

## LAY WORSHIP LEADER GUIDANCE

**Specific Instructions** (Sample calls to and prayers of confession, declarations of forgiveness, and prayers for illumination follow.)

- At 9:55, please enter with a pastor from the cloister door next to the lectern and sit in a pew in front of the lectern. During the last verse of the opening hymn, move to the lectern.
- Introduce the prayer of confession with a **call to confession**. (see samples). Please do not greet the congregation.
- The **corporate prayer of confession** of **50-to-100 words** should help us to acknowledge our sinfulness and to confess our sin to God. The prayer also must avoid any appearance of judgment and be clearly understood as a means of engaging individuals in making a confession that touches their lives. Please use **“we”** or **“us”** and not **“I”** or **“me.”**
- Conclude the written prayer of confession with language such as, **“We ask your forgiveness as we silently confess our sins.”** This becomes the last sentence of the prayer printed in the bulletin, so there is no need for a separate invitation for the congregation to pray. Allow 20-30 seconds for silent prayer.
- The **declaration of forgiveness** follows the prayer. Stay in place for the *Gloria Patri* or other musical response; then say, “Please be seated.” Either return to your pew seat, sit in “the chair” at the front of the chancel, or stay in place during the Time for Young Disciples (TfYD). (TfYD will take longer on 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, when children collect food donations for the Covenant Pantry.)
- After the Parting Response, read the **prayer for illumination**. Read the lesson and say, **“Here ends the first lesson.”** Be seated.
- For the **prayer of dedication**, move to the lectern once the ushers have passed your pew with the offering plates. After the Doxology, say, **“Let us pray,”** and read the prayer, ending with “Amen.” This prayer expresses gratitude for God’s grace and goodness and our commitment to seeking God’s will. Be seated.
- If your schedule permits, once the postlude begins, move to stand by the cloister-door steps (next to the lectern), to greet people leaving the sanctuary.

**The recent acoustical changes in the sanctuary have made it unnecessary to adjust the microphone. Please do not move it.** Simply speak clearly and a little more slowly than might be customary. If you wish, you may “test” the microphone between the end of the choir’s rehearsal and the beginning of the service.

## **Sample Calls to Confession** (Select or compose.)

God pours blessings upon us, even as we choose to go our own way. In every moment and in every circumstance, God is present and seeks to bring healing and wholeness to all. Therefore, I invite you to confess all that would separate you from God or one another. Let us pray.

Every time we gather up our courage and come before God with humility to confess our sin, God chooses not to turn a deaf ear to us, but to listen to our prayers. God chooses not to shame us, but to save us. Let us pray together with confidence and faith.

Hope, joy, forgiveness, life: These are the gifts God offers us. But too often, we put God's love to the test with our foolish behavior and unwise choices. Let us confess, aloud and in silence, by praying together:

The proof of God's amazing love is this: no matter what we have done, no matter what we have left undone, no matter what shame lies heavy on our hearts, God offers us healing. With grace, God patches up our ripped-apart places and makes us whole. With confidence in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin together.

## **Sample Prayers of Confession** (Compose or select.)

Gracious God, we confess that we close the doors of our mind, shutting out your truth. We lock the gates of our hearts, pretending to be self-sufficient. Help us to sense your presence and to taste your grace, that we may fling wide the portals of our hearts, making them temples set apart from selfish use for your service.

Gracious God, whose goodness extends even beyond our imagining, we confess to smallness of faith. We shrink back from the demands of your discipleship because we fear our needs won't be met. You offer us the liberation of self-giving servanthood, and we worry more about acquiring and accumulating things for ourselves. Forgive us for the ways our lack of faith hinders your work through us. Open us to your Spirit. Renew us by the power of your love to find our joy in following your way.

Gracious God, we try to be good; forgive us when our goodness makes us judgmental. We try to be faithful; forgive us when our faithfulness makes us intolerant. We try to be helpful; forgive us when our helpfulness becomes condescending. Take our best efforts, O Lord, and transform them by your grace and goodness.

## **Sample Declarations of Forgiveness** (Select or compose.)

One Voice: Hear the good news!

God does not deal with us according to our sins, for with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with God is plenteous redemption.

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun.

God shows the divine love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just, forgiving and transforming our lives.

Friends, believe the good news!

**All Voices: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

## **Prayers for Illumination** (Select or compose.)

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept your Word.  
Silence in us any voice but your own, that hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your light, we may see light, in your truth, find freedom, and in your will, discover your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Living God, help us so to hear your holy Word that we may truly understand, that understanding, we may believe, and believing, we may follow in all faithfulness and obedience, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Prayers of Dedication** (after the offering – written by other Lay Worship Leaders)

Let us pray. Thank you Lord for these gifts we have received. Help us to share with those in greatest need. Amen.

Holy God, Please accept this portion of your gifts and bounty as a gesture of our gratitude for your continued grace and compassion. Help us to apply it to the source of our concerns and not just the symptoms that we may bring forth Your Kingdom as you have commanded. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to present these tokens from the bounty of your blessings and of our dedication to your kingdom. May they be used to further your kingdom here on earth by bringing us and others closer to you and to your household. Amen.

2-2016