

A Liturgy for Pastor Appreciation Sunday
October 11, 2015
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Call to Worship

God, down through the ages you have called forth leaders for your people.

And for these gifts, we give you all glory, honor and praise.

In the Old Testament you called Moses, David, Deborah, Isaiah and so many others.

For their faithfulness, we give you all glory, honor and praise.

In the New Testament you called the twelve disciples, Paul, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, and so many others.

For their service, we give you all glory, honor and praise.

Still today you call women and men, young and old, to serve your church as pastors and leaders.

As we worship you today, we give you all glory, honor and praise for all those who have served this church and especially for our current pastor.

Call to Confession

The scriptures tell us that, if we say that we are without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, Jesus, the merciful will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, we know that we are sinners saved by grace alone. We understand that we often take so much for granted: you and your grace, things we enjoy and people you put in our lives. Forgive us our sins of commission and omission and help us to show our gratitude, especially for those persons who help us in our daily walk with you. (Continue to pray silently.)

Assurance of Pardon

Paul shared with the church in Rome the reality that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But the best part of Paul's words in that same letter is that God, with unmerited kindness declares that we are righteous because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. And all we have to do is accept God's gift in faith. Friends, believe the good news, in Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

Prayer for Illumination

Open our ears to hear your word for us this day as it is both read and proclaimed. Fill us with your Spirit and open our minds to encounter you again. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

While there are scripture passages that speak to the importance of pastoral appreciation, it seems that a sermon on one of those passages might seem self-serving. Perhaps a better alternative would be to choose one of the call stories from scriptures: Moses, Abraham, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, any of the disciples, Paul, or any other that speaks to you personally. Then share your own call story as a part of a sermon that explores the call to discipleship and possibly the notion that people can experience many forms of calls at various times throughout their life.

Prayers of the People

Almighty God, we are thankful for all your tender mercies toward us. Every time that we gather in your name, we feel the need to petition you on behalf of others.

- Hear our prayers as we lift to you the names of those who are sick, those undergoing tests and medical procedures. *(Allow time for silent or verbal petitions)*
- Remember those who are mourning deaths, job losses, broken marriages, or severed relationships. *(Allow time for silent or verbal petitions)*
- Bring healing and restoration to those who are in prison, those who battle addictions, those who fight mental illness and those who are victims. *(Allow time for silent or verbal petitions)*

We pray for our community, our state, our nation and our world. We know that you are the Prince of Peace, but we do not always live up to our calling to be peacemakers. Help us to be instruments of your peace.

We pray for the church: for our particular church, for Cumberland Presbyterian churches around the world and for all churches, no matter the name on the sign. Help us to be the body of Christ in and for this world which is in such desperate need for you.

We pray for leaders of every kind, but especially, on this day we pray for pastors. On this day when our denomination celebrates Pastor Appreciation Sunday, we lift to you all ordained clergy in our denomination. We pray for those who are preparing to be ministers in our denomination. We ask your blessings on those who are serving churches and other ministry roles. We lift up those who are seeking a call and those who are struggling with a sense of call. Give them a spirit of wisdom and discernment. Give our clergy the strength and the energy to do all that you call them to do for your Church. Help us all to be appreciative of their time and efforts, not just on this one day, but throughout the year. All these things and many others we ask in the name of your beloved son, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

As benefactors of your grace and recipients of such abundance, it is only right that we should come to you bringing our tithes and offerings as the appropriate response for all that we have received.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Giving God, we know that we can never out give you. We ask you to accept these gifts that we bring to you now. Bless them and multiply them for your use. We also offer ourselves to you. Use us for the furthering of your gospel message and bless us so that we might bless others in your name. In the name of our risen Lord and Savior we pray.
Amen.

Charge

As you go forth from this place, remember to be appreciative of all those who have nurtured your faith and especially for those who have answered the call to serve as pastors.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you. May God's face shine upon you and give you peace, both now and forevermore. Amen.