



Camp and Retreat Sunday

Liturgy Resources for 2022 and other tips

The PC(USA) designates various days on the church calendar for special emphasis. Below are resources for celebrating **Camp and Retreat Sunday** on February 13, 2022. (Or whenever your faith community chooses to lift up Camp and Retreat Ministry.)

Revised Common Lectionary for Sunday 2/13/2022

Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26
(The liturgy resources below emphasize the Gospel lesson.)

Hymns

Gather Us In (Glory to God, 401)
Blest Are They (Glory to God, 172)
The Summons (Glory to God, 726)
Kum ba Yah (Glory to God, 472)
Prayer of St. Francis (Glory to God, 753)
Guide My Feet (Glory to God, 741 / Presbyterian Hymnal, 354)
I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me (Glory to God 700 / Presbyterian Hymnal, 369)
Go With Us Lord (Glory to God, 748 / Presbyterian Hymnal, 535)

Considering asking your congregation's campers or local camp director for some suggestions of favorite camp songs to include as congregational singing or for a group of campers to sing!

Call To Worship

Leader: Blessed are the poor, the hungry, and the weeping.
All: God is with us now.
Leader: Blessed are the people whose reward is great in heaven.
All: God is with us now.
Leader: Rejoice in the day!
All: God is with us now. Let us worship God together!

Centering/Opening Prayer

Blessed are you, O God.
When you are present, let us notice.
When you speak, let us listen.
When you teach, let us learn.
You have blessed the poor, the hungry, and the weeping.
May we honor them.
Let us work to see you and follow you.
Let us rejoice and be glad as we worship God--
God who was with the disciples on the level place,

God who is with those who are suffering,
God who is with us now.
Blessed are you, O God. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

O God,
You are steadfast in your love and presence.
You bless and honor all who are suffering.
We are eager to identify as your blessed people,
But we are slow to recognize the poor, the brokenhearted, and the empty all around us.
We are hesitant to let the kingdom be theirs.
We forget to fill them up.
We struggle to let them laugh and be joyful.
Forgive us. Have mercy on us, O God.
Let us delight in your law and seek your righteousness.
Help us to honor and bless all you have created, including one another.
(Time for silent confession) Amen.

Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed

(United Church of Canada, 1968, rev. 1980, 1995)

We are not alone,
 we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
 who has created and is creating,
 who has come in Jesus,
 the Word made flesh,
 to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
 by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
 to celebrate God's presence,
 to live with respect in Creation,
 to love and serve others,
 to seek justice and resist evil,
 to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
 our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
 God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People

God, who is with us,
We rejoice in this day you have made.
We give you thanks that we can gather as a crowd of your followers,
Even under the strange and trying circumstances of our times.
Blessed are you, O God.
Grant that we may listen to what your Spirit is saying to us today,
That we might go out to act in ways that honor your beloved and blessed people.
Help us to recognize your presence with the poor,
And to offer them your kingdom now.

Help us to recognize your presence with the hungry,
 And to fill them now.
 Help us to recognize your presence with those who weep,
 And to bring them encouragement now.
 Help us recognize our wealth,
 So we might better share it with those in need.
 Help us recognize our fill,
 So we might better hunger for justice for those who are empty and oppressed.
 Help us recognize our joy,
 So we might better be present with those who grieve.
 O God, we pray that we may be steadfast in our faith,
 Even when people revile us.
 Help us to understand the different experiences in your world around us,
 And recognize your presence not with those who find consolation elsewhere from you,
 But with those who are suffering the most.
 We lift up to you the concerns of this congregation:
(You might list individuals on your prayer list and other prayer requests here.)
 O God, we also remember Camp _____.
 We celebrate the good ministry that happens there.
 Bless and keep all who love and serve and visit that place,
 That the lessons learned and the rest experienced
 Might inspire us all to practice your presence elsewhere in this world.
 God, we are glad to be part of your multitude.
 Help us to be living examples of Christ's teachings from the Sermon on the Plain
 And the Spirit's advocacy and guidance today.
 We pray all this in the way Jesus taught us to pray together, saying,
 Our Father...

Sermon Notes

- The *Revised Common Lectionary* offers us the Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Plain. Jesus shared this message with his disciples and followers outdoors in an open area, just like many messages are shared at camp and conference centers during devotions, vespers, and other worship services. Invite the congregation to imagine this happening in an open area at your local camp/conference center.
- Talk with your local camp director! They may be willing to guest preach or might have some insights to the particular ways your local camp ministry leans into the lessons of the Beatitudes.
- In Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer's work on the Beatitudes, she draws from both the Sermon on the Plain in Luke as well as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. She interprets the "blessed" language as "greatly honored," emphasizing God honors those who are suffering now—people who often aren't honored by society.
 - Blessed are the poor/woe to you who are rich: Jesus is clear in his teachings over and over again that hoarding wealth is not faithful. Aymer frames this Beatitude as "Greatly honored are the destitute." They are honored not for their destitution, but because God's kingdom is for them.
 - Blessed are the hungry/woe to those who are already full: Aymer includes in her study that the Greek word used in this Beatitude, is used elsewhere when discussing the feeding of animals. It is not a sin to have enough to eat, but it is sinful to be stuffed when others are hungry (whether literally for food, or more figuratively for justice).
 - Blessed are those who weep/woe to those laughing now: Aymer describes the shame and dishonor we tend to give to big emotional displays. God honors those who are mourning, those who are acknowledging the difficulties and losses they have suffered. In the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, the language of "comforted" is offered to those who mourn/weep; in Luke, it's laughter. God is present with those who are mourning until their weeping turns to laughter again.

- Blessed are you when people hate you on account of Jesus/woe to those who are spoken well of: Aymer describes how honoring those blessed in the Beatitudes would certainly displease those of more privileged status. It is dishonorable to allow my own name and reputation to be more important to me than following Jesus and seeking God’s kingdom.
- At camp, many different people come together without the distraction of everyday things and expectations. These are places where campers, staff, and other visitors have a chance to get to know and be present with one another. Not only is this a wonderful practice for campers and adults alike, it’s a reflection of God’s presence with us in our suffering—particularly those who are suffering most among us.
- The “woe” language of the Sermon on the Plain is uncomfortable, but an important reminder that Christ calls us to share what we have now and not hoard wealth or support for one another. Camp is a place where these lessons are learned through programs that seek to include everyone, regardless of their background, and offer space to build understanding and love among people who are different from one another. Camp is a place where people can practice living a little more simply, better understanding the humility, intentional peacemaking and accountability we are called to as Christians. These lessons are then brought home, where adults often report their campers are kinder and more compassionate following their time at camp.

Recommended Reading

Confessing the Beatitudes 2011-2012 Horizons Bible Study by Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer ([available in the PCUSA online bookstore](#)); one of the lessons is available by permission on the [Justice Unbound](#) website.

Other Tips

- Consider inviting your local camp director or a camper or summer staff member from your congregation to help lead worship! If they aren’t available on February 13, consider welcoming them for a moment for mission, worship leadership, or an information session another time.
- Remember your camp on other Sundays as well. Include program announcements in your bulletin, recruit staff and campers, and build a relationship with the director(s) and board members.
- Camp is for everyone! Learn more about the program offerings at your local camp or conference center for people of all ages.
- Host a retreat at your local camp! Even if it’s just a day trip, camps provide beautiful space and hospitality for volunteer opportunities, Session trainings and meetings, youth outings, and family gatherings. Be sure to plan a campfire and bring supplies for s’mores!
- If you are looking for other resources or information about camps outside your area you can learn more from Office of Christian Formation, or these websites for PCUSA experiences - [Summer to Remember](#) (for summer staff), [BookaRetreat](#) (for retreat groups) and [BestSummerYet](#) (for summer camps) or from the [Presbyterian Church Camps and Conferences Association](#). In addition, Brian Frick is the Mission Associate for Formation ([Camps and Conference Ministries](#)).

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Office of Christian Formation: www.pcusa.org/formation