

Overbrook Presbyterian Church Lay Leader Guidelines, 2018

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a lay leader in worship. OPC is blessed by your worship leadership.

- ❑ On Thursday before the Sunday that you will serve as Lay Leader, the Church Office will send you an e-mail with the Order of Worship attached, so that you can familiarize yourself with the service for the upcoming Sunday. On Saturday the pastor who is preaching will contact you to see if you have any questions.
- ❑ Plan to arrive on Sunday morning by 10:15 AM and meet with the pastor outside of the chapel. This will allow time to go over any last-minute details or address any questions you may have.
- ❑ You will enter the Sanctuary with the pastor around 10:25 AM. You will take your seat directly behind the lectern, facing the congregation, or in the seat hidden behind the lectern. There is already a hymnal provided there.
- ❑ Following the Organ Prelude and Choral Introit, you will go to the lectern, invite the congregation to stand, and then lead the **Call to Worship**. The worship leader's part is printed in normal type, and the congregation's part is printed in bold. When you are reading publicly, be sure to speak clearly and not too quickly.
- ❑ Following the first Hymn, you will again go to the lectern and lead the **Prayer of Confession**. This prayer is read in unison by the whole congregation. Immediately after the prayer, please sit down.
- ❑ After singing the Gloria Patri, please say "Let us pray..." and offer a **Prayer for Illumination**. Then you will read the first **Scripture Reading**. The reading will be found in the Bible on the lectern. This Bible is a large-print edition for ease of reading. Before the reading, give a short introduction (e.g., "Our Old Testament Lesson is from Genesis, chapter 1, verses 1-5.") Similarly, at the end of each reading, there is a brief response printed in the worship bulletin (e.g., "The Word of the Lord.") Be sure to read both the introduction and the response, in addition to the text itself. All Scripture readings come from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible. You should be sure to review the reading in advance and familiarize yourself with it.
- ❑ **Affirmation of Faith:** Begin with an introduction, such as "Please join me in affirming the faith of the church, using the words of _____" (name of creed, found in the bulletin). Please remain standing if you are able."

- ❑ Following the Sharing of Peace, you will assist the pastor with the **Offering**. You will first make a brief announcement, inviting people to give and /or inviting the ushers to come forward. The attached document of resources has some examples of different formulas you may wish to use. Then together with one of the pastors, you will go to the marble table where the offering plates are sitting and take the stack of four plates on the lectern side. Walk around in front of the communion table and reach down to hand the plates to the ushers who are remaining on the main floor level. You will give two plates to each of the two ushers on the lectern side. Then you may sit down.
- ❑ Following the Offering, as the Doxology is being sung, the ushers will come forward with the offering. You and one of the pastors will step around in front of the Communion Table to receive the offering plates, then turn, walk around behind the table, and place the plates on the marble table. The idea, again, is to make sure that the ushers do not have to come up the steps; the pastor and lay leader go to them and reach down to receive the plates.
- ❑ Following the Doxology, from where you are standing behind the Communion Table, you will offer a brief **Prayer of Dedication**. The attached document of sample prayers has several options for each season of the Church Year. You may use any of these if you like but do feel free to use your own words instead. Because there is not a microphone at the Communion Table, you will need to speak with a little more volume.
- ❑ **On Sundays when Communion** is celebrated, if you are an elder or a deacon, you may be asked to serve with the other communion servers. If so, you will receive separate instructions about this.
- ❑ Following the Benediction, and during the **Postlude**, you may exit the Sanctuary with the pastor, stand in the Wistar Morris Room, and greet worshippers on their way out.

Introduction to Prayer of Confession

Please choose one to read before the prayer of confession.

If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins,
God who is faithful and just
will forgive us our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
In humility and faith
let us confess our sin to God...

The proof of God's amazing love is this:
While we were sinners
Christ died for us.
Because we have faith in him,
we dare to approach God with confidence.
In faith and penitence,
let us confess our sin before God and one another...

The Bible tells us:
Remember that our Lord Jesus can sympathize with us in our weaknesses,
since in every respect he was tempted as we are,
yet without sin.
Let us confess our sins
against God and our neighbor...

Those who wait for the Lord
shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.
Let us confess our sins
against God and neighbor...

Prayers for Illumination

Please choose one to read before the scripture reading.

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.

O God,
by your Spirit tell us what we need to hear,
and show us what we ought to do,
to obey Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

O Lord our God,
your Word is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.
Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love,
that we may be obedient to your will
and live always for your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. 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

God our helper,
by your Holy Spirit,
open our minds,
That as the Scriptures are read
and your Word is proclaimed,
we may be led into your truth
and taught your will,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SAMPLE OFFERING SENTENCES

One common way of introducing the offering is by reading a verse of Scripture, followed by an invitation to give.

Scripture Verses

The Psalmist writes:

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.

The Psalmist writes:

The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.

The Psalmist writes:

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High.

In the Gospel it is written:

Freely you have received; freely give.

In the Gospel it is written:

From God's fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

In the Gospel it is written:

Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to God who is in heaven.

In Scripture it is written

All shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God, that he has given you.

In Scripture it is written:

Do good and share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

In Scripture it is written:

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

In Scripture it is written

Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor.

Invitations

Let us give generously, sharing the abundance of God's blessing.

In gladness, let us offer our gifts to the Lord.

Let us with gladness return to God the offerings of our life and labor.

The ushers will now come forward to receive the morning offering.

As we give today, may we do so in love, in joy, in prayer, in thanksgiving, and in unselfishness.

SAMPLE PRAYERS OF DEDICATION

Advent

God of abundance, we bring before you these tokens of our talents and of our lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Eternal God, as you led your people in ages past, you direct our journey into the future. We give you thanks that you came to us in Jesus Christ, and we eagerly await the time when his rule will be complete and your righteousness will reign over all the world. Receive the gifts we offer this day, as a pledge of our commitment to your gracious reign; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gracious God, we lay upon your table our gifts of heart and hand. Fill us with your love, so that our lives may bear the fruit of your Word, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. From all that you have given us, receive these gifts as signs of our thanksgiving and praise. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen. *(when communion is celebrated)*

Christmas

Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. Bless the gifts we offer this day, and let them be a blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of time and eternity, you have given your only Son, born of Mary, to save and redeem us. Receive now these gifts that we bring, and let the work of our hands proclaim the news of your redeeming love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mystery and might, we praise and worship you, for you came in silence, while all lay sleeping, to enter our world as a child of humble birth. We thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, born of your handmaid Mary. In his face we behold your glory, for in his life as in his death is your gift of salvation. By your Spirit, make our hearts burn with thanksgiving, that we may give as we have received. Let our whole lives be gifts of praise to you, O God. In the gracious name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Epiphany

God of glory, with great joy we worship you and lay before you these gifts, which you have first given us. Let our lives serve you only, and lead us always to our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, the bright and morning star. Amen.

Merciful God, as you have blessed us with many gifts, so receive now these offerings of ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Pour your Spirit upon us, and unite us as your body, that we may be a light to all nations; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

God of majesty and light, you hold the whole world in your hand. So we give you our great praise that in Jesus Christ all people may see your glory. We thank you for revealing Jesus to be your Son, and for claiming our lives in baptism to be his glad disciples. By your Spirit, may peace descend upon us that we may follow him with grateful hearts. Take us and all we have to be useful in your service; in the gracious name of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

Merciful God, it would have been enough for you to give us the fruit of the earth by which we live. But in this meal, by your promise, you also give us yourself. Use what we have gathered here in feeding the hungry world with your love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *(when communion is celebrated)*

Lent

Holy God, you provide us with every gift of creation, and you quench our thirst with living water. Receive these tokens of your goodness to us. May our lives be bread for the hungry and streams in the wilderness, signs of the abundance of your grace in Jesus Christ. Amen.

God of compassion, we praise you that you look upon our frail lives with love and understanding, and that you desire for us all new life in Christ. We are overwhelmed by your love, which goes to the cross for us, endures the grave, and leads us to new life. By your Spirit, strengthen our souls to be brave and bold in Christ's service. Take our offerings, and use them and us for your purposes, in the name of Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord. Amen.

Compassionate God, we offer you these gifts as signs of our time and labor. Receive the offering of our lives, and feed us with your grace, that, even in the midst of death, all creation might feast on your unending life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God our provider, you feed us not with bread alone, but also with the words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. *(when communion is celebrated)*

Easter

Eternal God, we praise you that your glory has dawned on us, and brought us into this Day of Resurrection. We rejoice that the grave could not hold your Son, and that he has conquered death, risen to rule over all powers of this earth. We praise you that he summons us into new life, to follow him with joy and gladness. By your Spirit, lift us from doubt and despair, and set our feet in Christ's holy way, that our lives may be signs of his life, and all we have may show forth his love. Praise, glory, and thanksgiving to you, our God, forever and ever. Amen.

God of glory, receive these gifts and the offering of our lives. As Jesus was lifted up from the earth, draw us to your heart in the midst of this world, that all creation may be brought from bondage to freedom, from darkness to light, and from death to life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

To you, O Giver of life, we offer our thanks, our praise, and these gifts from your world. As you give new life to us, so may we live always in you for the sake of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Living God, in Christ's resurrection you raised up new life for the world. Receive what we offer, that others might know that life through the gifts you give us to use and to share. Amen.

After Pentecost (Summer)

God of sun and rain, farm and flower, we praise you for your wonderful creation and your all-sustaining care. Receive these tokens of our gratitude, and may our lives reflect the goodness and love shown in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Accept our lives, O God, as well as our gifts. Let the spirit in which we give them be your Spirit. Let the use that is made of them be your use; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have blessed us with your goodness. You have given us our selves, our time, and our possessions. May these gifts be used in the care and healing of all that you have made, for the sake of the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Most giving and forgiving God, you provide for our every need. You open our lips to offer you praise. You strengthen our hands to respond to Christ's call. With hearts, hands, and voices renewed by your Spirit, we place now before you our commitment to serve. Use us in ways that will benefit others, and accept what we offer as a sign of our faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

After Pentecost (Fall)

God of every generation, we offer you our songs of praise and thanksgiving. We bring you these tokens of our talents and our lives. Help us to use our gifts in the name of Christ, so that justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal God, we bring you these gifts because we know that our life and all human life rightfully belong to you, and that everything we have we hold in trust from you. We praise you for everything you have done for the world in Jesus Christ. Help us, through him, to make our own offering complete by living in obedience to you. In his name we pray. Amen.

Living and true God, we give to you the things that are yours—our skills, our time, our possessions, our selves. Bless us and these your gifts. Move us to works of faith and labors of love for the good of all your people and the wholeness of your creation; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.