



Presbyterian Mission Agency 2019–20 Mission Work Plan

Call

Sing to God a new song; Sing to God, all the earth.

Sing and give praise to God's name;

Tell the glad news of salvation from day to day. (Psalm 96:1–2)

Bound together by the Grace of God, the Love of Christ, and the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is called to “sing to God a new song,” a song that bears witness to God’s abiding love made manifest in the life of Jesus Christ and gathers us together for the Holy Spirit’s equipping. Let us worship the Triune God in our daily lives through the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Hymn of Praise

All that we have, all that we are, comes from you, dear God, our Creator. We thank you for your steadfast love.

All that we are called to be, comes from you, Jesus, our brother and our guide, an abiding presence in our lives.

All that summons and sanctifies us, comes from you, Holy Spirit, our comforter and cleanser.

We praise you O God, Holy One, Holy Three.

Confession

Gracious and merciful God, we come before you to confess the ways that we have not been faithful to you or to one another.

In humility and with a contrite spirit, we admit that:

- We ignore your call to us to be stewards of your creation and all that is in it. We are guided by scarcity, forgetting or refusing to see the many precious gifts you set before us each and every day.
- We put our own self-interest ahead of the needs of your church and work to advance our own agendas rather than seeking to work in partnership with colleagues in ministry across the church.
- We ignore the systemic brokenness of the world and the church, poverty, white supremacy, and structural racism; systems that oppress and destroy members of our human family, created in your image.

- We allow fear to overcome us and we are unable to follow Christ, who said, “Fear not, for I am with you always.”

Compassionate and loving God, in Jesus Christ you make all things new. Forgive us. Transform our weak spirits and fearful hearts. Give us ears to hear and hearts to listen to the new songs that are welling up within and beyond the church. Give us courage to follow you so that we may become witnesses to your saving love and your call to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.

Assurance of Pardon

The God who challenges us is also the God who encourages us.

The God who confronts us is also the God who accepts us.

We can be assured that God is with us even now, accepting, guiding, and forgiving.

Thanks be to God!

The Word

Matthew 25:31–46

At the appointed time the Promised One will come in glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, and will sit upon the royal throne with all the nations assembled below. Then the Promised One will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be placed on the right hand, the goats on the left, “The ruler will say to those on the right, ‘Come, you blessed of my Abba God! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world! for I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then these just will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?’ The ruler will answer them, ‘The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me. Then the ruler will say to those on the left, ‘Out of my sight you accursed ones! Into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the fallen angels! I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you gave me no welcome; naked and you gave me no clothing. I was ill and in prison and you did not come to visit me.’ Then they in turn will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry or thirsty, or homeless or naked, or ill or in prison, and not take care of you? The answer will come, ‘The truth is, as often as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me. They will go off to eternal punishment, and the just will go off to eternal life.’” (The Inclusive Bible: First Egalitarian Version. The Priests for Equality, Sheed and Ward, 2007.)

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called us to a

... moment of great opportunity for our church. Momentum is building within our denomination and throughout our society to courageously confront the challenges of our time. A new civil rights movement, a new peace movement, a new economic justice movement is on the rise and we are in a position to stand in solidarity with the poor in a uniquely powerful way. It is a time for us to define who we will be for decades to come. May we choose to be a church committed to the gospel of Matthew 25.

... We see the Spirit blowing through our society, bringing to fruition seeds of peace and justice long dormant. The harvest will be plentiful. Let us heed the call to service, and recommit ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in deeds as well as in words. (Minutes, 2016, Part I, pp. 700–701)

Invitation to Discipleship

I appeal to you, therefore, members of one family in Christ, and by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
(Rom. 12:1–2)

Affirmation of Faith

Discerning the signs of the times and responding to the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as it approved the Confession of Belhar, we boldly proclaim that:

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.

We believe in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another.

We believe that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ.

We believe that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought.

We believe that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity, and hatred between people and groups is sin.

We believe that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted.

We believe that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine that absolutizes natural diversity in such a way that this hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church.

We reject any doctrine that professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers are alienated from one another and in despair of reconciliation.

We reject any doctrine that denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin.

We reject any doctrine that maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.

We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence.

We believe that Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be the honor and the glory for ever and ever. (© 2006 Reformed Church Press. Originally published in Unity, “Reconciliation, and Justice: A Study Guide for the Belhar Confession.” David Alexander. Used with permission.)

The Offering

All that we are and all that we have comes from God. God calls us to be stewards of the gifts entrusted to us to work in partnership with our colleagues from other agencies, mid councils, and congregations to become a “Matthew 25 Church,” committing ourselves to ongoing directional goals with specific emphases for 2019–2020:

- **Evangelism & Discipleship**

Grow, proclaim, and live out our faith in Jesus Christ by working with our partners, here and around the world, to build communities that witness to the gospel of Christ’s love for the rich diversity reflected in all humankind.

2019–2020 Emphases:

- Congregational Vitality, where churches prioritize faithfulness over self-sufficiency.
- Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need.

- **Leader Formation**

Seek, develop, and energize diverse leaders who are answering God’s call to equip the church to be a welcoming place of worship, mission, and spiritual nurture for all of God’s children, especially those who have been marginalized.

2019–2020 Emphasis:

- Structural Racism/White Supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color.

- **Justice & Reconciliation**

Galvanize the church to act on issues of racism, violence, and poverty as a prophetic witness to Christ’s transforming justice by speaking and living out God’s truth and compassion as we call ourselves and the world to account for injustice and oppression.

2019–2020 Emphasis:

- Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need.
- Structural Racism/White Supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color.

The Benediction

Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to this One be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20–21)