

A Liturgy for Pastor Appreciation Sunday

October 9, 2016

Sandra Shepherd

Call to Worship

Worship the Lord with gladness. Come into God's presence with singing.
Enter into the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving, and God's courts with praise.
Give thanks to the Lord. Bless God's holy name.

—Adapted from Psalm 100

Invocation (unison)

We gather once again to worship you, Holy God. Although we are mindful that we are always in your presence, we ask now to be supremely aware of your presence. May we be open to communing with you, seeking to bless you, even as we realize that we are the ones who are most blessed by our time with you. Help us listen carefully to you and your message throughout this time of worship.

Call to Confession

God knows our sin. God loves us still. Scripture tells us that God is “ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” Let us confess together.

—based on Nehemiah 9:17 NRSV

Prayer of Confession

One: O God, we hear your promise to help and guide us through even the most difficult times.

Many: Yet we are afraid, even paralyzed by our fears.

One: We are afraid of failing and we are afraid of the change that may come if we do not fail.

Many: Help us be confident that you lead us in right paths, even when they are rough.

One: We hear your promise that you will always be with us.

Many: Yet we sometimes feel so far from you. Help us trust in your unending love.

One: We hear your call to be the Church—to love, give, care and serve together in your name.

Many: Yet we find ourselves relying on pastors and other “professional Christians” to do these things on our behalf.

All: Help us be your Church, O God, for together we are the body of Christ.

One: Gracious God, hear us now as we continue with our silent confession.

(Pause for silent prayer.) Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Sisters and brothers, hear the good news from 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, [God] who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

All: Thanks be to God!

Prayer for Illumination

Open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds to your message, Holy God. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Ephesians 4:1-16 (*especially Ephesians 4:10-13*)
- Jeremiah 3:15-18
- James 3 (*especially James 3:1-12*)
- Romans 8 (*especially Romans 8:10*)

Prayers of the People

Pastor: Holy God, you invite us to come to you with our joys and our concerns. You welcome us into conversation with you.

All: You promise to hear our prayers, so hear us now.

Pastor: You have blessed us greatly with opportunities, families, educations, and sustenance. We recognize that not everyone has yet received these gifts. Help us be your hands and your heart. Help us bless others in ways you have blessed us. As we pray silently...

All: Speak to us. Help us listen. (*pause for silent prayer*)

Pastor: Some of us are struggling greatly with concerns about health, finances, parenting, school, and work. Others are battling loneliness, grief, confusion, and indecision. Still others are burdened by other issues. Help us to be of help in your name. As we pray silently...

All: Speak to us. Help us listen. (*pause for silent prayer*)

Pastor: Pastors are given the great opportunity to teach, to guide, to comfort, and to serve others. Yet we also need to continue learning, to be led, to be comforted, and occasionally to be served. Help us find the grace to receive as willingly as we give. As we pray silently...

All: Speak to us. Help us listen. (*pause for silent prayer*)

Pastor: Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

All things truly belong to God. We are God's stewards charged with creative and responsible use of God's gifts to us. As we bring these monetary offerings, let us also commit our lives, our talents, our time, and our attention to the furtherance of God's kingdom.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Creator and provider of all, we ask you to accept this money that we bring and these other gifts that we pledge. Bless them all so that they may be multiplied for your glory. Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Go! Go to your homes, to your schools, to your places of work or play. Go with the confidence of belonging to the Holy God. Carry with you a deep love for Christ. Be filled with God's Holy Spirit. Share the good news in all you do and say. May God richly bless you as you do! Amen.