

seminaries and churches together

for generations to come



Theological Education Sunday

September 2014



For centuries, we Presbyterians have prided ourselves on an educated clergy. To continue this tradition of excellence, we have entrusted ten Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminaries, and two theological institutions related to the denomination by covenant agreement, with providing the educational foundation church leaders need to be able to preach, teach, pray, and lead.

With the help of congregations nationwide, our Presbyterian seminaries are “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12).

OUR PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARIES:

- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas
 - Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia
- University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa
- Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky
 - McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 - Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey
- San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California
 - Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia
- Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, and Charlotte, North Carolina

In covenant with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- Auburn Theological Seminary, New York, New York
- Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico

We are pleased to invite you, once again, to celebrate God’s inspiring work in equipping our seminaries to educate and prepare Christian leaders to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). The Office of Theological Education offers these liturgical resources to assist you in preparation for worship, prayer, meditation, and reflection. The Presbyterian Planning Calendar specifies Sunday, September 21st as the Lord’s Day for recognition of this mission emphasis, yet you may choose an alternative date as customs dictate or circumstances require.

Call and Community:

Liturgical Resources for Theological Education Sunday 2014

(inspired by 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1)

Call to Worship

Leader: Early in the morning, God calls us into the presence of another day; to celebrate the gifts of life and breath, of possibility and promise.

People: **Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.**

Leader: Through the voices of young, old, and in-between; you teach us and reveal to us your plans for our formation and growth.

People: **Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.**

Leader: On this day, we gather together to discern your voice in our midst, and to be inspired to bear witness to your extraordinary grace throughout the world.

People: **Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.**

Leader: Let us glorify God and enjoy God forever! Let us worship the Holy One!

[Consider leading the Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness from the baptismal font. This helps to illuminate the theological connections between God's forgiveness and the new life we receive in baptism. You may pour water into the font during the call to confession, lift water from the font with your hands as the words of forgiveness are spoken.]



Call to Confession

Leader: Like our spiritual ancestors from the house of Eli, we, too, are full of iniquity. Try as we might to cover up our sinfulness with superficial acts of contrition, we attempt in vain to activate the forgiving grace that only God can provide. Humbly and sincerely, let us turn to God, our Fount of Forgiveness, to confess our sinfulness.

Prayer of Confession (in Unison)

Have mercy on us, Almighty God. Too often, we hasten to “show what we know,” only to reveal the depths of our ignorance. Afraid that increasing our knowledge will reveal us to be lacking, we close our minds and cover our ears to new sources of information. Daunted by the weight of history, we forget our traditions and neglect our time-honored sources of wisdom. For those moments when you have called us to do good, to be better, and to seek the best for one another—but we have ignored your voice—forgive us, O God. Inspire us to open our hearts, enrich our minds, and restore our relationships, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: May our ears “tingle” at God’s news to us—not of destruction, but of restoration. God made whole what we have broken; God redeemed us when we were lost. Through the saving power of our loving savior, Jesus Christ, we receive the gracious gift of forgiveness. Knowing that we are forgiven, let us be at peace within ourselves and be seekers of peace with one another.

People: **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Scripture Reading

I Samuel 3:1-4:1

Litany of Thanksgiving

Leader: Rabbouni, our Divine Teacher, we give thanks for the gift of learning. As we allow ourselves to be transformed by knowledge and insight, and embrace opportunities for learning and growth, we thank you for nurturing our hearts and minds as fertile ground into which your seeds of purpose grow.

People: **We thank you for the communities in which you place us that challenge us to listen for your direction. We give thanks for those who dedicate their time, talent, and energy to disciplined learning and study as they deepen their commitment to serve the body of Christ.**

Leader: We thank you for calling us into communities of learning and growth, for inspiring us to serve as mentors and for prompting us to receive instruction; for giving us, like Samuel, the courage to be vulnerable in order to be teachable, and for encouraging us to model generosity of spirit, like Eli, in order to teach.

People: **We give thanks that the processes of call and response, of teaching and learning, of mentoring and apprenticeship, are happening throughout the world and in many different settings: worshiping communities, office spaces, campgrounds, kitchens, and classrooms.**

Leader: For our rich heritage of theological education, and for our commitment to equipping leaders through our seminaries to serve your church, we offer special thanks and praise. For faculty and those who offer instruction; for administrators; for clerical staff; for those who keep the grounds and for those who serve healthy meals; for students; for alumni; for members of boards; for all who provide for and support our seminaries, bountiful God, we give thanks this day. Our prayers extend to those involved in education at institutions from other traditions as well, that all partners in the enterprise of education may bring you honor and glory.

People: **All thanks and praise be to you, almighty God, for equipping us to build and sustain mentoring communities of learning and instruction that prepare us to hear and respond to your call in our lives. Amen.**

Charge and Benediction

Leader: Here you are! Listen for the voice of God. Celebrate God's message taking shape and form in the lives of those preparing to serve God's realm. Be followers of Christ. To each you encounter, teach the Good News through bold action and disciplined word. Now may the peace of Christ, which transcends all understanding, be in your hearts and minds today, tomorrow, and for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Suggested Hymns

26	"Earth and All Stars!"	401	"Here in This Place (Gather Us In)"
451	"Open My Eyes, That I May See"	453	"Open Your Ears, O Faithful People"
691	"Lord, When I Came into This Life"	707	"Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord"
722	"Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak"	726	"Will You Come and Follow Me (The Summons)"
733	"We Are All One in Mission"		

Notes

All suggested hymns are found in *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013). Go to www.presbyterianhymnal.org for more information, or order through the PC(USA) Store, 800.533.4371 or www.pcusastore.com.

These liturgical resources were written and prepared by the Reverend Nancy Benson-Nicol, Associate for Theological Education Funds Development at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Louisville, Kentucky.



O God,
you are the giver of life
and new life.
Each of us longs to draw close to you,
and to see our lives transformed in the
image of Jesus Christ;
come and make all things new.
Our seminaries need your presence
to become wise, able to discern
your vision for ministry
in this changing world; come
and make all things new.
Renew your churches with servants
and leaders, that all may participate in
your great purposes
in the world you so love; come
and make all things new.
Amen.

Prayer by Dr. Gary Hansen, author of
*Kneeling with Giants: Learning to Pray with History's
Best Teachers.*

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for generations to come

VISIT OUR WEBSITES

Office of Theological Education

www.pcusa.org/seminaries

Take the Virtual Tour

www.seminarytour.org

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All gifts to the Theological Education Fund are welcome!
Go to <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/donate/TE999999/>



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Supplement:

Lectionary-Based Liturgical Resources for Theological Education Sunday September 21, 2014 *25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A*

Scriptures

Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

Opening Sentences

(1) Give thanks to the Lord!
Call upon God's name.
Sing praises, and tell the wonderful works of the Lord.
Rejoice and give glory to God.
Seek the presence and strength of the Lord.
Remember the wonderful things God has done.

Psalm 105

(2) Praise the Lord,
who gives us food in abundance.
Praise the Lord,
who provides water from a stone.
Praise the Lord,
whose promise is trustworthy.
Praise the Lord,
our savior, the source of our song.

Exodus 16, Psalm 105

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we give thanks for the blessings you shower upon us each day, like manna in the wilderness, like water in a dry and weary land. Gather us into your presence, and surround us with your Spirit as we come to worship you today; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Exodus 16

Confession of Sin

[Consider leading the Prayer of Confession and Declaration of Forgiveness (not included in these resources; see Book of Common Worship, 56-57) from the baptismal font. This helps to illuminate the theological connections between God's forgiveness and the new life we receive in baptism. You may pour water into the font during the call to confession, lift water from the font with your hands as the words of forgiveness are spoken.]

Exodus 16

Loving God, you are our way in the wilderness of sin. You walk beside us each day— yet we are quick to complain and slow to recognize your care. We try to hoard up your good gifts and worry that there is not enough. Forgive our fearful and selfish ways, and teach us to trust your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.
[Silent prayer for confession may follow.]

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, provider of our daily bread, you are the source of all wisdom and truth. Nourish us by your Living Word and fill us with your Holy Spirit, so that we may love and serve you faithfully this day, and always; through Jesus Christ, true bread from heaven. Amen.

Prayers of the People

[Consider leading the Prayers of the People and/or the Offering (below) from the Lord's table. This helps to demonstrate our calling—as the body of Christ—to intercede for others and to offer our lives in love for the world.]

In faith and hope, let us call on the name of the Holy One, saying:
God, in your wisdom, hear our prayer.

We pray for the church of Jesus Christ our Lord,
for its mission and ministry to a world in need.
Unite us as your people and fill us with your purpose.
God, in your wisdom ...

We pray for our theological seminaries
[Austin, Columbia, Dubuque, Louisville, McCormick, Pittsburgh, Princeton, San Francisco, Johnson C. Smith,
Union, Auburn, and Evangelical of Puerto Rico],
and for the work of seminaries and churches together.
We give thanks for the women and men who have answered your call to ministry
and for the professors and administrators who help to shape them for your service.
Challenge and nurture them with your Word.
Strengthen and stir them with your Spirit.
God, in your wisdom ...

We pray for the people of all nations and those who govern them,
for the wisdom to seek peace, and the will to do justice.
Heal our divisions, put an end to our violence,
and help us to build new relationships of compassion and understanding.
God, in your wisdom ...

We pray for the earth and its precious resources.
Restore the splendor of your good creation
and give us a common vision of this world as our home.
God, in your wisdom ...

We pray for this community of your people,
for discernment as we seek to be your disciples in this place.
Lead us toward the future you have prepared for us
and keep us faithful in our promises to you and to one another.
God, in your wisdom ...

We pray for the poor and oppressed, and all who suffer,
for those in prison, and those who mourn.
Pour out your healing love on our broken world,
and equip us for ministries of healing and wholeness,
evangelism and outreach, peacemaking and reconciliation.
God, in your wisdom ...

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died,
particularly those saints and sages who bore witness to your light,
opened our hearts to your Word, and helped us to discern your call.
Let our own lives give testimony to your love and grace,
as we seek to share your good news with all the world.
God, in your wisdom ...

Loving God,
receive all the prayers of your people, spoken and silent,
and in your infinite wisdom,
use them for the fulfillment of your new creation;
through Jesus Christ, your Word and our way. Amen.

Offering

Matthew 20

God has given us far more than we deserve,
far more than we could ever ask or imagine.
With glad and generous hearts,
let us return to God the offering of our lives.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Matthew 20

Generous God, we give you thanks and praise
for the grace of Jesus Christ,
so freely given to all the world.
Strengthen us in faith and faithfulness
and empower us to proclaim this good news,
until that day when the last are first
and all are one in your heavenly realm;
through Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega. Amen.

Charge

Philippians 1, Matthew 20

Live your life in a manner
worthy of the gospel of Christ.
standing firm in the Spirit,
working side by side
as laborers in God's vineyard.

Lectionary-Based Hymn Suggestions

Exodus 16:2-15

"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" (*Glory to God* (GTG) 65)

Philippians 1:21-30

"Pues Si Vivimos / When We Are Living" (GTG 822)

Matthew 20:1-16

"Come, Labor On" (GTG 719)

Notes

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