



**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Theological
Education/Seminary Sunday
Liturgical Resources
September 20, 2026**

About the Liturgy

Both the lectionary texts and the emphasis upon theological education informed this liturgy. Psalm 79:1-9, Jeremiah 8: 18-9:1, 1 Timothy 2:1-7, and Luke 16:1-13 all offer liturgical and interpretive bridges.

You are welcome to use these texts word-for-word or adapt as needed to best serve your congregation or community.

Call to Worship:

One: What do you seek?

All: We've come to seek God's presence!

One: What will you do?

All: We've come to pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance!

One: What do you offer?

All: We've come to offer God praise and worship!

Call to Confession (Psalm 79):

The Psalmist writes, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the Glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins, for your name's sake." It is through confession that God forgives us our sins, not of merit or righteousness, but for our own sake and God's glory. In humility and faith let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Prayer of Confession (Jeremiah 8):

In our weary world, filled with selfishness, war, and corruption, we ask you, O Lord to be the balm of Gilead, to heal the sins of our world. Too often we neglect or abuse the talents and gifts you have given us. Help us Lord to pause and see the ways we can use our positions and gifts to help others and follow the teachings of Christ. Help us to heal and to love. We pray that we will be faithful in all that we do. Whether it be small or large so that the world may know you through our actions. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (Psalm 79)

Hear the Good News: There is a balm in Gilead that heals us and the sins of the world. In Jesus Christ you are forgiven!

Children's Message (Luke 16)

This message is best done around the baptismal font. We recommend having water ready to pour into the font at the end of the message. Ask the children to put their hands in the water during the prayer.

Begin by asking questions about responsibility.

- Who here has to help clean their house? Make their bed in the morning? Anyone have to help feed their pets?

Next, ask the question of who is responsible for the child?

- Who are the people who are responsible for you? (Guide answers towards Parents, teachers, grandparents, etc.)

Finally move into a reflection

- Did you know the church is one of those people who are responsible for you? Part of baptism in our church is that we make a promise to love and care for you and help you in your faith journey. We as the church want to be responsible for you and help you. Look around at all these people who promised to help you. Know that you are never alone and we love you and are always praying for you.
(Pour the water into the baptismal font.)

Let's pray: Dear God, thank you for the ways you show up for us and take care us, help us to model your love and care for the people in our lives and the world. Amen.

Scriptures:

- Psalm 79:1-9
- Jeremiah 8:18-9:1
- 1 Timothy 2:1-7
- Luke 16:1-13

Sermon Themes:

When beginning to write your sermon this week, take a moment of reflection. Think of all your responsibilities. Chances are if you are a pastor or community member you have quite a lot of responsibilities with work, in the church, in the community, in your home, perhaps with your family. Lay them out before you.

Now think of why you took on those responsibilities. Was it out of necessity? Was it out of love? Was it because of commitment? Was it because of call? Why did you decide to be responsible for all of these things and people?

Now take a deep breath.

Reflect now on your gifts. What are the things about you that make it so that you can be who you are and do what you do? Is it your creativity? Is it your flexibility? Is it your ability to navigate conflict? Is it your kindness? Perhaps it is your ability to truly listen to the person and the world before you?

Now ask yourself, how have you been shaped into the person you are today? You haven't always had these responsibilities. Have you always been able to use your gifts this way? Who were the people and what were the experiences that encouraged and invested in you?

What were the things that brought you to this place, to preach and care for God's people and creation? What led you to learn more about God?

Education is an incredibly formative experience.

Theological Education, whether through seminary, or a certificate program, or weekly bible study is an invitation to study and deepen our relationship with God with the lens of Christ's teachings and our tradition. Theological education allows us to ask questions of ourselves, including, Where is God in this, or how do the teachings of Christ and the

wisdom literature of our tradition inform my decisions, relationships, and place in the world?

Theological education invites us to critically explore the world and accompany our decisions, responsibilities, and relationships with God and Christ's teachings.

Today's Gospel reading says, "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much."

May we be encouraged to faithfully explore our lives, relationships, and responsibilities with God and Christ's teachings.

Prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-7):

There is nothing and no one that will not benefit from prayer. The apostle Timothy writes "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone." We pray for all those in our community and our world. 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.**

We pray for our leaders. Give them your spirit of wisdom and affirm their role as public servants invested with power to serve the people and the common good. May we as a community uplift our leaders who are dedicating their lives to bettering our world and caring for all people. Let us pray to the Lord, God of love and mercy... **hear our prayer**

We pray that our communities can be safe, our churches can be committed, that we be good thoughtful, caring, loving neighbors to all of those in our communities. May we learn our neighbors' names, may we care for the outcast and unsheltered. Let us pray to the Lord, God of love and mercy... **hear our prayer**

We pray for the teachers and students. For those studying to be leaders and pastors in your church. We pray 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.**

We pray for those who suffer in the mind, body, or spirit and those who care for them. We pray for those in prison realized or unrealized. We pray for those who are struggling, may we there for them in their time of need. Let us pray to the Lord, God of love and mercy... **hear our prayer.**

Oh Lord there is no one you cannot reach. We lift up these spoken and unspoken prayers before you with the prayer your child taught us to pray, saying... **Our Father who at in heaven...**

Prayer of Dedication (Luke 16)

Lord, we ask that you make us wise with our inheritance. May we be found faithful in that which we steward. Let us follow Christ's example and give generously and intentionally, so that we can sustain the good work and serve our community faithfully.

Charge and Benediction

Blessings in all that you care for and do! May we demonstrate the care and love God has shown to us to the people in our lives and the world around us! Amen.

Liturgy for this Theological Education Sunday was written by Rev. Zoë Garry. Zoë joined the Presbyterian Foundation staff in 2024 and would love to connect with you about Theological Education. She can be reached via email at zoe.garry@presbyterianfoundation.org