

Worship Resources for Building Congregational Vitality Sunday

Sunday, March 19, 2023

“God’s gifts of Word and Sacrament establish and equip the Church as the body of Christ in the world. The mission of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church flows from Baptism, is nourished at Lord’s Supper, and serves to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. In the same way, the Church’s ministry emerges from the font, arises from the table, and takes its shape from the Word of the Lord. Therefore the worship of the triune God is the center of our common life and our primary way of witness to the faith, hope, and love we have in Jesus Christ.” — Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Directory for Worship, *Book of Order*, W-1.0107

Revised Common Lectionary Readings (Year A)

1 Samuel 16:1–13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8–14

John 9:1–41

OPENING SENTENCES

Once we were in darkness,

but now in the Lord we are light.

Eph. 5

Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord,

all that is good and right and true.

For everything exposed by the light becomes visible,

and everything that becomes visible is light.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of glory, you sent Jesus Christ
to be the light of the world.

As Jesus restored the sight of a man born blind,
help us to see the new things you are doing
in your church and in your world.

Teach us to trust in you
and reveal your saving work to others,
that all may believe and have abundant life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

John 9

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Note: the seven parts of this litany of confession are based on the seven marks of congregational vitality used in the PC(USA) Vital Congregations Initiative.

The confession and pardon may be led from the baptismal font.

For our sake, God sent Jesus into a sinful world that we might know the righteousness of God.

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

O my people, O my church, says the Lord.

What more could I have done for you?

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have ignored and impeded
God's call to follow the way of Jesus.

Lifelong Discipleship Formation

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have silenced and suppressed
the good news of God's holy realm.

Intentional Authentic Evangelism

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have forgotten and forsaken
the gift of God's Word made flesh.

Outward Incarnational Focus

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have ridiculed and rejected
Jesus' example of humble service.

Empowering Servant Leadership

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have hidden and hoarded
the transforming presence of Christ.

Spirit-Inspired Worship

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have denied and disregarded
God's great love for all the world.

Caring Relationships

Holy One, have mercy on us.

We have abused and abandoned
our common ministry in Jesus' name.

Ecclesial Health

Holy One, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, God of grace.

Let us be reconciled with you

with one another, and with our neighbors,

so that your church may be a light to the world

and a vital sign of your redeeming love;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Christ there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away;
everything has become new!

I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ,
we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

The prayer for illumination is led from the lectern or pulpit.

O Lord our God,
through the wisdom of your Word
and the power of your Spirit,
open our eyes, hearts, and minds
that we may see as you see
and live as you have called us to live;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

1 Sam. 16

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe

The Confession of Belhar (excerpt), Book of Confessions, 10.7

- that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;
- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged
- that God calls the church to follow God in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
- that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;
- 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 God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;
- 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;
- that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

The invitation to discipleship may be led from the baptismal font.

To everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters; come and eat!
Come, without money and without price.
Come. And let everyone who hears also say, "Come."
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes
take the water of life as a gift.

Isa. 55:1, Rev. 22:17

All that God has is for each and every one of us
and for all that God causes us to meet.
So let us come together
for the work that God is calling us to do.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers of intercession may be led from the midst of the congregation.

O Lord, our shepherd,
you provide for all our wants.
Hear our prayer.

Ps. 23

We pray for your church . . .
Build us up as the body of Christ
in our worship and service.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world . . .
Bring peace to warring nations
and justice to oppressed peoples.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our neighbors . . .
Strengthen our witness and work
in the communities where we live.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for loved ones . . .
Help us to care for one another
in times of sickness and suffering.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for creation . . .
Show us how to live in right relationship
with the earth and all your creatures.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let your goodness and mercy
follow us all the days of our lives,
and let us dwell in your house forever;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer may follow.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

The invitation to offering may be led from the Communion table.

In every age,
the Lord anoints servants and leaders
to do the work of the gospel
and build up the people of God.

1 Sam. 16

Let us present our lives and gifts to the Lord
as an offering of thanksgiving and praise.
See what wonders God will do through you.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The prayer of thanksgiving may be led from the Communion table.

Holy One, we give you thanks
that in Jesus Christ you have come
to set us free from sin and death,
to open our eyes to your grace,
and to lead us into everlasting life.

John 9

Use our gifts and our lives
to help others share a glimpse
of the promise of your coming realm—
a glorious new creation
of righteousness, justice, and peace.
This we pray through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING AND CHARGE

The blessing and charge may be led from the doors of the church.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord be kind and gracious to you,
the Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace. **Amen.**

Num. 6; Eph. 5

Live as children of light.
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMNS, PSALMS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

All suggestions are from Glory to God (GTG): The Presbyterian Hymnal (WJKP, 2013); cross-references to the 1990 Presbyterian Hymnal (PH), if applicable, are provided.

Go to the World!	GTG 295
Go in Grace and Make Disciples	GTG 296
In Christ Called to Baptize	GTG 297
Lord, You Give the Great Commission	GTG 298, PH 429
Let Us Build a House (All Are Welcome)	GTG 301
When Hands Reach Out and Fingers Trace	GTG 302
Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!	GTG 305, PH 430
Blest Be the Tie That Binds	GTG 306, PH 438
Come, Great God of All the Ages	GTG 309, PH 132
Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather	GTG 311, PH 465
Men of Faith, Rise Up and Sing (Shout to the North)	GTG 319
The Church of Christ in Every Age	GTG 320, PH 421
The Church's One Foundation	GTG 321, PH 442
For All the Saints	GTG 326, PH 526
Lift Every Voice and Sing	GTG 339, PH 563
Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation	GTG 394, PH 416/417
Here in This Place (Gather Us In)	GTG 401
What Is This Place	GTG 404
Listen, God Is Calling	GTG 456
Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters	GTG 490
Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ	GTG 526, PH 514
Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether	GTG 529, PH 504
You Are Holy	GTG 596
Will You Come and Follow Me (The Summons)	GTG 726
Will You Let Me Be Your Servant (The Servant Song)	GTG 727
We All Are One in Mission	GTG 733, PH 435
From the Nets of Our Labor (We Will Rise Up and Follow)	GTG 751
Together We Serve	GTG 767