

Alive in the Spirit!
NOAC 2025 Worship Resources
September 1-5, 2025 -Lake Junaluska, NC

Opening Worship, Monday, September 1, 2025

Meditation

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”-Howard Thurman

Call to Worship *[2 readers at pulpit]*

- Voice 1: We’ve come from the East and the West, the coastlands,
and the valleys, the cities and the suburbs.
- Voice 2: We’ve come from the North and the South, the great plains
and the mountains, the small towns and country farms.
- Voice 1: We’ve come from places near and far to create a week-long
community where we will live and learn, pray and play together.
- Voice 2: Some of us come from places of pain and stress, from paths
of struggle and sorrow.
- Voice 1: Some of us come from places of joy and celebration, from
paths of comfort and caring.
- Voice 2: All of us come seeking God’s presence in this time of change.
- Voice 1: We come with some apprehension and fear about the future.
- Voice 2: We come wondering what will become of the Church we love.
- Voice 1: We come open to the movement of the Spirit among us this week.
- Voice 2: Come now to *this* place, and *this* time, to worship!
- Voice 1: To sing and to pray, and to dance with the Spirit!
- Voice 2: God brings us together for worship, holding our hopes and
our fears, our dreams and our longings. Come, let us worship!¹

Opening Prayer *(together)*

**Holy Spirit, Breath of God,
come and make your presence known to us this week.
Come to us in the natural beauty of this place.
Come to us as we listen and learn.
Come to us through scripture, songs, and stories.
Come to us through the community of old friends and friends yet to be made.
Come to us now in this time of worship. Amen.**²

Land Acknowledgement

As we begin NOAC please join me in making a land acknowledgement. I invite you to think about a piece of land that you love - maybe it's a garden you tend, or the yard around your house, or a park you like to visit or a favorite place to camp or even the median on a busy city street where a beautiful tree is growing. Think of that place and imagine yourself there.

Now imagine the people who have come before you who also know and love that place. Think of the other living beings who spend time there and depend on that land. How would it feel if you were told you could never go back to that place? Sit with that feeling for a moment. *[pause]*

As we gather near the waters of Lake Junaluska, we acknowledge that this place is part of the ancestral homelands of the East band of Cherokee, the S'atsoyaha (Yuchi) and Miccosukee peoples, who have stewarded these mountains and waters for generations beyond memory.

We know that the people of these lands experienced great loss when colonizers arrived and claimed this land for their purposes and profits. We recognize that we are part of an ongoing reality that displaces Indigenous peoples and has attempted to erase their memory and knowing of these lands.

This moment is an invitation - not just to reflect here, but to carry this awareness home. [While NOAC is just beginning], In five days each of us will return to different lands across Turtle Island (North America). Before we part, consider: "What is one way I can learn about the Indigenous peoples of the lands where I live, work, or worship?" May this question travel home with you [and throughout this week]. And may it grow into action.

In closing I invite you to recall again the land that you love... may your love extend to recognize the sacredness of all land and may our actions flow from that breadth of love. May it be so.

-Adapted from a Land Acknowledgement by Joanna Lawrence Shenk, San Francisco Mennonite Church Pastor
-Adapted from help chat at <https://native-land.ca>

***Doxology** Tune: LASST UNS ERFEUEN, All creatures of our God and King

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

Prayer of Dedication *(together)*

**Holy Spirit, You have gathered us here and we are thankful.
Thankful for this hour of worship.
Thankful for safe travel.
Thankful for the week ahead.
With grateful hearts we offer these gifts
for your work in the world, in these times. Amen.³**

Benediction *[have several people read Romans 15:13 in three different languages]*

Intro: On Pentecost there were people of many places, speaking many languages in Jerusalem. Hear our Benediction now in three languages - Spanish, ?? and English.

Que el Dios de la esperanza los llene de toda alegría y paz a ustedes que creen en él, para que rebosen de esperanza por el poder del Espíritu Santo.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Credits: 1-3. Bonnie Kline Smeltzer

Tuesday, September 2, 2025 – Living with Hope

Meditation

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness.” - Desmond Tutu

“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.”- Nelson Mandela

Opening Prayer

God of Hope,
we come into your presence this evening
with confidence that you will meet us here.
Where there is sadness, bring joy;
Where there is tiredness, bring refreshment;
Where there is despair, bring a renewed sense of hope.
Let this place be a sanctuary,
a safe haven for us,
a home for holy words and songs and prayers
as we devote ourselves to you.
We pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

- Adapted from “Copyright Carol Penner www.leadinginworship.com

Scripture - Luke 1:46-55

Intro - In the first chapter of Luke’s gospel Mary learns of her pregnancy. Troubled at first, Mary eventually goes to the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah. Upon greeting Elizabeth and receiving her blessing, Mary breaks into song. Through her words, often known as the Magnificat, we learn that Mary’s experience of becoming the mother of the Coming One is not just about her giving birth to a child, but about her participating in bringing a whole new world to birth.

[Join me in the responsive reading of this scripture.]

And Mary said,
“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, ⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹**you, the Almighty have done great things for me, and holy is your name.**

⁵⁰You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

⁵¹**You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,**

⁵² casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

⁵³ **You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.**

⁵⁴ You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,

**to remember the promise of mercy, ⁵⁵the promise made to our forbears,
to Abraham and Sarah and their children forever.”² [Voices #987 F]**

Invitation to Give

We give of our time, our money, our gifts and skills to those causes and purposes in which we believe. Today we believe in the hope that God’s reign is coming on earth through the work of Christ’s Church, through each of our lives, and through the movement of the Spirit. God needs all of us to be messengers of hope. May the gifts we offer today be tools of hope for our sisters and brothers everywhere. The ushers will receive our offerings.

***Doxology** Tune: Old Hundredth, text by Mary Luti

***Praise God whose love will never cease,
whose justice raises up the least
and sits all creatures at the feast -
God’s mercy is our hope and peace!***

Prayer of Dedication *(together)*

Holy One, Giver of Hope, accept the gifts we offer.

Use these resources to bring life and health and community to those in need.

Use us as messengers of hope and proclaimers of faith in the face of fear. Amen.

- Bonnie Kline Smeltzer

Wednesday, September 3, 2025 – Living with Gratitude

Meditation

*"Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart,
It could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude." - A.A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh*

Call to Worship *(responsive)*

In deep gratitude we come to worship God.

We recognize God as the source of all goodness.

All good gifts come from the Spirit of God:

love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, gentleness are all of God.

We come with grateful hearts, not for things, but for who God is.

We gather to show our gratitude in song and prayer.

- posted on *The Presbyterian Church in Canada* website. <http://presbyterian.ca/>

Opening Prayer *[after singing hymn Bring many names worship leader offers this prayer]*

God of many names, come in many ways this hour.
Come in the power of music.
Come in the quiet of prayer.
Come in the words of scripture and sermon.
Come in moments of mystery and silence.
Come to us, Holy One, come. Amen.

Invitation to Give

May our offerings today be a joyous outpouring of our thanks to God.
May our gifts be a token of all that we have to share to continue the work of Jesus in the world.
The ushers will receive our gifts of love and thanksgiving. - Bonnie Kline Smeltzer

Prayer of Dedication *(together)*

**God of Life and Love, we offer these gifts with gratitude and joy.
You have blessed us beyond measure. Multiply our gifts and use
them to bring new life, hope, and joy in the lives of others. Amen.**

- Bonnie Kline Smeltzer

Thursday, September 4, 2025 – Living with Power

Meditation

*"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."- Malala Yousafzai
"Sometimes in the stillness of the quiet, if we listen, we can hear the whisper in the heart
giving strength to weakness, courage to fear, hope to despair." - Howard Thurman*

Call to Worship

The Spirit of Life gathers us together for worship.
We come with joys and burdens, hopes and fears.
We come from many places, with different experiences.
May the Spirit empower us to become God's Beloved Community. - Bonnie Kline Smeltzer

Opening Prayer *(responsive)*

God, the encourager, God, the compassionate,
God, the merciful, holy, blessed:

**Disturb us. Rouse us from our sleep.
Lift us into awareness of your presence. |
Change us, move us, mold us for the better;
so that, at the sound of your voice,
at the call of our name,
we will never be the same.**

May our worship do this and so much more,
in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**¹

—adapted from **In the Name of Jesus.... Service Prayers for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**,
posted on the [Worship Ways](#) page of the United Church of Christ website.

Invitation to Give *[to follow Anthem]*

The power of the Lord has come down! And it is evident in the offering of our time, our gifts and skills, and our money. May the Spirit move us to give generously to God's work of healing, justice, and peace. Let us shout our Hallelujahs and praise God's Holy name through the gifts we give. -BKS

***Doxology**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One!*

***Prayer of Dedication** *(together)*

**All good gifts come from You, O God. Accept the gifts we offer.
Use them to further your purposes in the world. Use us to
continue to build the Beloved Community. In the name of Jesus,
our Friend and Savior, we pray. Amen.** -BKS

Closing Worship, Friday, September 5, 2025**Meditation**

*"Joy is prayer; joy is strength: joy is love;
joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls." - Mother Teresa*

*"Joy does not simply happen to us.
We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day." - Henri Nouwen*

Call to Worship

Sisters and brothers – arise.
Arise and lift your hearts
Arise and lift your eyes
Arise and lift your voices.

The living God,
The living, moving Spirit of God
has called us together -
in witness
in celebration
in struggle.

Reach out toward each other.
Our God reaches out toward us!
Let us worship God!

- Elizabeth Rice. Posted on the **Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand** website. <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-ministers/worship-resources/>

Opening Prayer *(responsive)*

Open our ears **to hear your word.**

Open our eyes **to see your presence.**

Open our arms **to the embrace of community.**

Open our minds **to the beauty of truth.**

Open our hearts **to the joy of new life.** - Copyright Carol Penner www.leadinginworship.com

Invitation to Give

Our lives, our churches, our communities, and the world need more joy.

Let us give with joyful hearts for the week we have spent together,

for all that we have learned and shared,

for the friendships made and strengthened,

and for the good work these gifts will enable.

Awakened by joy let us be generous. -BKS

Prayer of Dedication *(together)*

God of life,

We give these offerings in gratitude,

Rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.

We give these offerings in faith,

Trusting that you will provide for our needs.

We give these offerings in hope,

Knowing that you can use them to spread your love in this world.

And with these offerings, we give ourselves;

May we live with generous hearts and open hands. Amen.

- Joanna Harader (USA) 2013, *Voices Together*, #1017

Benediction *(responsive)* [*\[written to pick up daily themes\]*](#)

Alive in the Spirit, go forth with new insights.

We leave this place living with hope.

Alive in the Spirit, go now with uplifted hearts.

We leave this community living with gratitude.

Alive in the Spirit, go now with new passion and commitment.

We leave this conference living with power.

Alive in the Spirit, go now to be God's witnesses.

We go, choosing to live with hope, gratitude, power, and joy! - BKS