



**A Liturgy to Celebrate! Being a Senior Adult
Week Six of 2017 Christian Education Season
September 10, 2017
Abby Cole Keller (extras-Elinor Brown)**

Preparation for the Sunday:

- *Locate a copy of the song "Celebration" by Kool and the Gang to play as a gathering song for worship each Sunday of the CE Season. You may not want to play the entire song since it is about four minutes long and repeats.*
- *Ask your worship committee or a creative bunch of folks to decorate the worship area with items that represent your senior adults. Ask the Senior Adults of your church to bring items, possibly something from their childhood like an old doll or a butter churn or something that represents what they enjoy doing now such gardening tools. Encourage them to express themselves creatively, then have someone meaningfully arrange the items on the altar.*
- *Well before this Sunday, ask a member to take pictures of your Senior Adults and display them throughout the sanctuary. If you want to do some extra work, ask a member to interview the Senior Adults while another person records it on video. Ask them to recall a memory of a time when they have felt especially close to God. The stories can be funny or somber, but meaningful to them.*
- *Look through the Additional Activities at the end of this liturgy and decide which of these you will do. Make plans to do them and gather materials as needed. You will also need to publicize and recruit people to help you with them so leave plenty of time to do so.*

Call to Worship

One: Praise the Lord

Men: Praise God from Heaven

Women: Praise God from the mountaintops;

One: Praise God,

Men: all you angels,

Women: all you warriors

All: Praise God, sun and moon.

Praise God, you morning stars

One: Praise God from earth

All: Robust and important people

Adults: Graybeards

Kids: And little children

All: Old and young together

One: Let them praise the name of God

Women: It's the only name worth praising

Men: Hallelujah!

All: Praise from all who love God.

(Psalm 148)

Call to Confession

Remnant of God,

You are God's people,

God is always ready to hear you

and awaits you with forgiving arms.

With penitent hearts, let us confess our sins together.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Holy God,

We are your chosen people; we have been given strong hands to do your work.

Yet we turn to the comforts of this world and our hands have become smooth and weak.

You call us to sow your peace, yet we neglect your fields,

and fear and hatred grow as weeds in your kingdom.

You call us to yield your fruit, and to be a blessing in your name.

Yet too often we turn away from your calling.

We shy away from the labor of being your people

and refuse to work together for your good.

We are quick to blame our ailments, our age, our busy lives.

Too often we do not listen to the generation in the next pew,

And hold tight to our own view, unable and unwilling to listen and learn.

Forgive us O God. Call us back to you once again.

Fortify us for your labor. Calm our fears.

**Strengthen our hands that we may reenter the world your chosen people,
ready to work the field, sowing peace and sharing love. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

God has promised to do good to Jerusalem to the house of Judah—to all God’s children and we are all God’s children. We shall be God’s people and God shall be our God, in faithfulness and righteousness. Therefore believe the good news. Do not be afraid, for in Christ Jesus you are forgiven.

Children’s Message

Read the book Faith the Cow by Susan Bame Hoover. If you do not own this book, this is a great opportunity to buy it for yourself or for your church’s nursery or library. After reading it, you may want to make the following points:

- Today the scripture is talking about remembering our past history, which can help us to make things better in the future. We are also celebrating Senior Adults—those people who are older than us and smarter than us and have some great ideas. This story is about one of those Senior Adults who had a good idea.
- In this story, Dan West travels to Spain and gives away food and supplies to those who don’t have any. That was a great thing for him to do, but there were so many people who needed help that Dan couldn’t give them enough. He remembered that when he was growing up, his family had enough to eat because they had animals that provided food and milk.
- Dan West came up with an idea: If those families who don’t have enough to eat could get a milk cow, they could help other families by giving them milk. They could also sell the milk to buy food. He asked his friends and they gave him Faith the cow—and then another cow and another cow. Dan’s idea became a business called Heifer International. They give away all kinds of animals now, not just cows. Dan West could have just sat around being sad because he couldn’t do enough to help, but he didn’t. Because he took action, Dan made a difference.
- Sometimes people think that they can’t do anything to help others. They might think they are too young to make a difference. Or too old to make a difference. But God uses all kinds of people of all ages and races, girls and boys and men and women. We can be glad about that because everyone has to help to make the world a better place to live. That is what God wants from us and for us.
- Then pray something like this: God, we thank you so much for people like Dan West who want to serve other people and work hard to do so. We thank you that no matter what age we are, we can serve you and serve others. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

O Lord of Host, we gather together—old men and old women, children and youth, alike to worship you. We are drawn together to hear your word. We are gathered to worship you as your people. Speak to us now through your holy scripture. Still our worried hearts, calm our racing minds, and open our spirit to your Spirit that we might grow in wisdom and might through the hearing of your word this day. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Psalm 148
- Zechariah 8:1-13 (or on to 17 for more)

Prayers of the People

Most Holy God,

You call us all to be your children.

You call us to love one another and hold one another up in prayer.

Therefore we pray for all your peoples.

We pray for the young children

Who are growing up in a world that is changing too fast.

Help us to value their energy and enthusiasm.

Help us to reach out and support them as they grow.

May we have the strength to show them your ways
and be a source of strength and knowledge for them.

We pray for the youth of this community.

Teenagers who are working to find out who they are and whose they are.

As they grow into adults, help us to reach out to them and find ways to speak with them.

Help us to model the love of Christ to them and for them.

May we be the community that sows love in them that they may bear good fruit.

We pray for young adults.

As they face the hurried world around them,

As they feel the pressures of providing, surviving and finding their way,

May they find moments of grace and joy.

May this community support them and uphold them,

Making their burdens lighter.

Today we especially pray for our senior adults.

We give you thanks for their years of toil and labor,

For the hard work they have done

And the good lives they have lived.

They are the firm foundation of the church.
May their wisdom and knowledge continue to be a strengthening agent.
May they know their value in this community, in the world, and in your kingdom.
Continue to give them purpose.
May their strong hands help to shape the generations that follow.
May the wisdom of their years be heard and held in honor.
And may they continue to be the building blocks of our congregation.
Grant them peace of mind, strength of body, and grace abounding.
When they face challenges, loss and declining health,
May we be the people who lift them up, surround them with love,
And provide them with security and comfort.

Together we are all your people, O God,
Draw us nearer to one another through prayer and love,
That we may resemble your kingdom,
and that together we may live into the fullness of our calling.
In Christ, through Christ and with Christ we pray. Amen.

If you intend to commission some of the service activities, (see additional activities below), you may want to do it here.

Invitation to the Offering

God has chosen us. God has promised to be our God so let us be God's people. With glad hearts let us make our offering to the Lord.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of all people, young and old, you created us to be your people. You promised to be our God. You have given us hands to serve you and hearts to praise you. Accept these gifts from our toil and labor as a token of our gratitude for all that you have entrusted to us. May these meager offerings be strengthened in our giving. May they be used to sow your peace and to glorify your kingdom. May our hearts be humbled by your majesty and your might, and may our hands be strengthened for your labor. Amen.

Charge

Friends, do not be afraid.
Let your hands be strong.
Old men and women with their wisdom,
Young boys and girls with their energy,
Let your hands be strong.
Sow peace, yield fruit and be a blessing for God.

Benediction

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

Additional Activities

Senior Adult Gatherings and Beyond—Here are some ideas that can be for both one time programs and ongoing service activities for your church:

- Contact your state's Department of Aging or Human Services. Arrange to have someone speak to your group about the services the state provides for older adults.
- Ask a lawyer to talk with your group about wills, powers of attorney, protecting your finances, etc.
- Learn about fraud and scams. The local police or an advocacy group would be glad to share information with your group.
- Invite a school choir, ensemble, budding musician, and so forth to perform for your group. Chances are they would welcome the opportunity to use their skills. This might also provide an opportunity to forge a relationship with other groups in your community.
- Become involved in a service project. Rather than having someone give to your group, give to others.
- Take a tour of a historic site or a new manufacturing facility.
- Have someone teach basic self-defense techniques that the people in your group could use.
- Go to see a play or hear a musical performance at a local college or community center.
- Learn exercises that people can do at any level of mobility.
- Invite a representative from the Chamber of Commerce to talk with your group about things planned for the community.
- Start a mentoring program for children and teens.
- Have members of the group share their hobbies. Or, if you learn about someone in the community who has an unusual hobby, invite him or her to share with your group.
- Volunteer at a community food bank or clothes closet.
- Bring snacks and enjoy playing games.
- Attend a seminar that's being offered through a community college or other local group.
- Arrange to have someone bring an audio/video recording device so that members of the group can record some of their favorite memories, history of the church, funny stories, etc. Plan another time for sharing these recordings with the congregation.
- Learn about social media. A teenager or young adult in your congregation would be a good resource person.
- Have a class about basic use of a computer or other electronic devices.
- Invite someone to share budgeting tips for senior adults.
- Have a volunteer who can help with income tax preparation.

- Ask a mechanic or a home maintenance professional to share information about caring for your vehicle or home, how to perform simple repairs, and when to call a professional.