SERVICE SUNDAY 2025 WORSHIP RESOURCES

Suggested observance: Feb. 2, 2025

Call to Worship

God, you have gathered us here today

To worship in community

We welcome your presence

That brings us together

All that we bring with us today

We leave at your feet

Knowing that you will guide us through

Be with us today and every day. Amen.

—Rachel Johnson, BVS Volunteer, Unit 335

Poems

I greet the morning with a grin
The sun has risen and the air is fresh
My home is clean and safe
The children wake and are well fed
I have many things for which I am grateful
The day is filled with work
Yet I sleep soundly at night
Such splendor is a bird given
When I live as I should

—Justine Eckert – BVS Unit 336
Inspired by Matthew 6:25-34

I am your Beloved
The sun on my face
The wind in the trees
The breath in my chest
Your gifts given to me.
So I give to others the gifts that I have
My friendship, attention, laughter, and love
I share my belongings to work hand in hand
My service in deed; small but yet grand
Your presence a light guiding our way
Beside one another
Actions intentional
Across many lands
Sharing your love
Finding our way
Back to you

—Carolyn Neher, associate director, Children's Disaster Services

Prayer

God, you have called all of us to live a life with purpose. Each of us is called to love and serve others just as Christ did. When Christ traveled, as he was teaching, he looked out for those who were on the outside of society, those in need of necessities, and those who could use a loving gesture; and he made sure to serve them and love them. There are many similar needs in this community and beyond – many ways we can serve and love others with the gifts you have given us. Help us to learn where our gifts and the world's needs come together, so that we can live our lives with purpose.

—Rachel Johnson, BVS Volunteer, Unit 335

Offertory Prayer

Our Lord, who has called us to love, open our eyes so that we can see the beloved community around us. Help us to see the many layers of that community and how we make a difference in every one of them, both individually and as a faith family. Help us to discover where and how we can use the gifts that you have shared with us to bless others, so that the ripples of your love will flow from our center outward, bringing joy, hope, comfort, and light in this world. Amen.

—Sharon Franzén, manager of Brethren Disaster Ministries

Scripture

Ephesians 4:1-3

[1] I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [3] making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Children's Message

Good morning! Today, we're going to talk about something very important—serving others and living with purpose! Do you know what it means to have a purpose?

(Wait for responses like "a reason," "something we're supposed to do," etc.)

That's right! Having a purpose means that God made us for a special reason, and part of that reason is to love and help others. And guess what? When we help others, we are actually living with purpose—just like Jesus did.

Do you know how Jesus helped people?

(Pause for responses: "He healed people," "He fed people," "He taught people.")

Yes! Those are great examples of Jesus helping others. And you know what? We can do the same thing! God made each one of us to help and care for others.

In the Church of the Brethren, we believe that serving others is a very important way to live out our faith. Did you know that there are people in our church and in other churches around the world who have dedicated parts of their life to service?

(Give examples of people they may know in their church who serve or mention examples of ways you can serve within the Church of the Brethren – ex. when you are in middle school, youth go and serve for a week with FaithX, others serve with Brethren Disaster Ministries to help build houses after disasters, and some spend a whole year serving with Brethren Volunteer Service to help those in need.)

Can you think of a way you might help someone today? Maybe at school, at home, or with your friends?

(Wait for responses: "Helping with chores," "Sharing with a friend," "Being kind to someone who is sad.")

Those are great ideas! You don't have to wait until you're older to do good things in the world—you can start right now!

Here's another question: Why do you think it's important to serve others and help people?

(Pause for answers: "Because God wants us to," "It makes people feel happy," "It's kind.")

Exactly! When we help others, we show God's love. And guess what? Every time you do something kind for someone else, you're living out God's purpose for you!

So, I want you to think of one thing you can do this week to serve others. Maybe you can help your parents, share with a friend, or say something kind to someone who needs a little encouragement. Remember, when we help others, we're living with purpose—just like Jesus did!

Before you go back to your seats, let's pray together.

Dear God,
Thank you for giving us a purpose to love and help others. Help us to be kind and serve those around us, just like Jesus did. Show us how we can make a difference in someone's life today.
We love you, and we want to make a difference in the world by serving with love!
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!

—Chelsea Goss Skillen, director, Brethren Volunteer Service

Reflection - Living with Purpose

The statement "Living With Purpose," among other things, is a command. Similar to the Brethren ideal of living simply, to live like Jesus is to Live with Purpose. From cradle to high school, we are given a clear purpose: learn how to live in your society. This means learning your language, numbers, and months. This means positively interacting with your peers, respecting your elders, and above all, doing well in school. You may also be given chores at a young age. If nothing else, you are expected to keep your room clean and pick up after yourself. When you are 15 or 16, you are expected to get a job. Then you're expected to graduate high school. And from there you must either commit to a job or pursue further education. It is not until you are about 22 that you're really faced with this issue of "living with a purpose", you've been following the social script your whole life. You reflect on what it is you just spent the last 18 to 23 years doing. Maybe you kept up with your chores, worked over the summers in high school, you attended college or received a certification like you were supposed to. But now, it's all up to you. At this point, you may be tempted to solely seek purpose in a job or furthering your education. These can be helpful in determining your "calling" or your "purpose" but should not be the end of it. Instead, you should question what it is that gets you from one day to the next.
You may look to Romans 8:26-28.

> [26] And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.[27] And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. [28] And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to God's purpose for them. (NLT)

And for those of you that are not young adults, this is still important. Maybe you felt you had a purpose, but it no longer guides you. Or you were never too clear on what it is you're meant to be doing and instead you live life each day as it comes. No matter where you are in life, it's important to spend time in prayer. And prayer can be hard, but so long as your heart and mind are in the right place, you can be sure that the Spirit will guide you. May you be willing to offer yourself up to the Lord in prayer and receive a clear path in return.

—Justine Eckert, BVS Volunteer, Unit 336

Benediction

Sisters and brothers! We all have a purpose, to love and serve others. Each of us has gifts that have been given to us which enable us to love and serve the diverse needs of our community. Explore your gifts, find ways to serve others, and do it all with love.

—Rachel Johnson, BVS Volunteer, Unit 335

Service Sunday, recognized annually the first Sunday of February, is sponsored by the service ministries of the Church of the Brethren including Brethren Volunteer Service, FaithX, Brethren Disaster Ministries, Children's Disaster Services, and Material Resources. Congregations and church leaders are encouraged to use this Sunday to lift up those who serve, or have served, in their local communities and throughout the world. The above resources may be used how you see fit during your Service Sunday celebrations.

**"Living with Purpose" image is taken from the FaithX logo and theme for 2025.*