

WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULT SUNDAY

By Jan L. McGilliard

The Presbyterian Church (USA) designates the first Sunday of May as Older Adult Week, a time to honor older adults for their commitment to the life, witness, and ministry of the church. The timing is not so important...you may choose any Sunday for this *celebration of aging*. This service may be adapted for a retirement community or a Presbytery meeting. We suggest asking older adults to take part in leading the worship service. All bulletins should appear in large print on this Sunday. *indicates to stand as able

Thought for Meditation: *“Age puzzles me. I thought it was a quiet time. My seventies were interesting, and fairly serene, but my eighties are passionate. I grow more intense as I age. To my own surprise I burst out with hot conviction.”* Florida Scott-Maxwell in *The Measure of My Days*.

***Call to Worship:** (from Psalm 92)

It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord,
And to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

**To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning
And of your faithfulness in the night season;**

On the psaltery, and on the lyre,
And to the melody of the harp.

**For you have made me glad by your acts, O Lord;
And I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.**

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
And shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

**Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God;**

They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be green and succulent;

**That they may show how upright the Lord is,
My Rock, in whom there is no fault.**

Creator God,
You have planted your Word in our hearts
That you might harvest forth justice.

So root us in your love,
That we may always flourish,
Yielding all the fruits of the Spirit
From youth to old age;
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***Hymn:** *Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks, How Firm a Foundation, or Find us Faithful*

Call to Confession:

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Loving God, you provide everything we need, yet sometimes, we doubt there will be enough time, enough money, enough health, enough memory, enough compassion as we live out our days. We doubt when we need to have faith. We see the glass half empty when in fact it is half full. We know you are present, God with us, but in spite of ourselves we sometimes feel separated and lost. Forgive us when we rely too much on ourselves and not enough on you, for you are steadfast and strong, ready to meet our every need and receive every petition. Bless each of us, Lord, as we grow older, that we may mature in faith as well as in years. In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayers. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news! In every time and place, in every age and in every space we are forgiven in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

***Grateful Response** Sing the refrain of the first hymn, Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks
Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, alleluia! Give Praise to His Name.

Passing of the Peace

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

(Worshippers may exchange signs of God's peace, standing or seated, as needed)

Testimony of Service Older Adults from the congregation (as time allows)

Scripture Readings *Jeremiah 31:7-14, Ephesians 1:3-14*

Anthem (if possible, feature older adults from the congregation)

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-18

Sermon: *Testimony to Light and Life* (A traditional sermon may be preached. Alternatively, you may wish to call upon a few older adults to share their own stories as a testimony to the light and life in their life journeys)

Prayer of Commitment

A Litany of Storytelling (by the Rev. Donna Coffman)

(may be led by a number of older adults)

Since the beginning of time, stories have been told of the mighty works of God. Even the heavens tell of the glory of God and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.

"Come and hear and I will tell what God has done for me."

When we tell of the faith of Abraham, Moses, and David; Mary, Jesus, and Paul; Augustine, Luther and Calvin; grandparents, parents, and friends, we are picking up the shuttle lying on the loom of the tapestry of God's interaction with humankind. Each time a story is told, a few rows are woven into this tapestry of time. We become connected, tightly woven into the pattern that began before the world began.

"Remember the days of old, Consider the years long past. Ask your father and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you."

By telling our stories, we see how God has been at work in whatever life has brought to us. Meaning is fashioned from our suffering and pain. Healing comes as we make sense of collection of seemingly disconnected events. By putting experience into language, we build the stories of faith that inspire endurance in present times.

"Your life-filled word brings order to the chaos of our days. In love you claim us as your own..."

As we tell our stories, new directions are often revealed to us. We uncover paths not taken because they were covered with the brambles of daily living. Doors fall open that before seemed locked and sealed by the "shoulds" and "oughts" of life.

**"I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds."**

When we share our stories, we leave something of ourselves with others. We prepare the loom for the shuttle of generations to come. A strong foundation is woven that will allow more rows to be added to the pattern long after we have disappeared into the warp and weft of history.

"Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children and their children another generation."

In telling our stories, we discover who we are by knowing where we've been. We are able to fit together the pieces of the puzzles of our lives and make sense of who we are.

God's design for our part of the tapestry of time is revealed. We become secure in who we are and accept ourselves. Our common humanity is made known and we find our place in the family of God.

“How blest it is to be a part of God's beloved company.”

May you and your descendants know forever God's Shalom!

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer (led by an older adult)

***Closing Hymn** *There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit, My Hope is Built,
or Blessed Assurance*

***Benediction**

And now may the God of all ages bless and keep you today and always. **Amen.**

Jan McGilliard *lives in Blacksburg, VA, with husband Mike who is retired from VA Tech. Both are active at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, and Jan spends about half-time preaching in area churches. She is a past president of POAMN and worked many years for the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic in Older Adult Ministries. Jan loves being active, especially cycling long distances, hiking, and camping. Jan and Mike love grandparenting Connor and Emma Claire.*