

A World Communion Sunday Liturgy

This World Communion Sunday liturgy is made up of prayers from the churches with whom the four Pennsylvania Conferences have relationships, and is authored by the new Keystone Global Ministries Team. As we become the Keystone conference, we anticipate all of these relationships continuing. Members of these relationship teams are eager to make these special relationships known and to provide an opportunity to be part of the relationships to all church members, lay and clergy, throughout the Keystone Conference.

In addition to this liturgy, please print and distribute our bulletin insert, which describes these relationships, with the attendees of your church. Please pray, on World Communion Sunday and throughout the year, for our relationships in Germany, India, Guatemala, Namibia, Liberia, and the Philippines, especially those places where Christianity is persecuted or marginalized, and where the church is struggling. As our UCC motto states, Jesus has prayed, "That they may all be one," and we believe we are all one church of Jesus Christ throughout the whole wide earth.

Call to worship Julia Esquivel, Guatemala¹

One: I love all your paths
that lead me to your House, Lord,
simple roads
dusty
neglected
bordered by simple houses.

All: Undeveloped roads
marked by the footprints
of working people:
builders of broad highways,
fancy houses,
gardens,
and parks.

One: I love those paths
open to the rain
and to the good will
of their discounted residents.

Many: Paths that lead me to the illiterate woman,
to the child who has no school,
to the old man who sells ice cream from his worn-out wooden car.

¹ "In Your Path," from *Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community*, ed. Maren C. Tirabassi & Kathy Wonson Eddy. © 1995 by Maren C. Tirabassi & Kathy Wonson Eddy. Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, OH.

One: I love those paths
unimpressive
unattractive
that lead me to your brothers and sisters,

Many: because You, poor with them,
speak to me from their indigence
and violently shake loose
all my assurances
binding me inescapably
into the secret tenderness
of your unknown suffering.

All: And so I know I am your friend,
because you reveal your secrets to me,
the secrets of a love without measure!

Prayer of confession *Church of South India*

Brothers and sisters, in the presence of the God of glory,
We need to confess our true human condition.
In the light of Christ's self-giving life, his way of the Cross,
We see the darkness in our lives.

As we think of the evil and oppression in the world of which we are a part
We need to repent together with our fellow-humans.

As members of a people called to follow Christ and live in his new righteousness,
We need to repent for the evil in the church's life.

The Saviour of the world, the Refuge of the repentant,
Forgives and strengthens all who truly seek his grace.
He accepts you as his sons and daughters,
And sets you free from the bondage of your past
For Christ died and rose to new life that we might all share his wholeness and abundant life.
Amen²

² From *Prayers Encircling the World: An International Anthology*. #188, p. 152 ©1998 by SPCK, Great Britain.

*Assurance of Grace from the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa)*³

Christ is our peace; those who are divided he has made one. He has broken down the barriers of separation by his death and he has built us up into one body with God. To whomsoever repents and believes he has promised reconciliation. So, live as people reconciled. Amen.

Prayer of the day/Invocation *Phillippines*⁴

Lord, make us realize that our Christianity is like a rice field, that when it is newly planted, the paddies are prominent; but as the plants take root and grow taller, these dividing paddies gradually vanish, and soon there appears only one vast continuous field. So give us roots of love and make us grow in Christian fellowship and service, so that thy will be done in our lives, through our Savior, your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

God of kindness, we pray for your Church, here in Germany and in every land: for the church asleep, that it might awake; for the persecuted Church, that it remains glad and certain of your cause; for the confessing Church, that it may be nothing for itself alone but live alone for your fame. We pray for all the rulers and authorities in the whole world; those that are for good, that you preserve them; for those that are for evil, that you change their hearts or put an end to their power according to your pleasure; for all, that you prove to them that you are the one whose servants they are and must remain. We pray that all tyranny and disorder be resisted and all suppressed nations and peoples be helped to their rights. Holy Spirit, our comforter, **receive our prayer.**⁵

We pray for the Church in South India, in times of persecutions and marginalization. Walk with them in their difficult times, and embolden us to witness with them. Grant them and us strength to resist nationalism and grant them resilience and your protection through this time. Holy Spirit, our comforter, **receive our prayer**

We pray that our Lord bless the partnership with PNEC and Keystone to help the children in Zwedru City, Liberia West Africa with a school building for them to learn how to read and write. The students' ability to learn English will help them read the Holy Bible and grow up as Christians, interacting with other Christians around the world to build and uphold the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. We pray that Christ will be with these children and the children of the Mission Bible School, and the Jordan Community School District. Holy Spirit, our comforter, **receive our prayer**

³ From *Gifts in Open Hands*, by Maren Tirabassi & Kathy Wonson Eddy, © 2011 Maren Tirabassi & Kathy Wonson Eddy, Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, OH. p. 19

⁴ From *Prayers Encircling the World*, #91, p. 86.

⁵ Gifts in Open Hands, p. 19.

For life-sustaining jobs for the 27% of Namibians who are unemployed. For continued religious freedom in Namibia. That all may hear the Gospel once again and for many to turn back to Christ. For unity and cooperation among all groups seeking to uplift Christ. For wisdom and discernment to reach the unreached people. Holy Spirit, our comforter, **receive our prayer**⁶

Gracious God, we thank you for our partners in the Northwest Luzon Conference of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. We thank you for the opportunities that we have to connect with one another across the miles and to deepen our partnership together in meaningful ways. We thank you for the ways we have connected in the past, and for the Sustaining Hope for Educational Expenses in the Philippines program which we have supported. We look forward with eager anticipation to ways in which our partnership may grow and deepen as the Keystone Conference emerges. Bless and be with all the ministries across the globe that we seek to support and nurture together as your church. Holy Spirit, our comforter, **receive our prayer**⁷

For the church in Guatemala, that they may know you through us, so that our relationship may grow stronger. We especially pray for staff and patients of the Monte Margarita Medical center, that you as great physician may be present to them, and may walk with them on the road to health and to thriving. Holy Spirit, our comforter, **receive our prayer**

The following prayer from Germany may be inserted into the intercessions or done as a separate prayer for world peace.

One: Let us pray to God in peace: for an alert conscience, for forgiveness of our debts, and an open, quiet heart, let us pray, God have mercy upon us.

All: God have mercy upon us.

One: For an understanding of our fellow human beings, for a readiness and courage to speak the truth, let us pray:

All: God have mercy upon us.

One: For the ability so to behave to all people that they also through us might experience the love of God, we pray:

All: God have mercy upon us.

One: For our church and for all Christians, that they beyond all past divisions might be one in faith and in deed, let us pray:

All: God have mercy upon us.

⁶ From the web page prayer.africa/Namibia. Accessed 8/25/2025

⁷ From David Ackerman

One: For our nation and for all nations of the world, that, where there is war, justice and peace might prevail, let us pray:

All: God have mercy upon us.

One: For those who are in need and distress, that they may find help, let us pray:

All: God have mercy upon us.

One: Stay with us, God, with your Word and the gift of your goodness. May your [Reign] come. And so we pray in the faith of Jesus Christ, our Lord.⁸

Amen.

Call to Offering *from United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa.)*⁹

One: Let us present with joy our offerings of commitment and support for the work of Christ's church.

Many: Let us prepare Christ's table with the offerings of our life and labor.

Offertory Prayer adapted from Yoruba, from West Africa, around Liberia¹⁰

To our God of old, we bless the ground
that you tread in search of our freedom!
We bless your presence in our lives and in our hearts!
Take of this offering to your delight,
and be filled with our prayers of thanksgiving!
May our lives remain as full as our hearts on this day!

Post Communion Prayer India¹¹

We thank you, Lord,
that you have strengthened us through your nearness
and we pray: grant that the ears that have heard your Word
may be closed to the voice of discord;
that the eyes that have seen your great love
may see the blessedness which you have promised.
that the tongues which have sung your praise
may testify henceforth to the truth;

⁸ Gifts in Open Hands. p. 188-9. from Evangelische Gottesdienstbuch, Berlin, Germany, 2000.

⁹ from Gifts in Open Hands. p. 54

¹⁰ From World Prayers web site,

https://www.worldprayers.org/archive/prayers/celebrations/to_our_gods_of_old_we.html Accessed 8/25/2025

¹¹ Adapted from Agenda I, edited by the Church Office of the Evangelical Church of Kurhnesse-Waldek, Kassel, Germany. In *Gifts in Open Hands*, I p. 139

that the hands which have received your gifts
may do good to your honour;
that the feet which have come into your house
may not stray from the way of light;
that the bodies which have had a share in your living body
may change into a new life.
To you be glory forever. Amen.

A Litany of Commitment Philippines¹²

Leader: We, the church in the United States and the church all around the world¹³, are members of the one body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God's ministry.

PEOPLE: O GOD, BESTOW UPON US YOUR LOVE OF JUSTICE. ENABLE US TO MINISTER WITH YOUR COMPASSION AND WISDOM, SO THAT THE DEPRIVED AND THE DEFENSELESS MAY BE TREATED OBJECTIVELY AND WITH JUSTICE.

Leader: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

PEOPLE: UNPLUG OUR SENSES OF HEARING TO THE WAILS OF THE PEOPLE CLUTCHED IN THE PROGRESSIONS OF POVERTY, ABUSE AND VIOLENCE.

Leader: A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another.

PEOPLE: IMPART UPON US THE WISDOM TO DISCERN THE NOBLEST ACT AND VALOR TO EMBODY JUSTICE AND CONCORD EVEN WHEN IT PRESSES US TO THE MARGINS.

Leader: Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, since as members of one body we were called to peace.

All: As we thrive to be more cohesive with our mission partners, may the people flourish; may there be lasting peace and plenty for all. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

Benediction

¹² From the Church in through in the Philippines via our partnership group.

¹³ Original read "UCCP-Northwest Luzon Conference and the four UCCP Conferences"

Music Suggestions

Here are some musical options that might go with your worship. They might be used as choral anthems, hymns, occasional or special music. Publishers/source are included.

From Germany:

Many of our hymns come from Germany. You might particularly consider:

- From the New Century Hymnal: #4 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You, #6 – Sing Praise to God, Our Highest Good, #12 I Sing the Mighty Power of God #13 O My Soul, Bless Your Creator, #17 To You O God, All Creatures Sing, #22 – Note, from the Rhineland – Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped, #27 From All That Dwell below the Skies, #37 O God, to Whom We Turn, #44 Beautiful Jesus, #49 Ask Me What Great Thing I Know, #50 I Sing the Praise of Love Almighty, #57 O Holy Spirit, Root of Life, #60 O Spirit of God, #64 Fure of God, Undying Flame, #68 God is Truly With Us, #74 We Have Gathered, Jesus Dear, #86 When Morning Gilds the Skies, #94 Now All the Woods Are Sleeping, #179 We Year, O Christ, for Wholeness, #208 – God Loved the World, #269 Sweet Delight, Most Lovely, #276 Holy God, We Praise Your Name, #327 – Jesus Loves Me – there is a verse in German, #334 Graced with Garments of Great Gladness, #374 – God of All Your People Past, #375 Jesus Christ, Please Be by Our Side, #384 For the Faithful Who Have Answered, #404 Give Up your Anxious Pains, #419 – Now Thank We All Our God, #439, 440 – A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, #446 Jesus, Still Lead On, #463 I Look To You in Every Need, #480 Jesus, Priceless Treasure, #488 Be Still, My Soul, #510 Grant Us Wisdom to Perceive You, #513 O Source of All That Is, #566 Heaven and Earth, and Sea and Air, #600,601 How Lovely Is Your Dwelling
- From the Iona Community: Gelobt sint deine Treu (When Morning Meets Our Eyes), in “Sent by the Lord” collection (GIA);
- From Global Praise (www.globalpraise.org): Ausgang und Eingang (Going and Coming), Brich mit den Hungriegen dein Brot (Break with the hungry your own bread), Glauben Heisst: Christus (Trusting in Jesus), Komm, Herr, segne uns (Bless and keep us, Lord), in “Global Praise 1” collection, Lo, God is here, Christus is unser Friede (Jesus Christ is our Freedom), Manchmal kennen wir (Sometimes we can know), Savior of the Nations, come, Erwecke und belebe uns (Revive us and enliven us) in “Global Praise 3” collection
- Other – Jan Meyer’s tune, Do it in Love, in English from Kirchentag 2025 – available free at <https://www.michaeliskloster.de/1-Jahr-12-Songs/monatssong-januar1>

From Namibia and South Africa:

- New Century Hymnal: #360 Thuma Mina, #437 We Shall Not Give Up the Fight, #526 Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos,
- From the Iona Community: Alleluia, Bayavuya (Your People Are Happy Today), Re ya mathematha (We Are Running), Senzeni na (What Have We Done?), Thuma Mina (Send Me, Lord, all in "Sent By the Lord" collection (GIA); Amen. Alleluia!, Amen siakudumisa (Amen, praise the name of the Lord), Ndingen' endumisweni (Lord, let me enter your kingdom), Mayensiwe (Your will be done on earth, O Lord), from "Many and Great" collection (GIA)
- From Global Songs, Local Voices, published by Augsburg Fortress: Hamba Nathi (Come, Walk With Us), Mayenziwe (Your will be done), Sizohamba Naye (We will go with God), Amen, Alleluia!, Thuma Mina (Send me, Jesus), Sanna sannanina, from "Global Songs 2" Collection; Akanamandla, from "Pave the Way" collection
- From "Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round" collection from Chorister's Guild: Amen Siyakudumisa, Alleluia-Psalm 150, Sikhulele, Ahomna, Nkosi! Nkosi!, Thuma Mina
- From "Global Songs for Worship" collection, published by Faith Alive!: Sanna, Sannanina, Goodness is Stronger than Evil
- From Global Praise (www.globalpraise.org): Jikelele in "For Everyone Born" collection; Amen Siyakudumisa, in "Global Praise 1" collection, **Shiwana yambuka (Rise up, all you nations) in Global Praise 3 (from Namibia!)**

Liberia and Western Africa

- NCH #498 Jesu, Jesu
- From the Iona Community: Kyrie eleison, from Ghana, in "Many and Great" collection (GIA)
- From "Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round" collection from Chorister's Guild: **Come, Let Us Eat (Call and response, excellent for communion! – from Liberia!)**
- From "Global Songs for Worship" collection, published by Faith Alive!: The Lord is Ruler Over All (from Ghana), We Are Coming, Lord, to the Table (from Sierra Leone)
- From Global Praise (www.globalpraise.org): Tell am tenky (Sierra Leone) in "For Everyone Born" collection, Ocean of Love, in "Global Praise 1" collection, O va de laa moo (Come, one and all) in Global Praise 3

India

- New Century Hymnal #581 – Lead Us From Death to Life
- From Iona Community – Yesuve Saranam (Jesus, I Surrender), from "Many and Great" collection (GIA); Almighty God, Give Us Light (Jyothi dho Prabhu) from "Love and Anger" collection (GIA); Jyothi dho Prabhu (Give Us Light) from "Sing the World: Global Songs for Children" collection (GIA)

- From Global Songs, Local Voices, published by Augsburg Fortress: Ocean of Love from “Pave the Way” collection, Karthave, kirubaiyayirum from the “Global Praise 3” collection
- From “Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round” collection from Chorister’s Guild: I Was Glad, Rejoice, Hallelu
- From “Global Songs for Worship” collection, published by Faith Alive!: Father in Heaven, Far Beyond Our Mind’s Grasp, In Great Thanksgiving
- From Global Praise (www.globalpraise.org): The Great Thanksgiving (Punjabi) in “For Everyone Born” collection, God of Creation (Benediction) in “Global Praise 1” collection, Karthave Kirubaiyayirum (Gracious Lord, have mercy), Thooyaa, thooyaa, thooyare (Holy, Holy, Holy), Aadavar thaam (Christ has died) in “Global Praise 3” collection
- Many more resources in *Sound the Bamboo*, from the Christian Conferences of Asia, published by GIA

Philippines

- New Century Hymnal #29, Let Heaven Your Wonders Proclaim, #234 I’ll Shout the Name of Christ Who Lives
- From the Iona Community: Let heavens your wonders proclaim, Loving Creator, Maranatha (We Believe) The Earth is the Lord’s – all in “Sent By the Lord” collection (GIA)
- From Global Songs, Local Voices, published by Augsburg Fortress: The Earth is the Lord’s, Valley Psalm to the Holy Spirit, in “Global Songs, Local Voices” collection,
- From Global Songs, Local Voices, published by Augsburg Fortress: When Twilight Comes, from “Global Songs 2” collection,
- From “Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round” collection from Chorister’s Guild: Sing with Hearts
- From Global Praise (www.globalpraise.org): O many people of all lands, in “Global Praise 1” collection, Hindi ko maisip (What a great mystery) in “Global Praise 3” collection
- Additional resources in the UCCP *Hymnal of a Faith Journey*
- Many more resources in *Sound the Bamboo*, from the Christian Conferences of Asia, published by GIA

Guatemala

- From the Iona Community – La Paz de La Tierra (Octavo available from GIA),
- From “Global Songs for Worship” collection, published by Faith Alive!: Santo es el Señor (Holy is the Lord)
- From Global Praise (www.globalpraise.org): Tuya es la gloria (We sing of your glory) in “Global Praise 1” collection, Por la mañana (I waken each new day) in “Global Praise 3” collection

Liberia

The Penn Northeast Conference maintains a relationship with the Inside the Mission Bible School in Liberia.

Contact Person: Bonnie Bates, BonnieB@pnec.org

Jordan UCC in Allentown, PA maintains a relationship with the Jordan Community School System in Liberia.

Contact Person: David Charles Smith, therrev@aol.com

You are invited to be part of these relationships! We develop and maintain relationships, study together, travel to each other's homes, pray for each other, and sometimes support each other monetarily. If you are interested in being part of the relationships with any of these churches, please contact the appropriate contact person above, or contact Julie Holm, julie@bvfof.org, (703)-887-1265

Keystone Global Ministries Team



All four Pennsylvania Conferences maintain international relationships. The Keystone Global Ministries Team has formed to support those relationships through the transition to the Keystone Conference and Beyond. We believe that international ecumenical relationships help us to be better Christians, remind us of those who are our brothers and sisters but who may worship and experience their faith in different ways, and enrich our relationships and understanding in the world

The Predecessor Conferences to Keystone maintain relationships with:

Germany:

The Evangelical Churches of Berlin, Brandenburg, and Silesian Upper Lusitania (EKBO) in Germany – Born out of the end of the cold war and the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, a relationship with the Penn Central Conference began around the concept of peace, and to support the church in the former East Germany. In the 1990s the partners

established a tradition of joint biannual Colloquies. In recent years an emphasis toward engagement of younger church leaders has emerged, as has attention to church decline and renewal, and how divisiveness in our world has affected our communities. The Keystone Conference will host a Colloquy with EKBO on the topic of Church as Witness in a Divided World from July 26-31, 2026 at Juniata College in Huntingdon. Contact person: Julie Holm, julie@bvfof.org

The Evangelical Churches of the Rhineland in Germany – this has also been an active partnership since the 1980s. They have engaged with Pastor exchanges, hosted young students for visits, and supported occasional educational events, including a 2018 convocation on Martin Luther King in Atlanta. Currently our Next Generation Cohort, joint with the Churches of the Rhineland and the Wisconsin Conference have come together for two meetings, and developed a declaration addressing Christian Nationalism in both Germany and the US. Contact person: Julie Holm, julie@bvfof.org

The Evangelical Church in Anhalt in Germany – The Penn Northeast and Pennsylvania Southwest Conferences have a relationship with the Evangelical Church in Anhalt in Germany. Contact Person: David Charles Smith, therrev@aol.com

The Philippines:

The Northwest Luzon Conference of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines – The relationship with the Penn West Conference began in 2010. The partnership team has enable exchange of ambassadors, with visits of members of the conference to the Philippines and hosting of visitors from the Philippines. The partnership

has also initiated a SHEEP (Sharing Hope for Educational Expenses in the Philippines) Fund to help contribute to help children in school and for students preparing for ministry. Contact Person: David Ackerman, david@pennwest.org

Guatemala

The Penn Northeast and Pennsylvania Southeast Conference maintain relationships with the Amigos de Guatemala, Council of Ecumenical Churches in Guatemala and the Monte Maria Medical Center in Guatemala. The relationship includes some financial support of the medical center. Contact Person: Bonnie Bates, BonnieB@pnec.org

India:

The Church of South India – the Penn Northeast and Pennsylvania Southeast Conferences maintain a relationship with the Church of South India. Currently this relationship is spiritually supporting a persecuted church in that part of the world. Contact Person: David Charles Smith, therrev@aol.com (?)

Namibia

The Penn Central Conference maintains a relationship with the United Congregational Churches of Southern Africa Namibia Synod. In 2013 they were part of the Partners in Peace program which brought young people from Germany, from the Penn Central Conference, from Namibia and from the Dakota Conference of the UCC together, including time in Washington, DC and the Dakota Conference. Contact Person: Chris Rankin chris@trinityeastpete.org