

“One must never forget that slaves are first and foremost people. Their lives are filled with sorrow and injustice. . . but also. . .they are touched with humor and joy. Just like regular people. Just like free people.”

-Richard Holbrook

Planning for Worship

Human Trafficking Awareness Day is January 11. As you plan for a service of worship to raise awareness on this important issue, please note the following:

- When we consider the complexity of human trafficking, it is easy to despair. The problem is so huge that nothing less than a total recalibration of our global economy seems required, which may be why jubilee and Sabbath years were declared necessary by God (See Lev. 25). All of us are part of unjust systems of commerce and exploitative patterns of life that feed human trafficking. But recognizing this can also give us a place to begin working with God to build relationships, policies, and practices that make us accountable to one another and help us love our neighbor in all that we do.
- Consider how to frame this issue in such a way that the full humanity of trafficked persons, not just their vulnerability, is expressed. Print the quotation from Richard Holbrook in the worship bulletin so that persons may use it for reflection as they prepare for worship.
- In concert with the pastor, sessions/councils are encouraged to think ahead of time about ways to embody the Word that will be preached so that we not only pray for an end to human trafficking; we also work toward this end as Christ’s ambassadors. Provide opportunities for congregants to sign up for concrete action against human trafficking as they leave to serve the world. See the resources on www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking for suggestions of possible actions.
- The voices that will be heard in the Readers’ Theatre represent a compilation of the experiences of real persons who have been trafficked, some from the annual Trafficking in Persons Reports and others from the records of organizations engaged in work against human trafficking. In some cases, their experiences are quite graphic. Plan to use this piece when young children are not present, and alert parents of older children in advance that their children may have questions.
- Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence (PADVN), a network of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA), has produced its 2011 Domestic Violence Awareness Packet on the intersection of domestic violence and human trafficking. It includes helpful resources for addressing the issue. Download this packet at www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn. One particularly relevant resource that provides a process for exploring biblical texts using the lens of human trafficking is “Bible Study - Using the Stories of our Faith” by the Rev. Nancy K. Troy.
- For the Prayers of Intercession, it is suggested to set up prayer stations with stories of persons who have been trafficked. You can find such stories and photos in the annual

Trafficking in Persons Report issued each year by the U.S. Department of State at <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/index.htm>.

Liturgical Resources for Human Trafficking Awareness Day

CALL TO WORSHIP

from Isaiah 35:10, Ps. 95:1

Come, you ransomed of the LORD. Return and come into God's presence with songs and everlasting joy upon your head. Here you shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Come, let us let us sing to the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

HYMN

"Come All You People"

2274 STF

READERS' THEATRE

To underscore the concept that trafficked persons are people just like us, with their own foibles, hopes and dreams, ask readers to intersperse themselves among the worshipers in the congregation, rising just before they read their assigned part and remaining standing as others read

Liturgist: As we join together in this place to worship, others are enslaved, some to provide our comfort. Will we not look and listen?

Voice 1: I signed up to be a domestic worker in a foreign country where I could earn more in a year than I could in a lifetime in my country. But once there, my passport was taken. I had no time off. I was beaten almost daily, thrown down the stairs, and nearly choked to death. The hospital helped me escape when I tried to commit suicide.

All Readers' Voices: **Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Voice 2: I was nine when my father sold me for the equivalent of 100 US dollars to a lady who told me I was going to a special place to live in a big house with pretty things. I was excited. I'd never ridden on a bus or seen a car, and I was going to the big city. But when I got there, there was only a dark, dirty place. The lady told me what she wanted me to do, and I said no. Then a man came and beat me for three days. They didn't feed me. I was hungry, and I wanted to go home. I prayed, but the lady said my prayers aren't heard. It turns out she was right. When I contracted AIDS a few years later, I was thrown out on the street. I died at 16.

All Readers' Voices: **Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Voice 3: I was sold by my boyfriend of two years.

Voice 4: I was sold by my spouse.

Voice 5: I just went to a sleepover with a friend whose parent drugged me and sold me to be repeatedly gang raped. My parents found me before I was to be sold to a Texan for \$300,000.

***All Readers' Voices:* Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Voice 6: The soldiers came and killed my family when I was 12. They found me shaking in a corner and gave me pills they said would make me feel better. They did, but they made me crazy, too. The soldiers took me and fed me and gave me more pills. They taught me how to kill people. I didn't like doing this, but if I didn't, they would kill me, like they did my friend who was hacked to death by a machete right before my eyes when he refused to rape and kill his own sister.

***All Readers' Voices:* Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Voice 7: I dig through the mud in riverbeds to find the ore for what you call smart phones and computers. Because I'm only 11, I can crawl through the tunnels to where the best ore can be found. The problem is, the tunnels collapse and kill people. But the soldiers with guns make us work and take what we find. Sometimes they pay us. Mostly, they let us live.

***All Readers' Voices:* Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Voice 1: I was only eight years old when my family sent me to work in a brick kiln. After ten years of hard labor, I moved to another kiln, accepting an advance of \$150 to meet my immediate needs. But the owner inflated my debt through fraudulent fees and forced me into servitude to pay off an insurmountable debt, and I worked for fifteen more years before local officials intervened to obtain my freedom.

***All Readers' Voices:* Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Voice 1: I work 20 hours a day in Beverly Hills sewing clothes with labels that say "Made in the USA." Sometimes I get a day off, and I can see my children

Voice 2: I work 200 hours a week in a restaurant in Detroit in exchange for a cot in the basement. I don't speak your language well, but I can't talk to you if you try to engage me in friendly conversation. My boss is always watching. If I try to escape, I don't know what will happen to me. So I don't try.

Voice 3: I don't go to school so I can pick cotton.

Voice 4: I'm forced to make bricks.

Voice 5: Weave rugs

Voice 6: Work on farms.

Voice 7: Catch fish.

All Readers' Voices: **Don't you see us? We're everywhere. Don't you care?**

The following are to be said quickly by the different voices without pauses between voices:

Voice 1: We make your beds in hotels.

2: We serve your food in restaurants.

3: We sew your clothes.

4: We make your shoes.

5: We harvest your food.

6: We provide materials for your electronics.

7: We mine your diamonds,

3: your gold,

4: your silver,

5: your copper.

All Readers' Voices: **We're everywhere. Don't you see us? Don't you care?**

All Readers' Voices: **Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.**

Silence

A Kyrie may be sung here as a lament, crying for the Lord's mercy for the whole world.

Liturgist: Let us pray together.

**Eternal God, our judge and redeemer,
we confess that we have tried to hide from you,
for we have done wrong.
We have lived for ourselves,
and apart from you.
We have turned from our neighbors,
and refused to bear the burdens of others.
We have ignored the pain of the world,
and passed by the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed.
In your great mercy forgive our sins
and free us from selfishness,
that we may choose your will
and obey your commandments;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

ASSURANCE:

(from Exodus 3:7-8)

Then the Lord said, "I have seen the misery of the people in bondage.

I have heard their cries under the taskmasters.
Indeed, I know their suffering,
And I have come to deliver them.”
The Lord has sent you to proclaim release to the captives.
**In the name of Jesus Christ,
We are set free, free to love, free to serve, free to set others free.
Thanks be to God!**

“GLORY TO GOD”

2033 STF

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Old Testament

The prophets assure us of God’s saving action amidst exile and oppression which invite our response:

Isaiah 40:1-5, 27-31
Isaiah 51:11
Isaiah 61:1-4
Isaiah 65:17-32
Jeremiah 6:13-15
Micah 6:3-8

New Testament

Jesus renews God’s covenant, exhorting us to love God and neighbor

-Matthew 5:1-16
-Matthew 22:34-40
- Luke 4:16-20
- John 15:12-17

Epistles

The apostle Paul encourages followers of Jesus to show loving kindness and respect to all

- Romans 12:9-21
- Galatians 3:27-29

James and John remind us that our faith must be lived and that we should not fear

-James 2:14-26
-1 John 4:16b-21

Also see the suggested biblical narratives and a process for exploring them in “Bible Study - Using the Stories of our Faith” by the Rev. Nancy K. Troy. This resource is a part of the PADVN packet.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

For smaller congregations: Around your worship space, post stories and pictures of people caught in human trafficking, like the saints in stained glass windows in cathedrals.
For larger congregations: Post these in the narthex and have tables set up for people to engage in mission advocating for those caught in the web of human trafficking.

***Option 1:** Make a paper chain that goes all around the room beneath the pictures. Attach **each loop** to the wall and have people tear one of the loops in the chain as their prayer for that person at each station.*

***Option 2:** Have people walk around in silence, reading the various stories. They may write prayers or prayer requests on 3 x 5 cards. Collect these cards to be read during the following time of prayer.*

When all are finished, invite worshipers to lift up prayer requests either silently or aloud. The liturgist may read written prayer requests during this time, too.

Join together in the following responsive prayer:

Break all the chains that hold your children in bondage to sin, whether these be political, social, economic, ethnic, cultural, religious, familial, or personal. Lord in your mercy,
Liberate.

Almighty God, you have shared your power for good with us. Judge those who abuse power. Grant your wisdom to all who have authority over others that they may lead in accord with your Way of shalom for all people. Lord, in your mercy,
Empower.

Holy Lord, you have called your people to embody Christ's ministry here on earth. Help your church be vigilant for those in need of your freedom and give us the courage to act as your agents of liberation. Lord, in your mercy,
Encourage.

God of Compassion, there are others in bondage to bodies breaking down, so we pray for your healing for those who are also on our hearts this day. *{During the silence, lift up your prayer requests either silently or aloud.}* Lord, in your mercy,
Heal.

Hear all these prayers, and further them in accord with your will, that your name may be glorified in all the earth. Show each of us how you want us to be a part of the answer to these prayers, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

OFFERING

You may wish to designate a portion of the offering to help victims of human trafficking. One option is E052101, an account that facilitates the work of the Human Trafficking Roundtable of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to lift up the issue of modern-day slavery, provides resources, advocates for further action to eradicate human trafficking and facilitates human trafficking awareness trainings with presbyteries.

HYMN

“Live into Hope”

332 PH

CHARGE

from Gal. 5:1

It was for freedom that Christ set us free--not just for our freedom, but for all people's. Therefore keep standing firm and do not allow slavery to be master over anyone ever again

BLESSING

May God who created all for good, Christ who liberated all, and the Holy Spirit who empowers and guides us into all truth overshadow and keep you in God's glory, wisdom, and power now and forevermore. **Amen.**

STF=*Sing the Faith*

PH=*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

Liturgical resources by Teresa Lockhart Stricklen, Associate for Worship, Office of Theology and Worship, with input from members of the Human Trafficking Roundtable