

Leading with Love

Installation Service for Presbyterian Women Leaders

BY REV. CHERI HARPER

Call to Worship (Based on Jeremiah 1:4–10)

One: The One who created and calls us tells us this:

All: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

One: The One who gives us words to speak tells us this:

All: Before you were born I consecrated you.

One: The One who promises to deliver us tells us this:

All: I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

One: The One who commands us to care for creation and all its creatures tells us this:

All: I am with you, to deliver you.

One: The one who instructs us to love our neighbor asks us to respond:

All: We will pluck up and pull down, build and plant. We will love and serve in the name of the Holy One. Amen.

Hymn

"In Christ There Is No East or West" (GtG 317)*

Prayer

Spirit of Life, Creator of All Source of Wisdom, this is the day that you have made, and we rejoice and are glad in it. You call each of us by name and promise a future of abundance. Watch over these Presbyterian women as they answer your call in ways they cannot yet ask or even imagine. May they be open to your spirit and willing to go where you lead.

Bless them with confidence as they embrace with boldness the plans you have for them.

Bless them with patience when they stumble and fall.

Bless them with gratitude when they rise up and find success.

Bless them with courage to move beyond fear and doubt, and to call for change where it is needed.

Bless them with generosity to care, to serve, to give, to teach, to listen and to lead.

Bless them with love of friends, family and siblings in the faith who have supported them through this journey.

And bless all of us gathered today as we share in the joy of their installation. Amen.

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 13:1–3

Meditation

We have so many worries today, but the grace of Christ assures us that we are made one in God's love and, together, can work to show kindness and bring about wholeness for all. As Paul instructed the people of the church in Corinth, all the work we do in our churches, all the gifts we utilize in PW, all the ministry we do in our communities doesn't matter one bit if we don't do it all in love.

This scripture passage from 1 Corinthians may be very familiar, but challenge yourself to engage it afresh. It is more than lovely words read at a wedding or sung in a cherished hymn. This is a powerful call to love each other based in the unifying love of God. When you're frustrated and want to shout with a tongue of fire, speak in love. When you are sure you have the right answer to a problem, counsel in love. When you have the spark to move a mountain, guide in love. This is the more excellent way, the way of love. And love never ends.

Litany (Based on 1 Corinthians 13:4–13)

The leader and people pray responsively.

One: Gracious God, help us to support all who carry out your ministry in the world through their work in Presbyterian Women. God of abundant love,

All: We give you thanks.

One: Enable us to practice your love that is patient and kind. God of abundant love,

All: We give you thanks.

One: Remind us that love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. God of abundant love,

All: We give you thanks.

One: Teach us not to insist on our own way, be irritable or to keep a record of wrongs. God of abundant love,

All: We give you thanks.

One: Let us recognize your love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. God of abundant love,

All: We give you thanks.

One: Holy One, renew and enliven us through and through.

All: Now faith, hope, and love remain. The greatest of these is love.

Hymn

"Though I May Speak"/"The Gift of Love" (GtG 693)

Installation

Leader: As people of faith, we are called to respond to God's love for us by loving one another. We trust that we are equipped to serve and to lead with boldness because God dwells within our hearts and compels us to act with perfect love. As a body of Presbyterian Women, let us now 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. Eternal God, who has spoken through the prophets Miriam, Deborah and Huldah: Give us the courage to hear your word, often from the voices of those long silenced. Through their witness, may we be inspired and strengthened to work without ceasing for your love that never ends. Give us the wisdom to recognize your face in many images; in the name of the Holy One, our comforting mother, father, rock, midwife, mother bear, hen and eagle.

All: Amen.

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

Elected Leaders: We will.

One: Will you learn from the women you lead, being open to different points of view and listening graciously when disagreements arise?

Elected Leaders: We will.

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

Elected Leaders: We will.

One: (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?

All: We will. We will do everything in love, serving together as God calls us to do.

Declaration of Installation

(Presentation of tokens, if any)

Leader: (Name of each new officer), you are duly installed leaders of Presbyterian Women for this (group/congregation/presbytery/synod). As Paul reminds us, we know only in part, and we see only in part. But we have the full assurance that God's steadfast love never ends. As long as you are leading, speaking and serving in love, you are following God's call.

Hymn

"Called as Partners in Christ's Service" (GtG 761)

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

Sending

Installed PW Leader: God has created us for joyful worship, Christ has freed us to minister with grace, and the Holy Spirit has enlivened us with unending power. May we, Presbyterian Women, go out and serve, doing everything in love!

Rev. Cheri Harper is the program manager for Presbyterian Women.

Notes

* GtG indicates *Glory to God! The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013).

Recommitment Service

An adapted version of this service recognizes leaders who are serving additional terms. Visit presbyterianwomen.org/love-installation for the service and know that you are welcome to adapt or blend elements for the leadership needs of your group.