

# Worship Resources

*(For Services Recognizing the Return or Departure of Missionaries and Volunteer Workers)*

*The following resources may be used in a variety of ways. You may choose a service following the pattern of the Service for the Lord's Day as found in the Book of Common Worship (1993) or you may adapt these resources to meet your particular needs.*

**Sentences of Scripture** One or more of the following may be adapted for use responsively as a Call to Worship.

Psalm 8:1    Psalm 33:8    Psalm 57:9-10  
Psalm 65:5-8    Psalm 67:4-5    Psalm 68:32  
Psalm 86:8-10    Psalm 100:1-2a  
Psalm 138:4-5

## **Opening Prayers**

God of Abraham and Ruth,  
You call us to embark on a journey of faith.  
We stand before You, ready to hear Your call  
and to follow where You lead,  
for You have claimed us by Your mercy  
and set before us eternal promises in Jesus  
Christ,  
with whom we live to give You all glory  
in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

—from *The Service for the Lord's Day (SLR 1)*, #62, p. 43. Used by permission of Westminster/John Knox Press.

*another possibility...*

O God, who placed this world among the stars of the universe,  
and brought forth all life by the breath of Your spirit,  
we worship You in reverence and awe.  
As we rejoice in the life of Your creation,

we celebrate the new life You offer in Jesus Christ.

So we come now at Your bidding,  
to go forth at Your sending,  
to tell the world of Your love,  
to invite all people to praise Your holy name,  
and to rejoice in Christ the Savior. Amen.

## **Invitation to Confession of Sin**

### **Prayer of Confession**

God of might and mercy,  
on Your dominion the sun never sets.  
Yet we have presumed You are God in this land,  
ruler of this people alone,  
and that You care for us above all others.  
We have closed our eyes to the needs of neighbors  
and stopped our ears to their cries.  
We confess our pride and selfishness.  
Rescue us from our folly  
and set us once again in the way of Jesus Christ,  
that we may go forth into the world in peace,  
showing Your generous love to all people,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

### **Declaration of Pardon**

If anyone is in Christ  
there is a new creation:  
everything old has passed away;  
see, everything has become new!

II Corinthians 5:17

### **Prayer of Intercession**

*This prayer may be used as a litany by adding those portions in bold face type with appropriate instructions to the congregation.*

Almighty God, You have gathered us in this community of faith in order that we might shine with Your love in this dark and dreary world. Take hold of our souls in these moments, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that our prayers may be commitments to act in accord with Your gracious will, through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
**Amen. or hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, You have claimed all of us to be the church of Jesus Christ in this world. Fuse us into one people by the fire of Your Holy Spirit, that we may be strong to carry one another's burdens.

We pray for those who suffer in the silence of grief....  
for those afflicted with illness in body or mind....  
for the poor and the hungry and the homeless....  
and we remember before You in the silence of our hearts  
all with special needs known to us and to You...  
Give us strength to endure, O God,  
and relieve and heal every pain and sorrow.  
...through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of might, You have sent all of us into this world as agents of Christ's love. Inspire us by the Holy Spirit to brave and bold discipleship in ministries near and far. Especially we remember today (*Name[s]*) Whom You have claimed for special service in (*Place[s]*). As they go forth in Christ's name, (*or As they return from this distant field,*) We pray Your constant renewal and refreshment in their lives, that they may continue in strength to serve the cause of Christ. Give them full measure of grace in all they do that in their persons Christ may be visible, and evidence of Your generous love may be seen.  
...through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Specific intercessions for the missionaries may be offered at this point, concluding, if appropriate, with the litany response.*

O God, Ruler of the Universe, we pray for all the nations and peoples of the earth. We rejoice in the richness of your creation, the wealth of diversity in culture and custom, the beauty of the different races, the melodies of languages and tongues, the challenge of religions and beliefs. We pray for all who are different from ourselves for we know we are the same in our human need, and in the deep desires of our hearts. Give to all the gift of faith, the joy of Your loving embrace, and the blessings of salvation.  
...through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Specific intercessions for the regions or nations may be offered at this point, concluding, if appropriate, with the litany response.*

Great God, You have shaped all people in Your image, and You gave Jesus Christ to make us all sisters and brothers in one family of faith. May we be ambassadors of peace to those far away and those who are near. By the power of Your Holy Spirit guide all nations of the world

in the way of the Savior, and bring about Your eternal purpose for all peoples, through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
**Amen. or hear our prayer.**

### **Charge to the People**

Let love be genuine;  
hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;  
love one another with mutual affection;  
outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.  
Romans 12:9-12

### **Benediction**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. **Amen.**  
II Cor. 13:14

Notes - The liturgical passages are compatible with those offered in *The Book of Common Worship* (1993). Unless otherwise noted, all prayers in this section are by Donald Wilson Stake. All Scripture passages are from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, copyright ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.