

# **Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Presbyterian Women and Blessing Our Journey\* A Service of Celebration**

## Preparation

Ask each participant to bring a symbol of her ministry in, or hopes for, Presbyterian Women.

## Materials needed

- Christ candle
- *The Presbyterian Hymnal*
- *Sing the Faith*
- Bible
- Two long pieces of blue fabric to signify flowing streams. The length of the fabric may depend on the size of the group.
- Safety pins or common pins
- A banner with a PW logo, if one is available; otherwise, make one out of paper

## Room arrangement

(If you are conducting this service in a setting with fixed seating, adapt the following arrangement to suit your situation.)

- Arrange seats in a U-shape.
- Place a table in the hollow space at the top of the U.
- Display the PW banner or logo opposite the table, in the cusp of the U.
- Set two chairs with backs that are higher than the table behind the table, at its corners.
- Drape a piece of fabric over each chair, coming over the table on the left and right sides of the table.
- Have the fabric pieces meet and intertwine as they reach the floor, letting them flow into the center of the U, toward the PW logo.

## A Service of Celebration for the 20th Anniversary of Presbyterian Women

Leader: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (*John 8:12*). Let us gather around the light of life.  
(*Light the Christ candle.*)

**All: We draw near the light, seeking to be loved and illumined by the light.**

Leader: God of faithful women, throughout history  
you have raised up wise and strong women,  
even when human foolishness has tried to suppress women’s spirits.

**All: We bless you, O God. As a community of women,  
we praise you for your faithfulness to us.**

### Suggested Hymns

“O Sing to the Lord” (PH #472)

“Song of Mary” (PH #600)

“The World Abounds with God’s Free Grace” (PH #556)

### Scripture

*Revelation 22:1–3*

Leader: We have known the rivers.

**All: We were United Presbyterian Women in the “northern stream.”  
We were Women of the Church in the “southern stream.”  
Divided by an act of human history,  
our waters flowed in separate streams for a long time.**

Leader: Yet, your love did not leave us alone.  
You were with us, guiding our flow.  
Our lives were touched by your living water,  
and our waters touched the lives of others, near and far,  
healing the sick and restoring the brokenhearted.

**All: Thanks be to God, the water of life.**

Leader: Twenty years ago,  
we responded to your yearning that we become one.

**All: Our two streams met  
and started to flow side by side,  
and then more and more, coming together,  
we started to flow as one river.  
We have become one,  
Presbyterian Women.  
Alleluia.**

### **Suggested Hymns**

“Alleluia” (twice) (SF #2043)

“Wade in the Water” (SF #2107)

“Heleluyan” (twice) (PH #595)

“Gloria, Gloria” (twice) (PH #576)

### **Scripture**

*Luke 1:46–55*

Leader: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ  
and empowered by the Holy Spirit,  
we lived out our faith over the last 20 years,  
nurturing our faith through prayer and Bible study,  
supporting the mission of the church worldwide,  
working for justice and peace, and  
building an inclusive, caring community of women,  
to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
and to witness to the promise of God’s kingdom.

**All: Thanks be to God, the water of life.**

Leader: Let us place symbols of our ministry through PW (and symbols of our hope for  
PW) on the river of life that flows from God in Christ. (*One by one, each  
participant places her symbol on the river and briefly describes what it represents.  
Or, in a large group setting, ask women to simply share their thoughts aloud.*)

**All: Praise be to God who created us in God’s image.  
Praise be to Jesus who calls us friends and partners in his ministry.  
Praise be to the Holy Spirit who loves us as a gentle breeze,  
and empowers us to do God’s mission as a mighty wind.  
We are Presbyterian Women, and 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.**

### **Suggested Hymns**

“Spirit of God” (SF #2117)

“Spirit” (PH #319)

“Guide My Feet” (PH #354)

Leader: May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, be with you.  
**All: And also with you.**  
Leader: Let us share a sign of Christ's peace.  
**All: Thanks be to God.**

*Refreshments may follow, if you want to continue the celebration.*

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\*This ritual may be used in isolation or as a part of a longer liturgy. Please feel free to adapt it. It was developed in part with material from "Praying together in thanks for 20 years," by Audrey Novak Riley, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ([www.womenofthelca.org/20years/ritual.html](http://www.womenofthelca.org/20years/ritual.html)), and "Two Streams Unite," by Deborah Kapp, from the January/February 2008 issue of *Horizons*, p. 6.

PH: *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1990)  
SF: *Sing the Faith* (Louisville, Ky.: Geneva, 2003)