



The Song of Sophia, Shiloh Sophia McCloud

Women of Vision

Installation Service for Presbyterian Women

BY CHERI HARPER

Call to Worship (based on Joel 2:28–32)

One: As the prophet Joel tells us, the spirit of God is poured out for us.

All: **Our sons and our daughters shall prophesy.**

One: Our old ones will dream dreams.

All: **Our young ones will see visions.**

One: Male and female, slave and free,

All: **all who call on the name of the LORD will witness God's saving love.**

Hymn

"Open My Eyes, That I May See" (GtG 451)¹

Prayer

One: God of infinite wisdom, we come to you today knowing that we do not always see with your eyes. You promise us vistas of beauty and wholeness, yet we focus on destruction and despair. Guide us toward your perfect realm, O God. Illumine in us your spirit. Clarify our sense of purpose as women who lead and serve in your name.

All: **Amen.**

Meditation

Women with a clear sense of vision are nothing new. In Exodus 15:20–22, we encounter Miriam, the prophet, singing her victory song, tambourine in hand, and dancing with women after they escaped bondage in Egypt. Later we meet Huldah, another prophet, who advised the priests of Josiah, communicating God's word to the king of Judah

and his people (2 Kings 22:14–20). In the Gospels we find Elizabeth, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave a prophetic greeting when she saw Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus (Lk. 1:39–45). Perhaps our most familiar woman of vision is Mary herself who accepted that she was the mother of a holy child and offered herself as a faithful servant of God (Lk. 1:26–38).

As we celebrate the centennial anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women the right to vote, we also remember American women of vision. Harriet Tubman used her vision of freedom to escape slavery and rescue others through the Underground Railroad. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton used their vision of justice to organize and lead the women's equality and suffrage movements. Minnie Spotted Wolf used her vision of service to become the first Native American woman enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve.² Eleanor Roosevelt used her vision of righteousness to help draft and secure adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Berta Cáceres had a vision that the environment should be honored and protected, as should the needs and traditions of her tribe in Honduras.³

While women from the Bible and from American history give us inspiring examples of visionary lives, we can also look to our own communities and honor those who lead with the light of God. Who are the women of vision in your life? How do you honor them or apply their vision to your life and ministry?

Hymn

"I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"
(GtG 730)

Installation

PW Leader: As Presbyterian Women, we share God's promise of peace, hope, reconciliation, justice and love. We are inspired by women who came before us and led with faithfulness, bravery and their own dreams of what was possible. We look to our leaders today with hope for their own visions of service now and into the future. Now let us confirm our commitment to God and to each other by affirming together our PW Purpose:

All: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- ♦ to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
- ♦ to support the mission of the church worldwide,
- ♦ to work for justice and peace, and
- ♦ to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

Litany of Installation

Leader: Let us pray. Holy One, we give thanks that you seek out leaders to guide us. We know that your purposes for this world are lived out through the work of amazing women—those who give their time to

teach others, those who give their money to support mission, those who give their talents to serve in your name. As we commit ourselves to your service, help us catch your vision for this caring community.

All: Amen.

Leader (to elected leaders): Will you be faithful to the PW Purpose and do your best to lead your fellow Presbyterian Women with the love, compassion and courage that we encounter in Christ Jesus?

Elected Leaders: We will.

Leader: Will you learn from the women you are leading—being open to different and even uncomfortable points of view—and respond with grace when disagreements arise?

Elected Leaders: We will.

Leader: Will you motivate others to follow you, demonstrating the joy and enthusiasm that you receive from the Holy Spirit?

Elected Leaders: We will.

Leader (to the congregation): Will you draw closer to these leaders whom God has raised up, offering them support and grace as they take on this task?

Congregation: We will.

All: As sisters in Christ, we will.

Declaration of Installation

(Presentation of tokens, if any)

Leader: (Name of each new officer), you are duly installed leaders of Presbyterian Women for this (circle/ congregation/presbytery/synod). As we are reminded by scripture, God calls women and equips them with bold vision, strong voices and faithful spirits. You can rejoice, knowing that your Creator not only calls you, but claims you and gives you everything you need to lead and to serve.

Hymn

"Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness"
(GtG 291)

Sending

Installed PW Leader: We have had courageous and insightful women before us, among us now, and to lead us in the future. We can go out and serve with open eyes, knowing that God will always show us the way. Now, let's go out and lead with 20/20 vision! 🍀

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Notes

1. GtG: *Glory to God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013).
2. "Amending America: Women's Rights and Gender Equity," *Amending America National Outreach Initiative*, National Archives and Records Administration, on Google Arts & Culture; <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/FAKYPLUwUryVJw>; accessed February 7, 2020.
3. Patricia Bauer, "Berta Cáceres," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, July 13, 2019, *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.*; www.britannica.com/biography/Berta-Caceres; accessed February 7, 2020.

Suggested Visuals and Appreciations

Use sunglasses or other party glasses as decorations during the installation service. On tables, display the items below and put out paper for women to write notes of appreciation and in memory of those who fit these descriptions.

Sunglasses—those who shield us from danger

Bifocals—those who help us see where we are now and where we can go

Kaleidoscope—those who help us see with different and colorful lenses

Microscope—those who help us discover new things



Telescope—those who help us see far beyond our horizons

Glasses—those who help clear up our blurred vision

Magnifying glass—those who help us find the small details

Tambourine or bells—those who help us celebrate our accomplishments

Flowers of gold, purple and white adorned our foremothers who worked to secure women's right to vote. Fill a vase with flowers of these colors, pin a flower on your leaders or have each leader select a flower as she recesses.