



Called into Community, Called for Service

A Service of Installation for PW Leaders

BY JANICE CATRON

This liturgy may be used for installing the coordinating team for Presbyterian Women in the synod, presbytery or congregation. It is also an affirmation of 35 years spent together as Presbyterian Women—thanks be to God!

Advance Preparation

1. Display a large banner of the PW logo.
2. Make a blue and gold paper chain from crepe or construction paper or from strands of yarn. Have tape available to form this chain into a circle later.
3. Recruit two readers for the designated portions of this service.

Call to Worship

Leader: We gather today to celebrate the last three-and-a-half decades of Presbyterian Women, and the more than two hundred years of Presbyterian women organizing to further the mission and witness of the Presbyterian Church. We gather to engage with the faith, wisdom and journeys of our sisters and mothers, our siblings and mentors. We look forward to the faithful and creative ways that Presbyterian Women will respond to need in the world. We gather to give thanks and glory to God once again. Let us worship the Lord!

Hymn

"Heaven Is Singing for Joy"/"El cielo canta alegría" (GtG 382)¹

Leader: As our Bible study for this year—*Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts*—reminds us, God asks us to make ourselves available for holy purposes. We are called out of the shadows, affirmed as children of God, and offered opportunities for both personal and communal transformation.

All: Thanks be to God!

The following section is optional.

Leader: Of course, answering the call is not always easy. Does this sound familiar?

Reader 1: God said, "Go!"

Reader 2: And I said, "Who, me?"

Reader 1: And God answered, "Yes, you."

Reader 2: I said, "But I am not ready yet—an important meeting is coming up, and I have a lot of work right now, and you know there is no one to take my place."

Reader 1: And God said, "You are stalling. Go."

Reader 2: And I said, "But I don't want to."

Reader 1: God replied, "I didn't ask if you wanted to."

Reader 2: I said, "But I'm not really a leader. Besides, my family won't like me taking on one more thing, and church members will say I think too much of myself."

Reader 1: And God said, "You are needed." And, then for a third time, God said, "Go."

Reader 2: And I said, "Do I have to?"

Reader 1: God said, "Do you love me?"

Reader 2: And I said, "Look, I'm scared—I don't think I can do this. I can't take it all on by myself."

Reader 1: And God said, "Where do you think I'll be? Go."

Reader 2: And I said, "Here I am, send me."

End of optional section.

Leader: We are grateful for those who have said "yes" to God's call to leadership. (*To the elected*) Thank you!

Prayer of Installation

Leader: And now, let us pray. God, throughout the ages you have called your people to serve you, in the church and in the world. As you call, you gift these leaders with the skills, talents and resources they need for their service.

We give you thanks for those who respond to the call to serve, and for the gifts you give. We thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, who through encounters during his ministry showed the world that his call was to all people—regardless of gender, age or any other human category.

Especially we thank you, Gracious One, for those here today, who have answered the call to lead through Presbyterian



Women. May they find joy and blessing in their service; may they balance service with their needs for family time, work, church and relaxation. In all that they do, may they live their lives as an expression of the love that Jesus has brought to the world. For all this, O God, we give you thanks and praise, in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Installation of Leaders

Leader: As Presbyterian Women, we come together from different backgrounds and experiences, answering God's call to share God's love with the church and with society. We commit ourselves to God and to one another, celebrating the bonds that unite us. Today we celebrate 35 years of Presbyterian Women—35 years of being faithful to 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.

Reader 1: Thirty-five years ago, Presbyterian Women chose a circle to surround our logo. It is a unique circle, for the connecting links are not alike, making us aware of our differences but affirming them as we confirm our unity in Christ. Today, we are still the links that gather around our shared commitments to Bible study, mission and justice, pursued in community. (*Hold up chain.*) Today we lift up this unbound chain as a symbol of how, linked together, we are individually and collectively freed by faith to be all that we can be. (*The two readers then bring the ends of the chain together so the leader can tape them together and form a circle.*)

Reader 2: We invite the new leaders to join this PW circle of unity. (*Call forward each newly elected leader by name. Readers 1 and 2 join them in holding the chain.*) You have each been called to give leadership to this body. Remember the words of Ephesians 4:16—"Through Christ, the whole body grows. With the proper functioning of each member, firmly joined together by each supporting ligament, the body builds itself up in love."² Under God's control all the different parts of the body fit together and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body builds itself up through love." As

leaders, do you accept this vision of unity and wholeness for this organization of Presbyterian women?

Elected Leaders: I do.

Reader 1: Do you promise to give your skills and talents to serve in partnership to enhance the gifts of Presbyterian women to the glory of God?

Elected Leaders: I do.

Reader 1: (*speaking to all gathered*) You too are a special link in the circle. Do you pledge to give your support and energy to those whom you have empowered to represent you?

All: We do.

Declaration of Installation

Leader: (*To the new officers*) You are now duly installed as leaders of Presbyterian Women in and for this [congregation/presbytery/synod]. Thank you for your willingness to become part of the coordinating team. We are grateful for your service.

All: The purpose of Presbyterian Women is upon us. We will support your call, as we serve God and the community together.³

Hymn

"I, the Lord of Sea and Sky"/"Here I Am, Lord" (GtG 69)

Charge and Blessing

Leader: As you enter into these new positions of leadership, go with the confidence that Christ Jesus will guide your path; he will lighten your load; he will brighten your day. Bear witness to his eternal love in all that you do, and be a living reflection of God's grace, mercy, justice and peace to all whom you encounter. And may the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you—and with us all—this day and forevermore. Amen.

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Notes

1. GtG indicates *Glory to God! The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013).
2. *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).
3. This service draws from imagery and themes from installation services—written by Sara B. Cordery, Rebecca Harrison, Danilie C. Hilerio-Villanueva, and Vera P. Swann—in other years marking past PW milestones.