

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Theological Education/Seminary Sunday
Liturgical Resources
September 15, 2024

About the Liturgy

Both the lectionary texts and the emphasis upon theological education informed this liturgy. Proverbs 1:20:38, Psalm 19, James 3:1-12, and Mark 8:27-38 all offer liturgical and interpretive bridges. You are welcome to use word-for-word or adapt as needed to best serve your congregation or community.

Call to Worship:

One: Today we come to learn about God's love for us.

All: We gather to sing and pray, to praise and hear the Word of God.

One: Today we come to live as children of God.

All: Our hearts are open. Our minds are ready. Our lives hope to be transformed.

One: So let us learn together as we worship the God of love.

Call to Confession (James):

The apostle James writes: "We all stumble in many ways." We all make mistakes, we judge, we even harm. No one is perfect, this is a part of being human, but it is not the end of the story. For if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and all unrighteousness. In humility and in faith, let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Prayer of Confession (James 3):

Great and Almighty God, how often have our words or our silences harmed? For from the same mouth, we utter both blessings and curses. So often we speak and do not listen. Closing ourselves off from the wisdom of our neighbors and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Lord walk with us to be better advocates, guide us to be more thoughtful friends, and encourage us to be leaders in our community and church. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (Mark 8)

Our God who knows us and calls out to us when we falter or misstep, is the same God who embraces us, reminds us of our belovedness, and forgives us our sins. Hear the Good News: in Jesus Christ you are forgiven!

Scriptures (end of page):

- Proverbs 1:20-38
- Psalm 19
- James 3:1-12
- Mark 8:27-38

Prayer (Psalm 19):

- May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Prayers of the People for Theological Education Sunday:

With all our heart and with all our mind let us pray to the Lord, saying God of love and mercy, with the response... hear our prayer.

Lord we pray to you today for the peace of the world for the welfare of the Church, and for the unity of all peoples. Let us pray to the Lord. God of Love and mercy... **hear our prayer.**

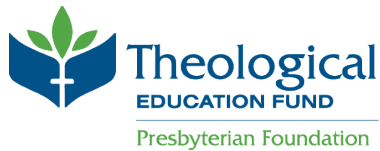
Let us turn to God, the source of our help and strength.

We pray for your city, for every city and community and for those who live in them. We pray for our leaders and country in this tumultuous political time and pray for civility and commitment to democracy and service. We pray for the violence we are witnessing around the world. Let us pray to the Lord. God of Love and mercy... **hear our prayer.**

Let us pray to God, the source of our grace and righteousness.

We ask you Lord for the deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation. We pray for the continuation of justice for all victims of violence: systemic, domestic, physical, sexual, and psychological. Let us pray to the Lord, God of love and mercy... **hear our prayer.**

Let us turn to God, the source of our learning and growing.



We pray, O God, for teachers and students. For those studying to be leaders and pastors in your church. For their wisdom, innovation, creativity, imagination, and love of your people and your church. Let us pray to the Lord, God of love and mercy... **hear our prayer.**

Let us turn to God, the source of our comfort and aid.

We give our prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison-realized and unrealized. Lord free us and heal us. Let us see and know your presence that it is always there. We pray for those in any need or trouble. Let us pray to the Lord, God of love and mercy... **hear our prayer.**

Let us turn to God, the source of all good things.

In praise and thanksgiving. For the blessings without number, we lift up these prayers with the prayer your child taught us to pray: **Our father...**

Invitation to Offering:

We have been blessed to be a blessing in this world. We call on you to share that which you have been given. May the gifts we dedicate and offer you this day be a blessing to the Church and her future leaders. May these gifts create opportunities and sustainment, so we can continue to grow, learn, and love. From that which we have been given, may we freely give.

Prayer of Dedication:

Take and use these gifts, gracious God, for the building of your kingdom, and the spreading of your love in this world. Amen.

Hymn Suggestions:

- Glory to God #69 I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I am, Lord)
- GTG #697 Take my Life
- GTG #700 I'm Going to Live So God Can Use Me
- GTG #761 Called as Partners in Christ's Service
- GTG #3 Womb of Life and Source of Being

Psalm 19: For the director of music. A psalm of David.

- ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
- ² Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
- ³ They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
- ⁴ Yet their voice^[b] goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
- ⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
- ⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.
- ⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
- ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
- ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.
- ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
- ¹¹ By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹² But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Proverbs 1:20-33: The Call of Wisdom

²⁰ Wisdom cries out in the street;
in the squares she raises her voice.

²¹ At the busiest corner she cries out;
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

²² “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?”

²³ Give heed to my reproof;

I will pour out my thoughts to you;
I will make my words known to you.

²⁴ Because I have called and you refused,
have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,

²⁵ and because you have ignored all my counsel
and would have none of my reproof,

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when panic strikes you,

²⁷ when panic strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.

²⁸ Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
they will seek me diligently but will not find me.

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,

³⁰ would have none of my counsel
and despised all my reproof,

³¹ therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way
and be sated with their own devices.

³² For waywardness kills the simple,
and the complacency of fools destroys them;

³³ but those who listen to me will be secure
and will live at ease without dread of disaster.”

Mark 8:27-38: Peter’s Declaration about Jesus

²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”^[a] ³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

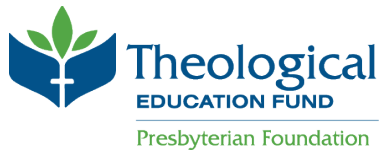
³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “If any wish to come^[b] after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel,^[c] will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words^[d] in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

James 3:1-12 Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ² We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.



It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Liturgy for this Theological Education Sunday was written by Rev. Zoë Garry, Associate Director for Theological Education Funds, and Rev. Bill Davis, Senior Director for Theological Education Funds. Zoë and Bill joined the Foundation staff this summer and would love to connect with you about Theological Education. They can be reached via email at zoe.garry@presbyterianfoundation.org and bill.davis@presbyterianfoundation.org.