

A SUGGESTED LITURGY FOR CAREGIVER SUNDAY

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

for November 15, 2009
or the Sunday of your congregation's choice

Written by Rev. Jeffrey A. Sumner**
Westminster By-The-Sea Presbyterian Church
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida

WORDS TO PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

The God who offers care to others—through Jesus Christ, through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and through loving men, women, and children—now hears the prayers of others who offer care. God offers unconditional love to those who need care themselves. Let us give thanks for those who love and support us in our daily walks.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The one who cared about you before you were born, the one who loved you in your mother's womb, and the one who persistently has never let you go is present with us now. Let us worship God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

SUGGESTED HYMN

"O Worship the King", verses 1-4 (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #476)

CALL TO PRAYER

In our brokenness there are things that we want to say to God. Our world is in a state of brokenness that we want to acknowledge. Let us turn to God in prayer.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

O God of both the dance and of the lament: where would we be without your steadfast love? We offer the adoration of our hearts for past promises you have unceasingly kept and for the hope we carry for the rest of today and tomorrow. We acknowledge our dependence on you: we break hearts and bones, we break spirits and commandments. Sometimes things happen that are just accidents; but sometimes we do things that hurt you and others. We confess our sins, are sorry for them, and repent of them. Take us once again, in our brokenness, and let us know how beautiful our brokenness is to you. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God loves you; through God's grace you are offered the opportunity for wholeness. And through God's great love in Christ, God came to earth to know our human emotions and

weaknesses; then through Christ, God reconciled the world with heaven! May you have God's peace now, and offer peace to others.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"O Worship the King", verse 5 (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, # 476)

"Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, in Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail. Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end, our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend." ("Amen" may be added because this verse directly addresses God.)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

(optional)

SCRIPTURES

(open to selection by ministers)

HYMN

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand" (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #404)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

PSALM 23

(Since many people memorize the King James Version, consider using it.)

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION AND THANKSGIVING

God of the wounded: we acknowledge today that there are wounded people among us, and wounded people on our minds. Some have been hurt by critical comments, others by a workplace accident. Some have been hurt in military service and others in automobile accidents; some have two eyes with vision, some have one, and some have none. Some have limited or no hearing; some have limbs that don't work or a mind that doesn't work well. Today we pray for broken people: we pray that, through proper prescriptions- from pills to prayer- and from exercise to changes in diet- that you will give us wisdom when we decide to move toward wholeness. Also today we pray for those who offer care: caring doctors, nurses, and technicians; Hospice staff and volunteers; a mother who rushes a child to an Emergency Room or a father who sits up and soothes a colicky baby. Sometimes grown children become a parent's companion out of medical needs. We acknowledge all who care in the most difficult of times, and we lift them up in prayer. Open our eyes to those who care for us: those close by and those far away; those who are family, those who are friends, and those who admire or appreciate our work. And dear God of grace, remind us that you showed us how to care through Jesus, who cared for broken people every day. To whom can we show our care; who needs to see Jesus through us? Lead us to places of need, and fill our own needs through your love and the love of others. We pray in the name of Jesus, who healed; we give thanks for the gift of your Spirit who comforts and counsels, and we acknowledge that you, O God, created us

for your own delight. May you dance over us on our best days, and cry with us on our worst ones. We pray in the name of Jesus, who came to save. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“God Be with You” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #540; or some prefer the tune from the 1955 *Presbyterian Hymnbook*, “God Be With You”)

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Go from this place lifting up your hearts, and looking for ways to show the care and love of God. And as you go: may God the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sustainer comfort and guide you now, and in the days ahead. Amen.

A Caregiver Sunday Idea

Our church, Westminster By-The-Sea Presbyterian Church, has a Prayer Shawl Ministry. Other churches do, too. Most often the shawls are blessed at the birth or baptism of a child, on the occasion of a marriage, or for a person who is sick or dying. A new way a shawl can be used is to lift up a person who offers care: to bless a recipient with the feeling that not only is the church embracing him or her, but God also “puts unfailing arms” around the caregiver. See www.shawlministry.com for more information.

Additional Suggested Hymns from *The Presbyterian Hymnal*

“Jesus, Thou Boundless Love to Me” (#366)
Different hymn texts of Psalm 23 (#170, #171, #172, #173, #174, #175)

Other Sources for Hymns

Sing the Faith (Geneva Press, 2003)
The Presbyterian Hymnal: Complete Concordance and Indexes, by Judith L. Muck (Westminster John Knox Press, 1997)

**Jeffrey A. Sumner is a member of the Presbyterian Health Network, a Presbyterian (USA) minister with diabetes, and is the Senior Pastor of Westminster By-The-Sea Presbyterian Church in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida. He was President of the Presbyterian Counseling Center Board of Directors in 2007 and 2008. He is currently pursuing the Doctor of Ministry degree in Christian Spirituality at Columbia Theological Seminary. He has been married for thirty-one years to Mary Ann, a Christian Educator, and they have two married sons, Chris (Amanda) and Matt (Vicki) and a daughter, Jenny, who is a senior at Columbia Theological Seminary (who is engaged to Brian!)