperative, owned and managed by the workers. This project empowers migrant workers and provides a community of mutual support. Migrant and undocumented workers face insurmountable barriers to finding basic employment due to lack of immigration status, lack of work references and being disconnected from supportive communities.

21



21 | Black Women's Blueprint, Bronx, New York

The project seeks to bring to the forefront the injustices that African-American women receive from the police and how to deal with their actions when confronted with such injustices.



MASS INCARCERATION/PRISONER RE-ENTRY

22 | E.P.O.C.A. (Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement), Worcester, Massachusetts

This group provides leadership and organizing training for formerly incarcerated people. The training provides participants with skills and resources that enable them to build capacity through community networks and by connecting those formerly incarcerated to greater employment opportunities. Group members also partner with other community organizations in organizing campaigns to make major legislative policy changes at the state and local level regarding formerly incarcerated people. E.P.O.C.A. recognizes that those who are formerly incarcerated struggle with intersectional issues such as homelessness, the need for driver's licenses, navigating the criminal justice system and exploring models of restorative justice, so the group pays special attention to these issues.

23 | The Genesis Youth Organizing Internship Project, Oakland, California

This project is comprised primarily of low-income minority youth seeking to disrupt School-to-Prison-Pipeline-related problems in Oakland. The project creates a platform for youth to engage in the public arena, and particularly in juvenile incarceration policy development. The Genesis Youth Organizing Internship Project will train low-income youth, many affected by suspension, expulsion and/or incarceration, in leadership skills and expose them to opportunities to develop and influence local county criminal justice budgets, programs and policies.

24 | Created to Create, Miami, Florida

This project is about teaching youth and young adults how to use their skills to provide an income for themselves and avoid encounters with the law and juvenile justice system.

25 | VOTE (Voice of the Ex-Offender), New Orleans, Louisiana

This is a well-organized group of ex-offenders, some of whom are living in a transition home and working together to improve their lives and support their families. They received training in entrepreneurship and marketing and have come together to create a co-op. The project provides the men with a means of making a sustainable income.

26 | Welcome Back Project, Missoula, Montana

Welcome Back is a group of formerly incarcerated and recently returned citizens who have banded together to advocate for increased housing and job opportunities. Social stigma and bureaucratic policies make it incredibly difficult for returning citizens to be reintegrated into the community. The group seeks funding for training opportunities in advocacy and leadership skills to help expand the group's capacity and effectiveness.

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WATER PROJECTS

27 | **Women Committee at Villa Nueva and Water Council, Comarca Indígena Emberá, Panama**

This project calls for construction of a rural aqueduct in a remote indigenous community. A 1,500-gallon cement tank container for water is being built, and connections will be made from the tank on several supply routes, providing each house with a spigot. There are 52 houses and a school. This way, each house in the area will have access to clean water for human consumption.

28 | **We the People of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan**

This is an advocacy project to provide short-term water supplies for members to avert a public health crisis, restore water to affected and high-risk members and implement policy to ensure that fresh, clean water is delivered to low income residents at an affordable cost.

29 | **Northern Cheyenne Utilities Commission, Lame Deer, Montana**

This project is to assist with upgrades and long-term delayed maintenance needs for fresh potable water and sewer lines throughout the five districts of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

FARMING/LAND

30 | **Strength to Love II, Baltimore, Maryland**

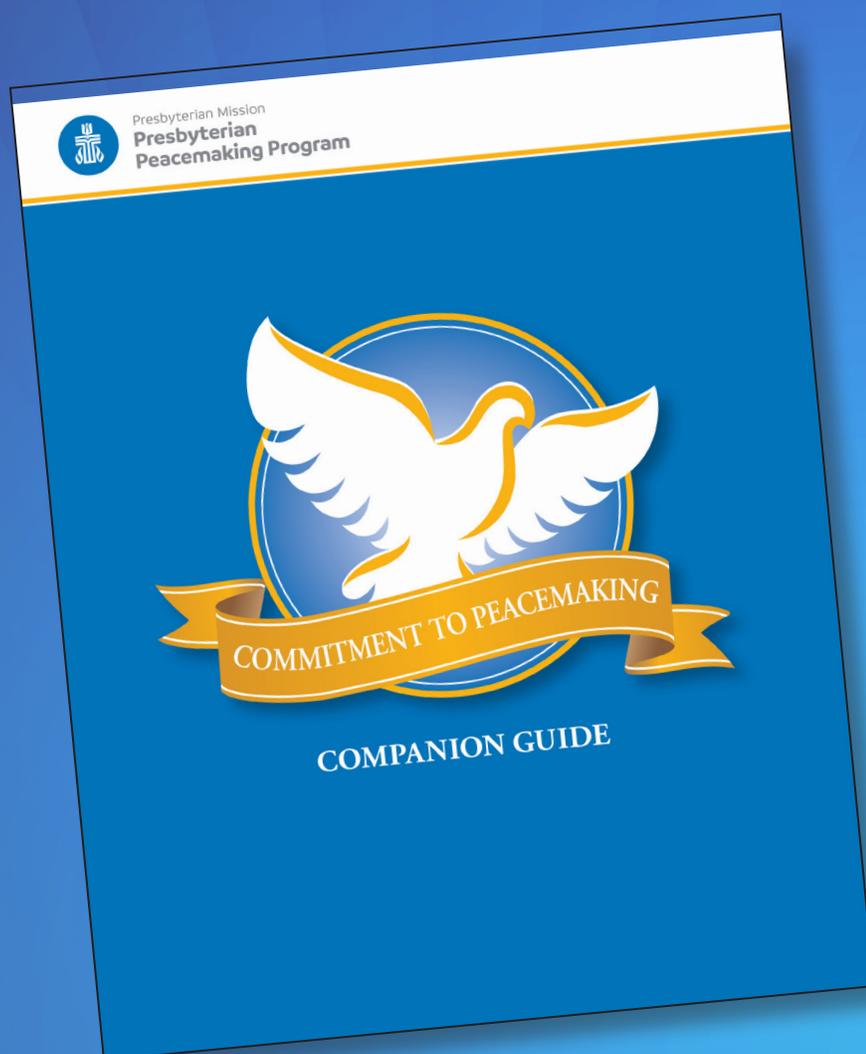
Strength to Love II is an urban farm owned and maintained by returning citizens and other community members. It also addresses the issue of a food desert in the neighborhood.

31 | **City Roots Community Land Trust, Rochester, New York**

This project provides affordable homeownership opportunities to income-qualifying buyers, who earn less than 50% of the area median income. A vacant home has been purchased and is in the final stages of rehabilitation. Funds will be used to purchase the materials necessary for neighborhood volunteers to complete the rehabilitation of the home. Once the rehabilitation is completed, the home will be resold at an affordable price to income-qualifying buyers who agree to a “pay it forward” approach to homeownership. With this approach, the initial buyer purchases a home at a subsidized price and then passes the value of that subsidy on to the next homeowner at the time of resale, thereby ensuring the permanent affordability of the property and helping to avoid gentrification.

32 | **Boricuá Organization for Agroecology of Puerto Rico (Joint OGHS Project)**

Project focuses on strengthening food security. Through educational and training activities members will enhance their ability to know how to reduce hunger, poverty and to produce sustainable and healthy food for themselves & for their community.



The Companion Guide to Peacemaking

The Companion Guide to Peacemaking assists congregations, mid councils and theological institutions as they make, reaffirm and deepen their commitment to peacemaking. The Guide outlines a unique process of worship, spiritual grounding and reflection, community building and partnership, study and preparation, and direct action and advocacy. Presbyterians are invited to engage in an intentional “development” of their peacemaking work and witness.

pcusa.org/companion-guide



Presbyterian Mission
Peacemaking Program

13 Ways We Can Engage in Poverty Alleviation

by Rev. Dr. Jimmie Hawkins, PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has determined that, “Poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making. Various social groups bear a disproportionate burden of poverty.”

1. We can educate the American public on the immensity of poverty in America and worldwide, and how little we are doing to combat it. Challenge the mentality that people are poor because they are lazy or don't work hard enough to overcome poverty.
2. Deracialize poverty: Re-educate the American public on the conscious and unconscious, false connection between poverty and race; how the face of poverty is often portrayed as being black or brown, while millions more whites are impoverished.
3. Partner with agencies that are effective in strategy and delivery. Study what works and apply strategies and programs to apply in local communities.
4. Identify ways to fight poverty on a multitude of levels: federal, state and local. Do a study of the most effective programs that work and duplicate their paradigms and eliminate those that are ineffective.
5. Address poverty as a regional issue. Identify the most prevalent causes of poverty in your state and local community. Define whether you live in a high-, low- or medium-poverty region.
6. Base the federal minimum wage on the cost of living. States should adjust their state minimum wage based on the cost to live in that state.
7. Determine state-by-state the basic income necessary to be able to afford to live in that state rather than utilizing a national average. According to the Economic Policy Institute's Family Budget Calculator, the revenue needed for a family of two (adults only) “varies from just under \$43,000 in one state to over \$66,000 in another.”
8. Men and women suffering from poverty in a given region must have full political, economic and social participation in the “design and implementation of policies that affect the poorest and most vulnerable groups of society” (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs).
9. Advocate that the federal government raise the national standard determining poverty, established in 1963, that defines poverty as being an annual income of \$24,858 for a family of four; \$12,488 for an individual. This is exceedingly low and completely unrealistic.
10. Strengthen government safety net programs (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]; Earned Income Tax Credit; Social Security; Medicaid/Medicare), not weaken them. A 2018 Urban Institute analysis estimated that SNAP lifted 8.4 million people out of poverty in 2015 and reduced child poverty by 28%.
11. Address the intersectional root causes of poverty systematically:
 - Food insecurity (increase SNAP benefits)
 - Wage inequality
 - Lack of opportunities for upward mobility in employment
 - Inadequate public transportation

(More on following page)

12. Address and remove the barriers placed upon those formerly incarcerated, which keeps them impoverished. The stigma of a felony conviction prevents employment and any type of government assistance. Develop effective re-entry programs that provide support and mentoring for men and women who have suffered incarceration.
13. Work to eliminate homelessness by providing homes, not programs.

References:

Economic Policy Institute, "Government Programs Kept Tens of Millions Out of Poverty in 2017" (Sept. 12, 2018)

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Programs Targeted for Cuts Keep Millions From Poverty, New Census Data Show" (Sept. 10, 2019.)

24/7 Wall St.

USA Today article, "Progress in Fighting Poverty in America Has Slowed Despite Recent Economic Recovery" (Oct. 4, 2018.)

USA Today article, "Hawaii, Alaska Among the States That Require a Higher Family Income to Avoid Poverty" (Dec. 3, 2019.)



Presbyterian Committee on the
Self-Development of People

GIVING OPPORTUNITY

Consider giving directly to SDOP at presbyterianmission.org/donate/e051602.

SDOP is supported by generous gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). Contribute to the OGHS Self-Development of People online at presbyterianmission.org/donate/og200000; by phone at **800-872-3283**; or to send a check, please write "OG200000" on the memo line and mail to:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

QUESTIONS OR FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

English: 800-728-7228, ext. 5781/5782/5790/5792

Spanish: 800-728-7228, ext. 5781/5790

Email: sdop@pcusa.org

Fax: (502) 569-8001



SelfDevelopmentOfPeoplesdop



Presbyterian Committee on the **Self-Development of People**

CALL TO ACTION/GET INVOLVED WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE ON THE SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE!

- Consider giving to the **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)**, a special offering taken up during Lent to support Self-Development of People, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Visit **specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/oghs** to learn more about the OGHS offering and/or to give.
- Consider giving directly to SDOP. Your gift together with others makes it possible for thousands of communities nationally and internationally to have an opportunity to take control of their own destinies and develop solutions to their own challenges. The power of your giving is in the fact that it gives hope, meaning and purpose to people who for one reason or another find themselves in hopeless situations.
- Invite SDOP committee members or staff to speak to your congregation, presbytery/synod meetings, mission fair, etc.
- Learn more about SDOP's international projects in Belize and the latest projects funded in Panama.
- Serve on the SDOP committee within the bounds of your presbytery or synod. If there is not a committee, consider establishing one.
- Submit a form to the General Assembly nominating committee to serve on the National SDOP Committee. Email **valerie.izumi@pcusa.org**.
- Invite an SDOP group funded by SDOP in your area to share its project with your congregation.
- Share a "Minute for Mission" about SDOP with your congregation.

STOP THE CYCLE OF POVERTY!

For 50 years SDOP has partnered with congregations, Mid Councils and community groups to engage them on issues of poverty and social justice. Join us for Webinars in 2021 that will challenge us to go beyond charity and take a more holistic view of poverty, equipping teams to create real and lasting change by:

Staying tuned by visiting the SDOP website **<http://www.pcusa.org/sdop>** and SDOP Facebook page **<https://www.facebook.com/SelfDevelopmentOfPeoplesdop>**.

Email **sdopevents@pcusa.org** for dates, to register, or for more information after February 15

FREE SDOP RESOURCES

- On the Self-Development of People website (**pcusa.org/sdop**), you can find stories about SDOP community partners and a variety of resources, including sermons and liturgy that could be used to plan your Sunday worship service

The following print resources can be ordered by calling the Presbyterian Distribution Center at **800-524-2612**:

- SDOP trifold brochure (PDS #25422-17-001; includes basic information needed to apply for a grant and stories about SDOP partners)
- Wallet card (PDS #25422-07-001; includes basic information about SDOP in a wallet-size card)
- Celebrate Hope poster (PDS #74350-05-005; a colorful SDOP poster)

(More on following page)

FREE SDOP RESOURCES, continued

- 2020 awarded grants including 50th anniversary Covid recipients <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/funded-partnership-grants>
- Black Womens Blueprint <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/resource/2021-because-healing-empowers>

BOOK LIST ABOUT POVERTY AND RELATED ISSUES

Always With Us?: What Jesus Really Said About The Poor, Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharris

The Third Reconstruction, Rev. Dr. William Barber

Jesus and the Disinherited, Howard Thurman

Decolonizing Wealth, Edgar Villanueva

The Problem With Wealth, E. Hinson Hasty

Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City, Matthew Desmond

The Rich and the Rest of Us, Tavis Smiley, Cornel West

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption, Bryan Stevenson

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander

Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America, James Forman Jr.

SDOP HYMNS

Two hymns celebrate SDOP's ministry. The first was written in 1994 by Jane Parker Huber; the second in 2008 by John A. Dalles. Both are included in this resource, with permission to reproduce for ONE-TIME worship use.

Other suggested hymns from *Glory to God*:

Help Us Accept Each Other (Page 754)

When the Poor Ones (Page 762)

May the God of Hope Go With Us (Page 765)

Called as Partners in Christ's Service (Page 761)

The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor (Page 763)

For The Troubles and the Sufferings (Page 764)

Canto De Esperanza/God of Hope (Page 765)

The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound (Page 766)



Presbyterian Committee on the
Self-Development of People

JUSTICE IS A JOURNEY ONWARD

Jane Parker Huber, 1994

AUSTRIAN HYMN 8.7.8.7 D

Franz Joseph Haydn, 1797

1. Jus - tice is a jour - ney on - ward, up - ward e - ven
 2. When we hear a cry for jus - tice from the depths of
 3. Em - pa - thy with - out firm ac - tion turns to emp - ty
 4. Jus - tice is a jour - ney on - ward, up - ward, out - ward,

through the pain. Jour - neys have their hills and val - leys;
 hu - man need, Our re - sponse puts love in ac - tion,
 sen - ti - ment, But the call to free God's peo - ple
 spread - ing still. Christ has set us on this jour - ney,

still the dreams and goals re - main. We are peo - ple
 fol - low - ing our Sav - ior's lead. Where we see op -
 leads to self - de - vel - op - ment. When the struc - tures
 claim - ing us for God's own will. Let us share our

freed from bond - age by our Mak - er's will and power.
 pres - sive sys - tems, peo - ple hun - gry, crushed by fear,
 need re - shap - ing, or our neigh - bor is down - cast,
 neigh - bor's bur - dens far a - way or face to face.

We must now re - spond with ac - tion, in this place and for this hour.
 We must be the voice of jus - tice, and the hand to help and cheer.
 Let us seek a bright - er fu - ture, fair - er than the days gone past.
 So may we, by tak - ing ac - tion, be a part - ner through God's grace.



Presbyterian Committee on the
Self-Development of People

CELEBRATE HOPE!

John A. Dalles

DUKE STREET

Cel - e - brate hope! Come, — ga - ther near!
With Christ our friend, whom — we a - dore,
The work at hand, is — hea - ven — sent;
By the re - turn of — dig - ni - ty,

The spi - rit of the Lord is near! For Christ has
We shall be - friend and bless the poor! Bind up the
Our mis - sion is em - pow - er ment! In one great
May we build up com - mu - ni ty, With a con -

come — good — news to — preach: Good news for
wou - nds of — bro - ken — ness! Bring li - ber
ho - ur, — may — we — share, An off - er -
cern — for — hu - man - kind, Till we are

all! Good news for each!
ty to the o - pressed!
ing of las - ting care!
one, as God de - signed.



Presbyterian Committee on the
Self-Development of People

SERMON

From the Rev. Denise Anderson — Coordinator, Racial & Intercultural Justice; Compassion, Peace & Justice. Anderson was also co-moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Mark 2:23–3:6

One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?” And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.” Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.” Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Not One Step Back: King’s Unfinished Agenda and Why We Still Can’t Wait

I was asked to step into this moment in place of our sister and brother, the Revs. Drs. Liz Theoharis and William Barber. They were scheduled to talk about the **Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival**. As you may know, Jan and I had made PC(USA) engagement with the campaign a major focus of our work during our term. There was a reason for that. At our 222nd General Assembly, we approved **Item 11-03: On Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25** from the Presbytery of the Cascades. Its first recommendation was that the PC(USA) “recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate with all of our voice for the poor, and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor.” At the same time, there was a growing grassroots call to revive the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s Poor People’s Campaign ahead of its 50th anniversary. One of those who were calling for that revival was Presbyterian minister and director of the Kairos Center, the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, whom we heard from at the start of this assembly.

Currently the campaign boasts presences in nearly 40 states around the country. I am pleased to serve on the Maryland Coordinating Committee. We are in the midst of a 40-day season of nonviolent moral fusion direct action with weekly actions and civil disobedience around these foci: Poverty; Systemic Racism; Militarism and the War Economy; Ecological Devastation; and the Distorted Moral Narrative (because you can’t talk about one of these things without talking about all of them). During week three of our season, I submitted to arrest as we conducted a die-in inside the Maryland State House in Annapolis to bring attention to the impact of militarism, the war economy, and — by extension — gun violence on the nation and world’s poorest. As I shared on my social media about my arrest, I died-in as the daughter of two veterans who devoted more than two decades

each of service to this country.

I died-in because they were poor Americans, and enlisting in the military was one of few options available to them.

I died-in because I once had to rush my veteran mother to the hospital in the middle of the night for an urgent medical issue when her military-sponsored health care wanted her to wait two more weeks to be seen.

I died-in because I'm a former defense contractor who worked side-by-side with people who wore the uniform. I would regularly run into them after hours at McDonald's or Home Depot — their second job. I was being paid more than them and my employer was getting rich while they continued to struggle.

I died-in because D.C.-area veterans are among the best-paid in the country, but can only afford about 20% of the houses on the market. Vets in San Jose can't afford any on the market there.

I died-in because the weapons for which the military has no more use end up in the hands of law enforcement all over the country, usually to be used on the poorest residents.

I died-in because Maryland's gun violence problem is inextricable from its poverty problem.

I died-in for the countless poor citizens corralled into jails on minor, nonviolent offenses only to stay there indefinitely because they can't afford bail.

I died-in for the 2% of active duty military personnel who are on food stamps.

I died-in because the war economy is killing us in more ways than we know.

In conjunction with the Institute for Policy Studies, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival put out a few months ago an extensive look at poverty today called "The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America 50 Years After the Poor People's Campaign Challenged Racism, Poverty, the War Economy/Militarism and Our National Morality." "The Souls of Poor Folk" traces the 50 years since 1968, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and thousands of Americans, alarmed at their government's blindness to human need, launched the Poor People's Campaign. It is an empirical study that paints a startling picture of just how far we have yet to come in the last 50 years. I strongly suggest downloading this disturbing and eye-opening report from poorpeoplescampaign.org. But let me rewind for a second.

About a year before Jan and I became General Assembly co-moderators, I attended an event at Montreat Conference Center called "Dr. King's Unfinished Agenda." This event was hosted as a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's historical and at the time controversial visit and address to Montreat at its Christian Action Conference. At that commemorative event we would hear from Charles Blow, Leonard Pitts, Dr. William Barber, Congressman John Lewis and Bishop Vashti McKenzie in what can only be described as a transformational, inspiring and enlightening experience. We came away from that event reinvigorated and determined to further the cause of justice.

"Dr. King's Unfinished Agenda," however, was but one of a series of 50th anniversary commemorations in the life of MLK I would witness in recent years. I would take my daughter to the National Mall for the 50th anniversary commemoration of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. I would watch from a distance the reenactment of the March from Selma. As we prepared to launch the Poor People's Campaign, a National Call for Moral Revival, we did so with the 50th anniversary of King's original campaign and subsequent assassination in view.

I still fancy myself a young woman. I don't even know what 50 years feels like (I've not even yet experienced what 40 years feels like). But I do know that for some things, 50 years is too damn long to wait for anything.

In his book *Why We Can't Wait*, King talked about the significance of the year 1963 and the apparent awakening of the black community at that time. He posed the rhetorical question of why 1963 specifically would be the year in which we would see what he called the "Negro Revolution" and why the country would have to come to

grips with the sustained direct action we were seeing across the country. Simply put, at that point it had been 100 years since President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

Yesterday we marched to deliver over \$47,000 to bail out people charged with nonviolent offenses who would have otherwise languished in jail until their trial date because they cannot afford bail. But do you know the other significance of that day? Yesterday was Juneteenth. The Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Lincoln on Jan. 1, 1863, effectively but not functionally abolishing slavery in the Confederate States of America. It wasn't until April 9, 1865, that Gen. Robert E. Lee would surrender to Union forces, ending the Civil War and the slave economy as we knew it. And it still wouldn't be until later that year that the Confederate soldiers still fighting in Texas would learn that the war was over. On June 19, Union general Granger would arrive in Galveston, Texas, and announce the manumission of the slaves there. From then on, the day would be commemorated and given the portmanteau "Juneteenth."

But we must ask the question: Why are our siblings still not free?

The 13th amendment to the constitution was passed by the Senate on Jan. 31, 1865, and abolished slavery "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." What that means is that, if we wanted to make money off of human bodies, we now had to criminalize those bodies and find reason — any reasons — to incarcerate them. Slavery was abolished, but the slave economy never went anywhere. It just put on new clothes.

What is most egregious about the cash bail system is that the siblings incarcerated within it haven't even been convicted of anything yet. What it does is criminalize poverty, because if you are picked up on a minor offense and can't afford to pay the fine, you are immediately in violation of the law even though it's impossible to get blood from a turnip. That means siblings with already limited means are caged until they can magically come up with funds they definitely can't get while they're locked up, since they're prohibited from working. Again, I ask you, how long are we supposed to wait to get free?

Mass incarceration and the human rights affront that is the cash bail system isn't by any means new. It's simply an old devil in new clothes.

People have a curious tendency to treat old grievances as new menaces. I believe that we for far too long have valued nicety over honesty, and have conflated the absence of conflict with the presence of peace. Then suddenly when someone has the audacity to remind us that we are in fact in their way — that our boot is on their neck, that their space is encroached by us — we act shocked, shaken and turn on them for jolting us out of our sense of contentment. Sometimes we have this curious tendency to bristle when someone simply points out what has always been. As if racism suddenly appeared the moment we got a black president and the dominant culture started getting uneasy. As if Colin Kaepernick wasn't protesting something that hadn't existed for years. As if toxic waste hasn't been dumped in poor, brown and indigenous communities ad infinitum. How long are they supposed to wait to speak up for themselves?

Now, because I am a preacher, I have to consult the text for what I need to say to you today. And I am reminded of a story that, I believe, is one of the most important and most ignored accounts of Jesus' life and teachings. It is Saturday, the sabbath day, and he and his followers are walking through the grainfields. As we humans are wont to do when we're walking long distances, some of them got a bit peckish and began to pluck some of the heads of grain to feed themselves. Oh, but wait! It's the sabbath! You're not supposed to work! I mean, the law is pretty clear on that.

So, the Pharisees challenge him about why they're doing this.

Jesus then takes the opportunity to reframe the understanding of not only the sabbath, but the entire law for a people who had apparently missed the point of both. He uses his ancestor David and recalls the story from 1 Samuel 21 when David was fleeing Saul and begged the priest Ahimelech for bread. All the priest had in his possession was the consecrated bread, but he gave it to David and his men. Ahimelech (and Jesus) understood that consecrated effects become idols when we put more importance in them than in fellow human beings. For whom was the sabbath made? If the sabbath was made as a restorative gift for humans, and yet we fail to restore humans on the sabbath, we dishonor the sabbath.

What's interesting is that Jesus' detractors thought he was going about things the wrong way, and Jesus thought his detractors were going about things the wrong way. And you know what? Both were certainly right in a sense. The Pharisees were right in saying that it was unlawful to work on the sabbath. There is no question about that. But in the end, whose approach fostered healing? Whose approach engendered liberation? The approach that heals the broken, feeds the hungry and liberates those in bondage — that is the right approach because it is the righteous approach.

Friends, Jesus calls us to righteousness, not religiousness.

That might be especially important for us Presbyterians to remember. We fancy ourselves as a people of “decency and order.”

Friends, sometimes you can achieve order and miss out on decency.

Sometimes our adherence to order is really an exercise in maintaining our privilege. Privilege is pacifying. Imagine a baby mindlessly enjoying a pacifier. She's quiet, sated and probably unaware that the pacifier is even in her mouth. But try jiggling it. Try disturbing the pacifier's position or wresting it from her toothless mouth. All hell breaks loose. She is inconsolable. She doesn't yet have the tools to address her discomfort.

Too many of us are reluctant to do the work and say the words of justice out of fear of jiggling somebody's pacifier. But listen to me: Let them cry. We can never be the Church God calls us to be if we're too timid and afraid to be uncomfortable.

Our order should never become our idol. Order should never be an end to itself. It is supposed to serve the interests of the community. At its best, our order calls us to remember our ethics. Order should always be both simultaneously followed and interrogated, and if the time comes when order begins to serve itself rather than people, then the people have a responsibility to call order back to itself.

Friends, when have we favored order over decency? When have we expected people to be silent about their pain so as not to disturb our peace? (Don't answer; just think about it.)

King would lament in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” that the biggest obstacle to justice in Birmingham, in America and in the world were those who loved order more than righteousness.

“I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action'; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a 'more convenient season.' Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.”

Jesus was angered at the hard hearts of those in the synagogue — the house of worship — when they were faced with the question of whether or not to heal a man with an injured hand on the sabbath. Their apparent indifference or intractable need to be right rather than useful rendered them silent and ineffective in the face of someone who needed to be healed. That made Jesus angry. It should make us angry.

When you know that since 2010, 23 states have passed racist voter suppression laws, including racist gerrymandering and redistricting, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that wages for the bottom 80% of the population have been stagnant since the '70s, and that there is no state or county in the nation where someone earning the federal minimum wage could afford a two-bedroom apartment at market rent, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that there are 32 million people who lack health insurance and an estimated 40% of Americans have taken on debt because of medical issues, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that the United States accounts for 5% of the world's population, but 25% of the world's prisoners, two-thirds of whom are people of color, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that parents and children are being separated as they seek asylum and the powers-that-be not only use the law, but the faith to justify it, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that 13.8 million Americans can't afford water, and fossil fuel production and transportation too often threatens the water supplies of the poorest communities, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that systemic racism allows us to divorce people of their humanity and is the vehicle by which we exploit people economically and justify wars; when you understand the dog whistles of calling people who cross the border "animals," then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that the displacement of people in North America and Palestine and the world over is largely motivated by the fact they are living over aquifers that others want to access, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know the oceans are rising and poor communities are drowning, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that we have waited far too long for promises made far too long ago, then you know why we still can't wait.

When you know that the mother of peace is justice, you stop trying to circumvent the mother to get to the child.

Jesus saw injustice and got angry. We should get angry. And yet, in Jesus' anger, he didn't sin. In his anger, he healed. In his anger, he delivered. In his anger, he saved. In his anger, he toppled exploitative economic systems. In his anger, he commanded justice.

Jesus would continue to be a thorn in the side of those who loved order more than people. He would challenge the hypocrisy of his own community. He would heal not just on the sabbath, but any day anyone needed healing. He would proclaim the kingdom of his Father and the forgiveness of sins. He wouldn't condemn; he would liberate. He wouldn't ignore; he would see people right where they were. And yet there were those who would try to distort his message and narrative. They would call him a heretic. They would say he was trying to replace Caesar. They would accuse him of blasphemy. They would demand his crucifixion. They would nail him on a cross and cast lots for his clothes. They would watch him die an agonizing and unjust death. But they would not win!

Three days later he would get up with all power in his hands. He would get up with the power to move forward. And as he moves forward, he moves us forward. As he moves forward, he empowers us to move forward.

"Forward together; not one step back."