

A Year with Matthew

for a Matthew 25 church



Revised Common Lectionary, Year A

Part 2: Trinity Sunday through Reign of Christ

June 7 – Nov. 22, 2020



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Presbyterian Mission



Artwork: "Sermon on the Mount," JESUS MAFA, 1973. JESUS MAFA is a response to the New Testament readings from the lectionary by a Christian community in Cameroon, Africa. Each of the readings were selected and adapted to dramatic interpretation by the community members. Photographs of their interpretations were made, and these were then transcribed to paintings.

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A Year with Matthew

for a Matthew 25 church

June 7 – Nov. 22, 2020, Trinity Sunday through Reign of Christ

Drawing on the Gospel readings from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) Year A, this resource helps preachers, educators and worship planners attend to themes of congregational vitality, systemic poverty and structural racism throughout the Christian year (or liturgical calendar). It takes advantage of the convergence of the focus on Matthew in RCL Year A (2019–2020) and the 2019 launch of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Matthew 25 invitation, with its three-part emphasis on systemic poverty, structural racism and congregational vitality.

The primary components of this resource are:

- A brief introduction to the Gospel of Matthew and how it functions in the lectionary;
- Theological, pastoral and liturgical guidance for the seasons of the Christian year, with a focus on the Matthew 25 themes of poverty, racism and vitality;
- Sermon prompts and music suggestions that highlight Christ’s call to righteousness, justice and reconciliation in the Gospel of Matthew.

Additional features, found in Part I of this resource (see pcusa.org/matthew25), include:

- Seven Ways to Read the Gospel of Matthew [reading plans]
- Emmanuel: God with Us [public reading of the Gospel]
- The Sermon on the Mount [Scripture reading and hymn festival]
- The Ten Miracles [Scripture reading and hymn festival]
- Reading Matthew in Daily Prayer [daily lectionary]
- Index to the Gospel of Matthew [appendix]

The objective is to form faithful and active disciples and communities of people who are engaged with, energized by and committed to these strategic priorities for the PC(USA).

Notes

- The Scripture readings below are the appointed texts in the Revised Common Lectionary; brief summaries come from Call to Worship (pcusa.org/calltoworship).
- alt: *Italicized passages offer alternative (non-RCL) Gospel readings from Matthew.*
- [Verses in brackets are added to expand the readings from Matthew’s Gospel.]
- Congregations wishing to read the whole Gospel of Matthew during Year A should use the italicized passages and the verses in brackets; they should also find occasions to read The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–7:29) and Ten Miracles (Matthew 8:1–9:34).

How to use “A Year with Matthew for a Matthew 25 church”

Please note: This document includes the second half of the Christian year, Trinity Sunday through Reign of Christ. The first half, Advent through Pentecost, is available at pcusa.org/matthew25.

This resource was designed to offer a variety of ways to engage the Gospel of Matthew and the PC(USA)’s Matthew 25 vision over the course of a year. It is not assumed that congregations or individuals will make use of all the options provided in the document. You are encouraged to select the approaches that seem most appropriate and helpful, and to adapt as needed to suit your context. For instance, congregations might choose to host a reading of the Sermon on the Mount, but not the whole Gospel of Matthew. Preachers might decide to use some of the sermon series provided, but not others. Individuals might elect to use the 26-week reading plan for half the year and other options for the remainder.

The Gospel of Matthew

Thought to have been committed to writing in Antioch or southern Galilee after the year 70 CE, the Gospel of Matthew was intended for a primarily Jewish audience. The central figure of Jesus is depicted as the “new Moses,” who has come to lead his people to redemption. The structure of the Gospel mirrors the five books of the Torah (see outline below), with each section consisting of stories from Jesus’ ministry followed by accounts of Jesus’ teaching. Distinctive features of the Gospel of Matthew include the account of the visit of the Magi (Matt. 2), the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7), and the Great Commission (Matt. 28).

An Outline of the Gospel of Matthew

Prologue: Genealogy and Infancy Narrative — Matthew 1:1–2:23

Book One: Opening Proclamation of the Kingdom — Matthew 3:1–7:29

Narrative: Matthew 3:1–4:25 beginning of ministry

Discourse: Matthew 5:1–7:29 Sermon on the Mount

Book Two: Ministry in Galilee — Matthew 8:1–11:1

Narrative: Matthew 8:1–9:34 10 miracles

Discourse: Matthew 9:35–11:1 instructions to the Twelve for mission

Book Three: Controversy and Parables — Matthew 11:2–13:53

Narrative: Matthew 11:2–12:50 incredulity and hostility

Discourse: Matthew 13:1–53 a collection of parables

Book Four: Formation of the Disciples — Matthew 13:54–19:2

Narrative: Matthew 13:54–17:27 stories before the journey to Jerusalem

Discourse: Matthew 18:1–19:2 instructions for the assemblies

Book Five: Up to Jerusalem — Matthew 19:3–26:1

Narrative: Matthew 19:3–23:39 stories on the journey and at Jerusalem

Discourse: Matthew 24:1–25:46 instructions concerning the last things

The Passion — Matthew 26:1–27:66

The Resurrection — Matthew 28:1–20

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) presents the Gospel of Matthew not strictly in its biblical sequence, but in a way that helps us keep time with Christ’s church around the world through the Christian year. The distinctive shape of the liturgical calendar — with the first half including numerous festivals and seasons and the second half consisting of “ordinary time” — lends itself to a two-part approach to this year with Matthew:

- (1) In the first half of the year, from Advent through Pentecost, this resource addresses the basics of Christian faith and discipleship in a more general way, yet always with an eye toward the themes of Matthew 25.
- (2) In the second half of the year, from Trinity Sunday (Great Commission) to the final three Sundays of Year A (all from Matthew 25), ending with Christ the King (final judgment), this resource focuses more specifically on Matthew 25 priorities — systemic poverty, structural racism and congregational vitality — as these themes are reflected throughout Matthew’s Gospel. (Fittingly, in the second half of the year the RCL draws exclusively from Matthew, not relying on the other Gospels.)

¹Gordon W. Lathrop, *The Four Gospels on Sunday: The New Testament and the Reform of Christian Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 98.

Time after Pentecost

The Sundays after Pentecost are sometimes called Ordinary Time—not because they are routine or mundane, but because their primary rhythm has to do with following the Sundays “in order.” Indeed, each Sunday is a celebration of Christ’s resurrection from the dead on the first day of the week, and it is this holy mystery that animates, renews and transforms our life of faith. These Sundays are bracketed by festivals that concern key theological affirmations of the church: Trinity Sunday and Christ the King/Reign of Christ; the former celebrates the mystery of God’s triune being, while the latter extols the sovereignty of God in Jesus Christ. The RCL readings for the time after Pentecost cover large sections of the biblical story—including the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry of teaching, healing, feeding, and welcoming. (Excerpted from the Book of Common Worship (WJK, 2018), p. 352)

In RCL Year A, the time after Pentecost (the second half of the Christian year) begins with the Great Commission and then backs up to move semicontinuously through the narrative of Matthew, ending with Matthew 25 on Reign of Christ/Christ the King. This second half of the year will focus most intently on the themes and objectives of the Matthew 25 vision.

June Series: The Great Commission (four weeks)

The time after Pentecost begins with the final words of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus’ Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20). In his brief scene, Matthew gestures to what Luke spells out in the “sequel,” the book of Acts. We begin to glimpse the events that were to unfold through the work of the Spirit in the lives of the apostles as they sought to bear witness to the resurrection: making disciples, baptizing and teaching them to follow Christ always.

It is fitting that this happens on Trinity Sunday. The doctrine of the Trinity is integral to God’s “co-mission” — God’s collaborative purpose, God’s connectional work in the world. The themes of relationship and sending are built into who God is. As God sent Jesus to reveal this great love for the world, now Jesus sends us out, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to do the same.

Trinity Sunday this year provides an opportunity to highlight another three-fold, cooperative mission — the three priorities of the PC(USA)’s Matthew 25 vision. After an introductory week, focused on the Great Commission, the preaching and music suggestions in this monthlong/four-week series focus on eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism and building congregational vitality — all in the name of Jesus Christ and for the sake of the world God loves. This is a critical part of how the PC(USA) is forming disciples and following Christ’s commandments in our present age.

Sunday, June 7

Trinity Sunday

Matthew 28:16–20	Jesus’ Great Commission: Go, make disciples, baptize and teach.	
Sermon prompt:	How can the church’s mission of baptism and teaching help to make disciples who will address poverty, racism and congregational vitality? What does the doctrine of the Trinity have to do with these priorities for the PC(USA)? Where must we “go” to do this work?	
Featured hymns:	Go to the World!	GTG 295
	Go in Grace and Make Disciples	GTG 296
	Listen, God Is Calling	GTG 456

Sunday, June 14

Proper 6

Matthew 9:35—10:8	The harvest is plentiful; Jesus instructs and sends the twelve apostles.	
Sermon prompt:	[poverty] The fundamental problem of poverty is not one of scarcity, but of the willingness to share God’s gifts. Moved with compassion for people in need, Jesus sends the apostles out to share in God’s mission. He emphasizes abundance: “The harvest is plentiful.”	
Featured hymns:	God of the Fertile Fields	GTG 714
	Come, Labor On	GTG 719
	The Lord Now Sends Us Forth	GTG 747

Matthew 10:24–39	Jesus says: Do not fear for your life; take up your cross and follow.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[racism]</i> The struggle against racism is fraught with danger. History tells us of prophets and martyrs who accepted this cost of discipleship and took up their cross to follow Christ. For people of privilege, this may mean disrupting family systems and building new communities.	
Featured hymns:	Lift Every Voice and Sing	GTG 339
	Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said	GTG 718
	Rejoice in God’s Saints	GTG 732

Matthew 10:40–42	Jesus sends disciples, saying: Whoever welcomes you welcomes me.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[vitality]</i> Real welcome involves real work. Authentic and effective evangelism requires something deeper and more difficult than accepting those who happen to enter our doors. It means going out to the margins and recognizing Christ in the faces of our neighbors.	
Featured hymns:	Let Us Build a House	GTG 301
	Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life	GTG 343
	God Welcomes All	GTG 399

All hymns, psalms and spiritual songs are from *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2013). For more ideas, see the *Book of Common Worship* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018) and *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts* (pcusa.org/calltoworship).

The *Book of Common Worship* includes Opening Sentences, Prayers of the Day, Litany for Trinity Sunday, Confession and Pardon, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Prayers of Intercession, Great Thanksgiving (2), Prayer after Communion, and Prayer of Thanksgiving; see pp. 352–364.

Call to Worship 53.1 (Year A, 2019–2020) includes Confession and Pardon, Thanksgiving for Baptism, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Ascription of Praise, Affirmation of Faith, Invitation to Offering, Prayer after Communion, Blessing and Charge, Litany of Dedication for Stewardship Pledges, Seasonal Hymns, Anthems for Children’s Choirs, Anthems for Youth Choirs, Piano Music, Instrumental Music, Opening Sentences, Prayer of Confession, Hymns for the Day, Psalm Settings, Anthems for Adult Choirs, Handbell Music and Organ Music; see pp. 114–133.

Summer Series: The Challenge of the Gospel *(nine weeks)*

As the Sundays after Pentecost continue, the Revised Common Lectionary passes through the center of the Gospel of Matthew (“books” three and four in the outline above). This section of Matthew’s Gospel finds the disciples in frequent situations of conflict and controversy, debate and danger, as Jesus’ words and actions put him at odds with religious leaders, political authorities, societal norms and cultural expectations.

The church’s work to eradicate systemic poverty, dismantle structural racism and build congregational vitality draws the people of God into similar dilemmas. Jesus’ call to faith and faithfulness is often counter-cultural, socially unacceptable, politically unpopular and even scandalous to certain religious sensibilities. Yet those who undertake this work also come to know the gifts and blessings of following Jesus, the hope and joy of life in the Spirit, and the grace and peace that come from God alone.

The passages from Matthew that frame this sermon series exemplify this tension. In the beginning (July 5), Jesus promises, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:30). At the end (August 30), Jesus warns, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross” (Matt. 16:24). The yoke is the cross — but it is easy and light because Christ is the one who shoulders its true weight.

The preaching and music suggestions in this nine-week summer series explore the challenging nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ, specifically with respect to these three priorities for the PC(USA): systemic poverty, structural racism and congregational vitality. Topics rotate (not always in the same order) according to the themes and images of the biblical passages. By the end of the summer, congregations will have had the opportunity to engage each of these topics three times, and from a variety of approaches.

Sunday, July 5

Proper 9

Matthew 11:16–19,
[20–24] 25–30

Jesus says: Come to me; my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

Sermon prompt:

[vitality] Jesus' call to discipleship involves constancy and change. In the changing contexts of each generation, vital congregations are challenged to discern how best to respond to Christ's call. Yet Christ's faithfulness is constant: inviting us to come, learn, serve, and rest.

Featured hymns:

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say	GTG 182
Come to Me, O Weary Traveler	GTG 183
Come, Bring Your Burdens to God	GTG 851

Sunday, July 12

Proper 10

Matthew 13:1–9,
[10–17] 18–23

Jesus tells and explains the parable of the sower and the seeds.

Sermon prompt:

[poverty] The parable of the sower and the seeds illustrates God's extravagant generosity, scattering out grace and truth in abundance. But this parable also challenges us to be good soil, so that God's will for the world — and care for the poor — may flourish among us.

Featured hymns:

A Sower Came from Ancient Hills	GTG 171
The Rice of Life	GTG 524
Seed, Scattered and Sown	GTG 531

Sunday, July 19

Proper 11

Matthew 13:24–30,
[34–35] 36–43

Another parable of the kingdom: Weeds grow among the wheat.

Sermon prompt:

[racism] This parable may be applied to the hidden dimensions of racism — secret prejudice, implicit bias and unconscious patterns of privilege. One challenge of dismantling structural racism is learning to recognize these “weeds,” yet continuing to love and serve all.

Featured hymns:

One Bread, One Body	GTG 530
Sheaves of Wheat	GTG 532
Somos el cuerpo de Cristo	GTG 768

Sunday, July 26

Proper 12

Matthew 13:31–33,
44–52 [53–58]

God's kingdom is like a tiny seed, yeast, a treasure, a pearl and a net.

Sermon prompt:

[racism] Small moments and subtle actions sometimes make a big difference in the struggle to challenge structural racism and white supremacy. Can you think of people who have been a mustard seed, a measure of leaven, a hidden treasure, or a pearl of great price?

Featured hymns:

If You Only Had Faith	GTG 176
I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me	GTG 700
What Is the World Like	GTG 771

Sunday, Aug. 2**Proper 13**

Matthew 14:13–21	With five loaves and two fish, Jesus feeds a great multitude.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[poverty]</i> In “God’s economy,” abundance comes from sharing. The story of Jesus feeding the multitude is a perfect illustration. How might this insight inform our ministry with people who are poor? How might it challenge our anxieties and encourage our generosity?	
Featured hymns:	Loaves Were Broken, Words Were Spoken	GTG 498
	All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly	GTG 509
	When the Poor Ones	GTG 762

Sunday, Aug. 9**Proper 14**

Matthew 14:22–33 [34–36]	Jesus walks on the water to meet his disciples and calms a storm.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[vitality]</i> In the Christian imagination, the symbol of a boat has been an important metaphor for the church. How is your congregation like a boat? What storms have you weathered? What tempests are you experiencing now? How is Jesus challenging you to step out in faith?	
Featured hymns:	Calm to the Waves	GTG 184
	Lonely the Boat	GTG 185
	It Is Well with My Soul	GTG 840

Sunday, Aug. 16**Proper 15**

Matthew 15: [1–9] [10–20] 21–28	Debate about what defiles; a Canaanite woman shows great faith.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[racism]</i> A courageous and persistent Canaanite woman speaks out with great faith to challenge the ethnic divisions and purity restrictions of Jesus’ time. Where do we find similar situations in our society? How does our faith call us to confront these problems?	
Featured hymns:	In Christ There Is No East or West	GTG 317, 318
	For All the Faithful Women	GTG 324
	For the Troubles and the Sufferings	GTG 764

Sunday, Aug. 23**Proper 16**

Matthew 16:13–20	Who is Jesus? Peter answered: You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[vitality]</i> Jesus gave Simon a new name and identity: Peter, the rock on whom the church is built. Similarly, the challenge of building congregational vitality depends on our confession of who Jesus is. What difference does it make that Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God?	
Featured hymns:	The Church’s One Foundation	GTG 321
	We Are One in Christ Jesus	GTG 322
	O Christ, the Great Foundation	GTG 361

Sunday, Aug. 30**Proper 17**

Matthew 16:21–28	Jesus says: If any want to follow me, they must take up their cross.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[poverty]</i> Jesus again presents the paradox of “God’s economy” (see Aug. 2). Those who seek to save their own lives will lose them. Those who want to acquire the world will lose what truly matters. How does this challenge conventional wisdom about wealth and poverty?	
Featured hymns:	When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	GTG 223, 224
	Lift High the Cross	GTG 826
	Precious Lord, Take My Hand	GTG 834

All hymns, psalms and spiritual songs are from *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2013). For more ideas, see the *Book of Common Worship* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018) and *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts* (pcusa.org/calltoworship).

The *Book of Common Worship* includes Opening Sentences and Prayers of the Day; see pp. 365–373.

Call to Worship 53.1 (Year A, 2019–2020) includes Confession and Pardon, Thanksgiving for Baptism, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Ascription of Praise, Affirmation of Faith, Invitation to Offering, Prayer after Communion, Blessing and Charge, Litany of Dedication for Stewardship Pledges, Seasonal Hymns, Anthems for Children’s Choirs, Anthems for Youth Choirs, Piano Music, Instrumental Music, Opening Sentences, Prayer of Confession, Hymns for the Day, Psalm Settings, Anthems for Adult Choirs, Handbell Music and Organ Music; see pp. 114–120, 134–160.

Fall Series: Glimpses of God’s Realm *(nine weeks)*

The autumn months are “back to school” time in many congregations and communities. This rhythm in common life happens to correspond with a focus on Jesus as teacher in the Revised Common Lectionary. Most of the Gospel readings in September and October feature Jesus teaching through parables: imaginative and surprising stories that offer a vision of God’s kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace. The few passages that do not contain parables per se still highlight Jesus’ ministry of teaching — to the disciples, crowds and religious leaders.

These parables and other lessons of Jesus have much to teach us about the PC(USA)’s mission to eradicate systemic poverty, dismantle structural racism and build congregational vitality. They provide valuable insights into the coming realm of God — where the hungry and thirsty are satisfied, where strangers are wrapped in welcome and where the body of Christ is strengthened and set free to serve God with joy.

The preaching and music suggestions in this nine-week fall series seek to offer glimpses of this glorious new creation, promised by Jesus Christ and proclaimed in the Gospel of Matthew. Specifically, this series examines the issues of systemic poverty, structural racism and congregational vitality through Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom of God. As in the summer series, topics vary according to the themes and images of the biblical passages. By All Saints’ Day (which falls on a Sunday in 2020), congregations will have had the opportunity to engage each of these priorities three times and in different ways.

Sunday, Sept. 6

Proper 18

Matthew 18:15–20	Jesus says: Seek reconciliation; when you gather, I am with you.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[racism]</i> In the realm of God, all will be reconciled. The work of dismantling structural racism begins with confessing sin, lamenting evil and seeking justice; only then can right relationships be restored. This will require the participation of the whole people of God.	
Featured hymns:	Come, Now, O Prince of Peace	GTG 103
	Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love	GTG 203
	Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether	GTG 529

Sunday, Sept. 13

Proper 19

Matthew 18:21–35	A lesson in forgiveness from a parable about debts and debtors.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[vitality]</i> In the realm of God, debts are forgiven. In this parable, Jesus uses astronomical numbers — seventy-seven, ten thousand — to underscore the imperative of forgiving others as God forgives us. Why is forgiveness so important for building congregational vitality?	
Featured hymns:	Jesus Knows the Inmost Heart	GTG 427
	God, How Can We Forgive	GTG 445
	Help Us Accept Each Other	GTG 754

Sunday, Sept. 20**Proper 20**

Matthew 20:1–16	The parable of the laborers in the vineyard: the last will be first.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[poverty]</i> In the realm of God, the last will be first. God’s grace is extended to all. This is the scandal of the gospel — that by the grace of God, we don’t just get what we deserve. How might this view of God’s grace influence our work to eradicate systemic poverty?	
Featured hymns:	All Who Love and Serve Your City	GTG 351
	O for a World	GTG 372
	The Bread and the Wine Are Here	GTG 512

Sunday, Sept. 27**Proper 21**

Matthew 21:23–32	Leaders question Jesus’ authority; he answers them with a parable.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[vitality]</i> In the realm of God, Jesus is Lord. Jesus asks us only “one question” (Matt. 21:24): Will you follow me? We respond by doing God’s will. A vital congregation must answer to Jesus’ authority and seek to follow him faithfully, trusting in his transforming power.	
Featured hymns:	At the Name of Jesus	GTG 264
	Will You Come and Follow Me	GTG 726
	From the Nets of Our Labor	GTG 751

Sunday, Oct. 4**Proper 22**

Matthew 21:33–46	A parable about a vineyard, wicked tenants and the owner’s son.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[racism]</i> In the realm of God, the crucified one is the cornerstone. Structural racism is built on hatred and fear. But the beloved community is built on God’s beloved Son — the very one who was betrayed, denied, rejected, despised and put to death on a cross.	
Featured hymns:	Rejected and Despised	GTG 222
	This Is the Day	GTG 391
	Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation	GTG 394

Sunday, Oct. 11**Proper 23**

Matthew 22:1–14	The kingdom is like a banquet: many are called, few are chosen.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[poverty]</i> In the realm of God, a table is set. Many are called to the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (see Rev. 19:9). God’s gracious invitation upsets our expectations, overturning the tables of power and privilege and disrupting the systems that perpetuate poverty.	
Featured hymns:	The Trumpet Sounds, the Angels Sing	GTG 505
	Look Who Gathers at Christ’s Table!	GTG 506
	I’m Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table	GTG 770

Sunday, Oct. 18**Proper 24**

Matthew [17:24–27] 22:15–22	The Pharisees test Jesus with a question about paying taxes.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[poverty]</i> In the realm of God, we honor God’s image. The coin used to pay the tax was marked with the likeness of the emperor; each human being is made in the image of God. Jesus’ words in this parable present us with a critical decision: What or whom do we value most?	
Featured hymns:	We Give Thee but Thine Own	GTG 708
	We Lift Our Voices	GTG 710
	When We Are Living	GTG 822



Sunday, Oct. 25

Proper 25

Matthew 22:34–46	Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself.	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[racism]</i> In the realm of God, we live by love. Jesus teaches that all of Scripture can be summarized in two commandments: loving God (Deut. 6:5) and loving neighbors (Lev. 19:18). How does this “rule of love” support and stand behind the work of dismantling racism?	
Featured hymns:	Love the Lord Your God	GTG 62
	The Lord Is God	GTG 63
	Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord	GTG 628

Sunday, Nov. 1

Proper 26

Matthew 5:1–12 alt. Matthew 23:1–12 [13–37]	The Beatitudes: Blessed are you; your reward is great in heaven. <i>The greatest will become servants; the humble will be exalted.</i>	
Sermon prompt:	<i>[vitality]</i> In the realm of God, the humble are exalted. The “five books” of Matthew’s Gospel begin (Matt. 5:1–12) and end (Matt. 25:31–46) with an emphasis on humble service in Jesus’ name. Why is this kind of leadership so important for building congregational vitality?	
Featured hymns:	Blest Are They	GTG 172
	When Twilight Comes	GTG 195
	Will You Let Me Be Your Servant	GTG 727

All hymns, psalms and spiritual songs are from *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). For more ideas, see the *Book of Common Worship* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018) and *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts* (pcusa.org/calltoworship).

The *Book of Common Worship* includes Opening Sentences, Prayers of the Day, Litany for All Saints’ Day, Confession and Pardon, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Prayers of Intercession, Great Thanksgiving (2), Prayer after Communion, and Prayer of Thanksgiving; see pp. 374–391.

Call to Worship 53.1 (Year A, 2019–2020) includes Confession and Pardon, Thanksgiving for Baptism, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Ascription of Praise, Affirmation of Faith, Invitation to Offering, Prayer after Communion, Blessing and Charge, Litany of Dedication for Stewardship Pledges, Seasonal Hymns, Anthems for Children’s Choirs, Anthems for Youth Choirs, Piano Music, Instrumental Music, Opening Sentences, Prayer of Confession, Hymns for the Day, Psalm Settings, Anthems for Adult Choirs, Handbell Music and Organ Music, as well as resources for Reformation Day; see pp. 114–120, 161–192.

Concluding Series: Becoming a Matthew 25 Church *(three weeks)*

Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary culminates in a three-week sojourn in the 25th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Our pilgrimage through “A Year with Matthew” has led us at last to this place. Jesus is waiting for us here. Are we prepared to recognize him?

Matthew 25 consists of two parables and a vision of the last judgment. Together, these three passages conclude the fifth “book” of Matthew’s Gospel, in which Jesus instructs his followers on “last things” — how to live in light of God’s ultimate purpose for the church and for the whole creation. As it is depicted in Matthew 25, this new way of life involves vigilant prayer, good stewardship and compassion for our neighbors.

In contrast to previous weeks that focused on particular facets of the church’s work on systemic poverty, structural racism or congregational vitality, the preaching and music suggestions in this three-week concluding series relate to the Matthew 25 vision as a whole. They seek to cast a vision for what it means to be a Matthew 25 church in the world today.

For congregations that have spent all or part of this year immersed in the Matthew 25 vision, these final three Sundays of the Christian year present an ideal opportunity to declare and celebrate their commitment to this three-part mission focus for the PC(USA). (Resources for doing so are available in the Welcome Kit at pcusa.org/matthew25; look for “Worship in a Matthew 25 Church.”) For faith communities just beginning to discern their response to the PC(USA)’s Matthew 25 invitation, this brief sermon series provides an excellent occasion to test the waters — and perhaps to begin their own journey of reformation and renewal.

Sunday, Nov. 8

Proper 27

Matthew 25:1–13	The parable of ten bridesmaids: Keep awake, the Lord is coming.	
Sermon prompt:	This parable focuses on time. In your congregation, how will you use the resource of time as you watch for the coming of God’s realm — advancing the Matthew 25 vision of eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism and building congregational vitality?	
Featured hymns:	“Sleepers, Wake!” A Voice Astounds Us	GTG 349
	Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning	GTG 350
	Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers	GTG 362

Sunday, Nov. 15

Proper 28

Matthew 25:14–30	The parable of talents: Good, trustworthy servants are rewarded.	
Sermon prompt:	This parable focuses on treasure. In your congregation, how can you be good stewards of the gifts of God as you await Christ’s return — sharing in the Matthew 25 vision of eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism and building congregational vitality?	
Featured hymns:	Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ	GTG 526
	Give Thanks, O Christian People	GTG 644
	God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending	GTG 716

Sunday, Nov. 22

Reign of Christ / Christ the King

Matthew 25:31–46	The king will judge: just as you did it to the least, you did it to me.	
Sermon prompt:	This vision focuses on service. In your congregation, how might you love and serve Christ as you love and serve your neighbors in need — living into the Matthew 25 vision of eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism and building congregational vitality?	
Featured hymns:	Come Now, You Blessed, Eat at My Table	GTG 186
	Heaven Shall Not Wait	GTG 773
	When the Lord Redeems the Very Least	GTG 852

All hymns, psalms and spiritual songs are from *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). For more ideas, see the *Book of Common Worship* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018) and *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts* (pcusa.org/calltoworship).

The *Book of Common Worship* includes Opening Sentences, Prayers of the Day, Litany for the Reign of Christ, Confession and Pardon, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Prayers of Intercession, Great Thanksgiving (2), Prayer after Communion, and Prayer of Thanksgiving; see pp. 392–400.

Call to Worship 53.1 (Year A, 2019–2020) includes Confession and Pardon, Thanksgiving for Baptism, Prayer for Illumination, Response to Readings, Ascription of Praise, Affirmation of Faith, Invitation to Offering, Prayer after Communion, Blessing and Charge, Litany of Dedication for Stewardship Pledges, Seasonal Hymns, Anthems for Children’s Choirs, Anthems for Youth Choirs, Piano Music, Instrumental Music, Opening Sentences, Prayer of Confession, Hymns for the Day, Psalm Settings, Anthems for Adult Choirs, Handbell Music and Organ Music, as well as resources for Thanksgiving Day; see pp. 114–120, 193–201.