

Worship @ Home Guide – October 18, 2020

Woodstock Presbyterian Church, 142 E. Court St., Woodstock, VA 22664



RECONNECT

Gathering Music/Announcements - *“Jesus Loves the Little Children”*

Call to Worship

Gather our hearts, O God,
knitting us together across difference and division to live with your compassion.
Gather our minds, O God,
from distractions and distance to focus on you and your children.
Gather our wills, O God,
to be strong and courageous in pursuit of your justice.
By the power of your holy spirit,
make us one in heart, mind, and spirit as we worship you today.
Come, let us worship God.

Hymn – “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

READ

Moment for Children

Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” ²¹ They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then

he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." ²² When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

REFLECT

Message

RESPOND

Moment for Mission – What is Children's Sabbath?

The [National Observance of Children's Sabbath](#), sponsored and resourced by the [Children's Defense Fund](#), is a time for people of all faiths to unite in shared concern for children and common commitment to improving children's lives and working for justice on their behalf. Children's Sabbath is typically observed in October.

As part of the ["Educate a Child, Transform the World" Initiative](#), Presbyterians across the country are encouraged to join in observance through **worship, education, and action.**

If you are a Presbyterian and reading this, you are someone who appreciates education. People in the Reformed tradition have always affirmed the value of education and its potential to transform lives and systems. Beginning with John Calvin and continuing with later Reformers and numerous General Assembly actions, Presbyterians have long considered public education essential – first of all, so that the general population might be literate and thus able to read the Bible *for themselves* – and that they might read *with understanding*.

Walk into any Presbyterian church, and there is an excellent chance you will find a day care center, a tutoring program, a mentoring program, or an afterschool program. There is always room for children in our churches. We are reminded that God broke into human history as a vulnerable, fragile, and helpless baby in a land that was not his own. Our theology of the incarnation compels us to advocate for children.

The words of Jesus remind us and compel us, as God's household of faith, to engage in the ministry of child advocacy. The welfare of the whole people of God begins with how we care for the children. Everyone's children.

The role of public schools must be consistently maintained for the good of the whole community. Quality public education gives us the best chance to empower the most students to embrace an abundant life in community. In 1987, the reunited Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted *A Call to Church Involvement in the Renewal*

of Public Education, calling Presbyterians “to join others in their communities – to provide schools that will secure for all children an education that develops their capacities to serve as creative and responsible persons in the common life and – to mobilize the resources available in each community – home, church, community organizations (both public and private) – that will support public schools and share in achieving the necessary education of children and youth” (*Minutes* Part I, pp. 479-80). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Office of Public Witness in Washington, DC (pcusa.org/Washington), in alignment with our education policy statements, works to give voice to Presbyterian values as they regard public policy.

Presbyterians take education very seriously.

Hymn

“Jesus Loves Me”

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.*

Refrain:

*Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
As He loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to Me."*

Prayers of the People

Prayer for Justice (from The Book of Common Prayer, USA)

Almighty God, you created us in your image. Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression. And, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice to the glory of your holy name; Through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Children (From the Presbyterian Church USA Book of Common Worship)

Great God, guard the laughter of children. Bring them safely through injury and illness so they may live the promises you give. Do not let us be so preoccupied with our purposes that we fail to hear their voices, or pay attention to their special vision of the truth; but keep us with them, ready to listen and to love, even as in Jesus Christ you have loved us, your grown-up, wayward children. Amen.

Prayer by Marian Wright Edelman adapted from Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children

God, please use us to stop injustice, the killing of innocent children by violence at home and in faraway lands. God, please use us to stop injustice, the killing of innocent children by poverty at home and abroad. God, please use us to stop injustice, the killing of innocent child spirits by vanity and greed in our land and others. God, please use us to stop injustice, the assault on precious child dreams by neglect and apathy near and far. God, please use us to stop injustice, so our children may live and love and laugh and play again.

Lord's Prayer

RETURN

Charge & Benediction

Beloved, may the Spirit guide us to
that which is true,
that we may be set free;
that which is honorable,
that we may rise above ourselves;
that which is just,
that we may stand in the breach for another;
that which is pure,
that we may live with integrity;
that which is pleasing,
that we may look beyond ourselves;
that which is commendable,
that we may seek to do God's will;
that which is excellent and worthy of praise,
that we may praise the name of the Lord forever.

Hymns from Glory to God.

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