

## MODEL WORSHIP SERVICE FOR OLDER ADULT SUNDAY

By Rev. Mike Fonfara

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourages congregations to set aside the first Sunday in May to celebrate the many gifts and graces brought to the people by older adults. It is easy to overlook contributions by the aging because their ministries often show up in silent and private ways. Please plan to recognize an Older Adult Sunday in your congregation. If May's first Sunday does not work, pick another Sunday. Your congregation will be blessed in many ways as it celebrates older adult gifts and graces.

This model worship service exists to stimulate the congregation's imagination about the ways that people are equipped for ministry throughout the whole life's journey. Please use it as it is presented – if you like. Better still; work with the Session and Worship Committee to create your own worship order and elements that better suits your community's personality, interests, and gifts! Your worship will honor God's holy name!

**Before worship ...** As the congregation gathers, let silence provide an atmosphere that encourages prayer and meditation. Minds, hearts, souls, and bodies should be prepared for the wonderful spiritual enrichments that lie ahead. As worship time gets close, raise the people's spiritual awareness by singing a few favorite old hymns that bring back memories and generates inspiration.

**Call to Worship ...** (Based upon Psalm 118:1 NIV)

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

**People: We gather today with thankful hearts ready to praise God.**

Leader: His steadfast love endures forever.

**People: For all the days of our lives, we have known God's love.**

**All: Let us worship our loving God of all ages.**

**Invocation ...**

Leader: Almighty God, you have walked with everything and everyone since the beginning of all creation. Your Presence has brought wholeness, joy, and divine energies. Today, we ask that your Presence would help us recognize the divine gifts and graces of our beloved older adults. Guide us to appreciate this love and ministries offered by our elders. We may be of differing ages, O God, but we honor the ways our older adults teach us, provide faithful role models, bring joy to our gatherings, and draw more than a few smiles from time-to-time. Come, smile with us, Gracious God, as we praise You and honor our aging friends.

**People: Amen.**

**Hymn ...** 489 “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, 1990)

### Prayer of Confession ...

(Based upon Psalm 71:9 NIV)

A Unison Reading

**Almighty and Gracious God, we join together with thankful and humble hearts to confess our sins. Too often, we let the world's sinful ways set our agendas. Regardless of our ages, the temptations to sin are overwhelming. We trustfully ask that You will not cast us off in our old age and when divine care is especially needed. Forgive us of our unrighteous attitudes, behaviors, and judgments, O God. Let the Holy Spirit strengthen us for the Christian paths that need traveling and Christian service that need doing. Please cleanse us from all evil and restore us to a faith that is worthy of your Presence in our lives. We lift all these burdens to You and offer our thanksgiving in Jesus Christ's holy name. Amen.**

### Assurance of Pardon

Leader: God is mighty and eternal in all matters.

**People: God cares individually for each of us during every age of our lives.**

Leader: Receive God's grace as our lives are restored to wholeness.

**People: We yield to God's loving mercy.**

Leader: Our sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ!

**People: We honor and praise God for the giving of such loving kindness.**

**Hymn ... # 420 "God of Grace and God of Glory" (The Presbyterian Hymnal, 1990)**

**Scripture Lessons ...** Please consult Lectionary/ Program Calendar for the first Sunday in May. Other appropriate Scripture lessons may be: (O.T.) Psalm 71:7-16 and Joel 2:25-29; (Gospel) Matthew 9:14-17 and John 3:1-10; and (Epistle) Romans 6:5-11 and Colossians 3:1-11.

**Sermon/Message ...** This is the pastor/worship leader's choice.

### Affirmation of Faith ...

(Based upon 2 Corinthians 5:15)

A Unison Reading

**We believe that Christ died for everyone, young and old alike. Regardless of our age, we choose to live not for ourselves but for Christ's ministry in the world. We affirm that our Savior died and was raised to life so that all people may enjoy freedom from sin, serve God their whole lives, and celebrate eternal life in Heaven. This we believe.**

(If the Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated in the congregation on the first Sunday of each month or the Session wants the Sacrament celebrated on this Older Adult Sunday, this is a good location in the worship order to do it.)

### **Prayers for the People ...**

The worship leader is encouraged to lead the congregation's prayers according to the traditions of the worshipping community. Please be sure to recognize the presence of older adults in the church, their contributions, their influence, their encouragements, and their ministries.

The following prayer starter is just one alternative that may be used to focus the people's minds for prayer. It is fitting for this prayer to conclude with "The Lord's Prayer."

Leader: Let's turn our thankful hearts toward heaven in prayer.  
People: **We are thankful that God has broad shoulders to carry our joys as well as our sorrows.**  
Leader: Let us pray.

**Hymn ... # 540** "God Be with You Till We Meet Again" (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, 1990)

**Benediction ...** "Worship is now over, but the service just begins. Go forth with resolve to glorify God in all things while enjoying the Almighty's presence forever. Amen."

**Closing Hymn ...** Some congregations find it pleasing to close worship and leave the area by singing portions of a beloved hymn or song. An up-beat song like "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (# 29) can do much to energize worshippers for the Christian meditations and ministries that lie ahead.

**Rev. Mike Fonfara, D.Min.,** serves God's cause as an honorably retired pastor in Tampa Bay Presbytery (Florida) providing spiritual direction, professional storytelling, Christian meditation training, and local studies into the Celtic and Native American cultures from which he comes. He is an experienced workshop leader and brings enthusiasm as well as vitality to the classroom. Mike has served on the POAMN's Executive Committee in various capacities, and also was a member of the Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors (ARMSS).