

# Worship in a Matthew 25 Church

*Resources for Congregations and Presbyteries*



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
**Presbyterian Mission**

# Worship in the Matthew 25 Church

*The Beatitudes may be spoken by three leaders; for a shorter version, use only the first beatitude in each section.*

## Opening Sentences

Jesus says:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.

**And blessed is the church  
that serves with the love of God  
to eradicate systemic poverty.**

*Matt. 5:3–12*

Jesus says:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

**And blessed is the church  
that trusts in the grace of Christ  
to build congregational vitality.**

Jesus says:

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you  
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.  
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

**And blessed is the church  
that seeks by the power of the Spirit  
to dismantle structural racism.**

Blessed are you, O holy, triune God,  
**and blessed is your holy realm forever.**

## Gathering Prayer

Holy God, by your Word and Spirit,  
come and transform your church  
to be a living sign of your love for the world —  
where the poor are filled with good things,  
the dividing walls are broken down,  
and the dead are raised to new life;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## Confession and Pardon

A voice is crying out in the wilderness:  
Prepare the way of the Lord.

*Matt. 3:3*

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

*There may be a time of silence for personal confession.*

**Merciful God, we confess that we have wandered  
from your way of truth and life.**

**You call us to share all that we have  
and work together for the common good,  
but we hoard up treasures for ourselves  
and deny others their daily bread.**

Systemic Poverty

**You call us to set the captives free  
and seek justice for the oppressed,  
but we live in fear of our neighbors  
and hide ourselves from our own kin.**

Structural Racism

**You call us to walk in newness of life  
and to be witnesses to the resurrection,  
but we dwell in the valley of dry bones  
and keep silent about your saving love.**

Congregational Vitality

**Forgive us, God of grace.  
Set us free from sin, death and fear  
so that we may serve you with gladness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*The presider pours or lifts water at the baptismal font:*

Hear the good news: God's love has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit.  
I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

## Prayer for Illumination

Speak to us, O God, with the voice of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may know the way of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Affirmation of Faith

*The affirmation of faith may be led from the baptismal font.*

We trust in Jesus Christ,  
fully human, fully God.

*A Brief Statement of Faith (excerpts)*

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:  
preaching good news to the poor  
and release to the captives.**

Systemic Poverty

We trust in God,  
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

**In sovereign love God created the world good  
and makes everyone equally in God's image  
to live as one community.**

Structural Racism

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

**The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith  
and binds us together with all believers  
in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

Congregational Vitality

With believers in every time and place,  
**we rejoice that nothing in life or in death  
can separate us from the love of God  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

### **Prayer of Intercession**

Jesus says: Ask, and it will be given you;  
search, and you will find;  
knock, and the door will be opened for you.  
Trusting in Christ's grace, let us offer our prayers  
for the church and the world, neighbors and loved ones,  
saying, Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Matt. 7:7*

*A time of silence may follow each intercession.*

We ask your provision for all people.  
Teach us compassion and generosity.  
Put an end to economic exploitation.  
Fill this world with your abundant life.  
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Systemic Poverty

We search for your beloved community.  
Break down systems of oppression.  
Dismantle patterns of privilege.  
Establish justice and equality for all.

Structural Racism

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**  
We knock at the door of your house.  
Gather us in as disciples of your way.  
Nourish us in faith and faithfulness.  
Send us out to share good news.  
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Congregational Vitality

*Other intercessions may be offered; then the presider prays:*

Living God, we ask, we search, we knock —  
answer our prayers with the power of your Spirit,  
who transforms our lives to do your will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Offering**

Jesus says: The realm of heaven has come near.  
Freely you have received; therefore, freely give.  
Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

*Matt. 10:7–8*

*An offering may be received in support of the church's mission  
to eradicate systemic poverty, dismantle structural racism and build congregational vitality.*

### **Invitation to the Lord's Table**

*The table is prepared for the Lord's Supper; then the presider says:*

Jesus says: Come, you that are blessed by my Father,  
inherit the kingdom prepared for you  
from the foundation of the world.

*Matt. 25:34; 23:37*

Jesus says: How often have I desired to gather you together,  
as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.

## **Great Thanksgiving**

*The introductory dialogue ("The Lord be with you") may be spoken.*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God:  
You have created us in your own image.  
You have claimed us as your beloved people.  
You have called us to be a blessing for others.  
Therefore we praise you, joining the song  
of the universal church and the heavenly choir.

*The Sanctus ("Holy, holy, holy") may be spoken or sung.*

Blessed is Jesus Christ, our Savior:  
Jesus called disciples to follow in your way.  
He fed the hungry and healed the sick.  
He loved neighbors and welcomed strangers.

*The words of institution are included here, if not elsewhere.*

Remembering your goodness and grace  
we offer ourselves to you with gratitude  
as we share this joyful feast.

*A Memorial Acclamation ("Christ has died") may be spoken or sung.*

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon this bread and cup;  
make us one in the body and blood  
of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Keep us faithful in your service  
until justice and peace embrace  
and all things are made new  
and heaven and earth are one.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ,  
in the unity of the Spirit,  
we bless you, God of glory,  
now and forever. Amen.

*The Amen may be spoken or sung. The Lord's Prayer follows.*

## **Breaking of the Bread**

*The presider breaks the bread (and pours the cup) in silence, then says:*

Jesus says: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

*Matt. 5:6*

## **Prayer after Communion**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
for you have filled us with your life and love.  
Now send us out to share these gifts with others;  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

## **Blessing and Charge**

The God who was and is and is to come  
is with us in Christ Jesus.

The blessing of the triune God  
be with you all. Alleluia!

Jesus says: Remember, I am with you always,  
to the end of the age. Thanks be to God.

*Matt. 1:23; 28:20*

# Additional Texts

## Thanksgiving for Baptism

*The introductory dialogue (“The Lord be with you”) may be spoken.*

O Lord our God, we give you thanks  
that through the sign of baptism  
you have marked us for a new creation —  
where all people are reconciled,  
and there is an abundant feast,  
and the saints sing night and day.  
By the power of your Holy Spirit,  
poured out upon the church,  
let our witness, work and worship  
proclaim the promise of your coming realm  
of righteousness, justice and peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The presider may splash water on the people, saying:*

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Invitation to Discipleship

Jesus says: Come to me, all you that are weary  
and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.

Matt. 11:28–30

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

*A leader may extend the invitation to become a Matthew 25 church or presbytery.*

## Litany of Lament

*This lament of Jesus is based on the seven “woes” of Matthew 23, the condemnations of Matthew 25, and the Solemn Reproaches of the Good Friday liturgy (see 2018 BCW, pp. 288–289, 308–309).*

*The seven woes may be divided among multiple readers, speaking from the congregation.*

*A time of silence should follow each lament and response (“Lord, have mercy”).*

From the cross our Savior cries:  
My people, my church,  
why have you forsaken me?

*Matt. 27:46*

Woe to you  
when you satisfy yourselves with a rich feast  
and pass by those who beg for bread —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Woe to you  
when you are drunk with power and privilege  
and ignore those who thirst for justice and dignity —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Woe to you  
when you open your hands to grasp and take  
and close your doors to strangers in need —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Woe to you  
when you adorn yourselves with honor  
and despise the naked because of their skin —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Woe to you  
when you anoint yourselves with precious oil  
and deny healing and wholeness to others —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Woe to you  
when you flaunt and abuse your freedom  
and allow the oppressed to remain in captivity —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Woe to you  
when you sing my praise  
and study my teaching  
and say your prayers in my name  
and still fail to recognize me  
in the faces of your neighbors —  
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

*For use after the offering when the Eucharist is not celebrated.*

We give you thanks and praise, O Lord:  
You have created us in your own image.  
You have claimed us as your beloved people.  
You have called us to be a blessing for others.

Use the gifts of your good creation  
and the works of our hands  
to lift up the oppressed,  
break down dividing walls,  
and build up your church;  
all in the name and for the sake  
of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### **Litany of Commitment**

*The litany of commitment is led from the baptismal font;  
worshippers are invited to turn and face the font.*

Jesus says: Repent,  
for the realm of heaven has come near.

I invite you, in the name of Christ,  
to turn from what is evil and turn to what is good,  
rejecting all that is contrary to the gospel  
and embracing the vision of the Matthew 25 church.

*Matt. 4:17*

Do you renounce  
the evils of systemic poverty and economic exploitation?

Systemic Poverty

**We renounce them!**

Will you devote yourself  
to doing justice, loving kindness,  
and walking humbly with your God?

**We will, with God's help.**

Do you renounce  
the sins of structural racism and white supremacy?

Structural Racism

**We renounce them!**

Will you devote yourself  
to breaking down the walls of hostility  
that separate us from one another?

**We will, with God's help.**

Do you renounce  
the ways of fear, isolation and scarcity in the church?

Congregational Vitality

**We renounce them!**

Will you devote yourself  
to the church's teaching and fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

**We will, with God's help.**

*An affirmation of faith may follow.*

### **Beatitudes for a Matthew 25 Church**

*These phrases, based on the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1–12) and the Matthew 25 priorities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), may be used as a call to worship, response to the sermon or charge at the conclusion of worship.*

#### ***Systemic Poverty***

Blessed are those who serve the poor,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

Blessed are those who share the wealth,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

Blessed are those who work for good,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

#### ***Structural Racism***

Blessed are those who open doors,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

Blessed are those who break down walls,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

Blessed are those who challenge hate,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

#### ***Congregational Vitality***

Blessed are those who live their faith,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

Blessed are those who speak the truth,  
**they will be called the children of God.**

Blessed are those who show Christ's love,  
**they will be called the children of God**



# Daily Prayer with Matthew 25

## Morning Prayer

### Opening Sentences *Matt. 5:14, 16*

Jesus says: You are the light of the world.  
**Let your light shine before others.**

### Prayer

*Water may be poured.*

Come, Holy Spirit —  
pour out your blessing  
in our lives this day. **Amen.**

### Psalm

*Pray a morning psalm, such as 5, 19, 51,  
63, 95, 100 or 150. Silence may follow.*

### Scripture

*Read one chapter of Matthew each day of the  
month. On the 29th–31st, read other Scriptures.*

### Prayer *Matt. 25:31–46*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
as this new day begins  
help us to recognize you  
when our neighbors say:

*Sun* I am present ...

*Mon* I am hungry ...

*Tue* I am thirsty ...

*Wed* I am a stranger ...

*Thu* I am vulnerable ...

*Fri* I am sick ...

*Sat* I am in prison ...

Give us minds to know you,  
hearts to love you,  
and strength to serve you,  
this day and always. **Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer may follow.*

### Dismissal *Matt. 1:23*

God is with us in Jesus Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Bless the Lord.

**The Lord's name be praised.**

*A sign of peace may be exchanged by all.*

## Evening Prayer

### Opening Sentences *Matt. 14:27*

Jesus says: Take heart, I am here.  
**Do not be afraid.**

### Prayer

*A candle may be lighted.*

Come, Holy Spirit —  
kindle the fire of faith  
in our hearts this night. **Amen.**

### Psalm

*Pray a evening psalm, such as 1, 8, 27,  
65, 104, 113 or 141. Silence may follow.*

### Scripture

*Read one chapter of Matthew each day of the  
month. On the 29th–31st, read other Scriptures.*

### Prayer *Matt. 25:31–46*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
at the close of this day  
we remember our neighbors  
and we ask ourselves:

*Sun* When did I recognize you?

*Mon* When did I give you food?

*Tue* When did I give you drink?

*Wed* When did I welcome you?

*Thu* When did I protect you?

*Fri* When did I care for you?

*Sat* When did I visit you?

Bless what we have done,  
forgive what we have failed to do,  
and make us ready to meet you  
when you come in glory. **Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer may follow.*

### Dismissal *Matt. 28:20*

Jesus says: I am with you always.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Bless the Lord.

**The Lord's name be praised.**

*A sign of peace may be exchanged by all.*







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