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# **Metropolitan/Urban Ministry Sunday**



**July 26, 2009**

**Evangelism and Church Growth  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**



## CELEBRATION OF METROPOLITAN/URBAN MINISTRY SUNDAY

July 1, 2009

Dear Friends,

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has set aside July 26, 2009, as a day to celebrate Metropolitan/Urban Ministry Sunday. We encourage all congregations and presbyteries to take the opportunity to celebrate the work of PC(USA) metro/urban congregations and specialized ministries, locally, nationally and globally.

We have included some worship and resource ideas for your use on Metro/Urban Ministry Sunday or on a day you discern to celebrate metro/urban ministry in your congregation, Presbytery or community ministry.

We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and worship resources for celebrating ministry in our metro/urban communities. If you would like more information about the resources provided for metro/urban ministry, please contact us or check out the Small Church & Community Ministry Office's website at [www.pcusa.org/smallchurch](http://www.pcusa.org/smallchurch).

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## METROPOLITAN/URBAN MINISTRY SUNDAY WORSHIP RESOURCES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

**For your sermon on Metropolitan/Urban Ministry Sunday, use one of the following scripture texts for your sermon:**

Nehemiah 2:11-18	Rebuilding the walls of the city
Jeremiah 29:4-8	Seek the peace of the city
Jeremiah 32:1-15	Jeremiah buys the field at Anathoth, investing in the city under siege
Isaiah 58:6-12	Seeking justice and restoring the vitality of the city
Isaiah 6:2-5	The city will be called “My Delight”
Isaiah 66:17-25	The New Jerusalem
Matthew 9:35-38	Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness
Luke 13:34-35	Jerusalem is not forsaken
Revelation 21:1-4	The holy city, the new Jerusalem.

### **Suggested hymns from THE PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL**

- #332 “Live Into Hope
- #413 “All Who Love and Serve Your City”
- #424 “O Jesus Christ, May Grateful Hymns Be Rising”
- #437 “ Our Cities Cry to You, O God”
- #453 “O Holy City, Seen of John”

### **Call to Worship**

**Leader:** Come, let us give thanks and praise to God.

**People:** **Let us celebrate the city where signs of God’s work are found everywhere.**

### **A Prayer (Unison)**

Thank you, our God, for calling us to be the light of the world. We are honored by our calling. We have discovered through our ministries in dark places the importance of bringing light. We have also learned that there is one thing that gives radiance to every place and every day. It is the idea of something around the corner. We fulfill our call to be light givers by being hope bearers. Our hope is grounded in the faith that you, our God of creation, are around every dark corner. Give us the courage, the grace, and the wisdom to be in partnership with you in designing our cities as places of hope and light. Amen.

(SCUPE worship resource)

## **Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

Merciful God,

We confess before you our ambivalence concerning your dwelling place known as the city. We take for granted the beauty and opportunities cities afford as centers of learning, science, art and culture. We tend to focus on the darker sides of city life. We are frightened by urban violence, anxious about living near folks different from us, and crippled by the scale of the problems.

We admit that it has sometimes been easier to leave the city than dwell in the complexity of its life; or if we had stayed, often we have clung to a past long over. Forgive us for not perceiving the new things that you are accomplishing in our city and every city. Open us to the vitality of new peoples in old neighborhoods, of different perspectives of looking at the world, of exciting new ways to worship. Help us to be citizens of the City of God not yet realized in the communities in which we live.

We are grateful for a vision of a Holy City, where Christ will reign, and all people will dwell in perfect unity and peace and respect. To this vision, may we be faithful. Amen.

## **Prayer for our Cities**

Lord Jesus Christ,

Today, we share your tears for the cities of the world;  
- still we have not loved the things that make for peace.

We weep for the divided cities:  
where brother (*and sister*) fights with brother (*and sister*),  
where anger feeds on hatred,  
where prejudice blinds the eyes of comparison,  
and even religion divides,  
where children are taught to hate,  
and old men (*and women*) relish ancient wrongs.

We weep for the cities of oppression:  
where iron law imprisons freedom,  
where thought is curbed and conscience stifled,  
where the questioning spirit is called a traitor,  
where art and civilizing truth grows barren,  
and each must think in manner as his (*or her*) neighbor.

We weep for the cities of poverty:  
where children live, but die too soon,  
where eager hands can find no work,  
where hunger rules and aid is short,  
where mothers clutch uncomprehending young,  
and where the little we could do, we fail to do.

We weep for cities, and for ourselves;  
We have not learned the things that make for peace.

Lord,  
turn tears to love,  
and love to work.  
Turn work to justice,  
and all that makes for peace.

(This prayer comes from the National Council of Churches Women's Delegation  
to the Middle East 2007)

### **Prayer for our City**

Bind our citizens, not by the bond of money and of profit alone, but by the glow of neighborly good will, by the thrill of common goods, and the pride of common possessions. As we set the greater aims for the future of our city, may we ever remember that her true wealth and greatness consist, not in the abundance of things we possess, but in the justice of her institutions and the community of her children. Make her rich in her sons and daughters and famous through the lofty passions that inspire them.

Grant us a vision of our city, fair as she might be: a city of justice, where none shall prey on others; a city of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a city of solidarity, where all success should be founded on service, and honor shall be given to nobleness alone; a city of peace, where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for the city, the great mother of the common life and weal. Amen.

(Prayer by Walter Rauschenbusch, For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening, 1910)

### **A Litany**

Leader: For such a time as this

**People: We have been called from the streets and churches to this place to share our wisdom as we discern the times.**

Leader: In such a time as this

**People: We have heard the cries of the hungry, the poor and the homeless. There are so many who need our care and compassion.**

Leader: In every city, the powers and principalities are at work.

**People: We affirm that God is in the midst of the city healing, challenging, comforting, supporting and sustaining.**

Leader: In such a time as this

**People: God has blessed us with gifts and talents which can support the gifts, and talents of those with whom we work.**

Leader: For such a time as this

**People: God has called us to speak, to act, to live by faith so that the sounds of violence and the cries of distress will be turned in the music of dancing and the laughter of joy.**

(SCUPE worship resource)

## Charge

Beyond the frontiers of language, or race, or nation,  
unite us, Jesus!  
Beyond our ignorance, our prejudice, our hostilities,  
unite us, Jesus!  
Beyond our intellectual and spiritual barriers,  
unite us, Jesus!  
O God, for your greater glory,  
gather together your separated Christians!

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Lift up the story about Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York in your 2009 MISSION YEARBOOK FOR PRAYER AND STUDY (page 209), or any of the numerous stories written about metropolitan/urban ministry in the Mission Yearbook such as the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community in Pittsburgh, PA (page 15), Portland Ave. Presbyterian Church in Louisville, KY (page 148), Covenant Presbyterian Church and Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispania de Durham-Chapel Hill Fellowship in Durham, NC (page 198) or the Korean Presbyterian Church in Tampa, FL (page 31).

Invite for your worship service a speaker from a local metropolitan/urban ministry/project in your community.

Plan a local work project with a metropolitan/urban ministry during the weekend that you celebrate Metropolitan/Urban Ministry Sunday.

Develop a long-term partnership ministry with a local metropolitan/urban ministry project such as a homeless shelter, after-school tutoring program, or affordable housing development project.

Plan a bible study session on biblical texts that speak about God's love and presence with the people of the city.

Plan a small group conversation to talk about the changes taking place in your community and in your metro/urban area. Invite leaders from your community or someone from your local planning agency to discuss the demographic changes taking place in your community and how other churches and organizations are responding to these changes. Go out and walk around your church neighborhood and have conversations with your neighbors who live around your church home.

Be an advocate. Become more informed about public policy issues that are impacting the quality of life for people who live in metro/urban areas such as affordable housing, homelessness, livable wage, and public transportation. Go to the PC(USA) Washington Office for more information about these issues and how to be an effective advocate – [www.pcusa.org/Washington](http://www.pcusa.org/Washington).

Take up a special offering or put into your annual mission budget financial support for a local metropolitan/urban ministry project.