



God Is with Us in Every Season

A Worship Resource for College & Young Adult Sunday
Centered on 1 Kings 19:4-8

By Rev. Jasmine Evans & Rev. L. British Hyrams

Order of Worship

Call to Worship *Based on Psalm 34*

One: We will bless the Lord at all times.

All: God's praise will always be on our lips.

One: Let us magnify the Lord.

All: Let us lift high the name of God.

One: O, taste and see that the Lord is good.

All: Let us worship God together!

Gathering Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for your presence with us as we worship your holy name. Speak to the hearts and minds of all who are gathered, especially the young adults and their loved ones who are foremost in our thoughts and who we hold close at heart today. As the transitions of life come quickly and sometimes suddenly, keep us aware that we are your beloved, and always in your care. Pour out the blessings of your Spirit in the midst of it all, and fill us with your love. Amen.

Song *See suggestions on page 6.*

Call to Confession

In spite of our feelings of shame and guilt, scripture calls us to confess before God and one another. Because of Christ, we can lay bare the individual and corporate ways we have sinned against God. Because of Christ, our mediator, we can be confident of receiving grace, mercy, and healing. Let us confess together, boldly yet humbly.

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, we confess that many times we forget that you are Lord of all. We get so caught up in our own needs and wants that we embrace selfish ways. These ways love and serve only our pride. At times, we care more about the things that society and culture say are important. We do not live in the ways of compassion

and love, justice and mercy, repentance and forgiveness that are taught to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Forgive us. Create clean hearts in us. Put new, faithful spirits deep inside us — every day, every hour, every minute. (Moments of silent prayer.) Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Beloved of God, from time to time our minds play tricks on us and our feelings misinform us. Be assured that we are never out of God's reach; there is no such thing as being too far gone. God sees us. God hears us. God loves us. In Christ, we are forgiven. In Christ, we are redeemed. Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

Dear God of every space and time,
Meet us in this time of transition,
Open our ears to hear your word,
Clear our minds of every distraction,
And let your Word take root in our hearts,
So that this message will bloom in us when we need it the most.
Amen.

Reading(s)

Psalm 34:1-8
1 Kings 19:4-8

Song *See suggestions on page 6.*

Sermon *See sermon starter and illustrations on page 7.*

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in the Triune God:

We believe in God the Creator of all the heavens and the earth, in whose image we are fearfully and wonderfully made. In life, in death, and all the stages in between, we belong to God. The love of God is steadfast. God's grace and mercy follow us all the days of our lives.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, our savior, and our friend. Jesus sustains us and lights our way. The Lord protects us and watches over us. Whatever we have or whatever we need, wherever we are and no matter how far we have to go, we can make it through Christ who gives us strength.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, our advocate, and our guide. By the power of the Spirit, God is revealed and faith received. By the power of the Spirit, we see and hear, speak and act in the ways that bring honor and glory to God.

This we believe; Lord help our unbelief. Amen.

Recognition of Transitions

Our focus in worship today is all about transition. We recognize times of significant change as a sacred and crucial part of life.

Would the following persons please stand or raise their hand, and remain so until the end:

- If you are a young adult moving toward independence by entering the workforce or starting your own business.
- If you are a young adult continuing your education beyond high school.
- If you are a young adult trying something new in life or carefully navigating current spaces and places, people and situations.
- If you, of any age, children through retirement, or someone you care about, are going through a time of transition in any aspect of life: physical health, mental health, relationships, employment, financial, educational, or spiritual.
- If you are willing to pray for others in a season of transition.

By now everyone should be standing, if not, ask everyone to stand or raise their hand. The following blessing may be extended before they are seated.

Brothers, Sisters, Siblings in Christ: rest assured in these promises: God is your helper. God is on your side. May the Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways. Amen.

Commissioning Litany

For other litanies and blessings that celebrate college students and young adults, visit pcusa.org/collegesunday.

One: When we find ourselves at the intersections of life, we remind ourselves...

All: God, we know you are with us!

One: As we move to new places and meet new faces, we say...

All: God, we know you are with us!

One: When we can't decide which way to turn, we say...

All: God, we know you are with us!

One: Even when we are sure of exactly where you are leading us, we say...

All: God, we know you are with us!

One: For new schools and new jobs, for new adventures and old friends, for going and growing, for learning and unlearning, for change and sameness, and for all that we will find in between, on this we can depend...

All: God, we know you are with us!

Continued on next page.

One: We give thanks to You, God, for being with us every step of the way. Let this refrain be a charge to you to walk boldly into your next season of life reassured by God's promises and saying...

All: God, we know you are with us!

Song *See suggestions on page 6.*

Invitation to Offering

Everything we have, we received from God. Out of God's generous abundance, we receive blessing upon blessing. Giving is an honor and privilege. We are blessed in order to be a blessing to others. Let us now cheerfully present our offerings.

A note from UKirk National: College and Young Adult Sunday is a great time to receive a special offering in support of collegiate ministry! We encourage you to find the UKirk(s) closest to you and ask how you can best support them. (Not sure who's nearby? A map of our network ministries is available at ukirk.org/ministries.) If you'd also like to support the UKirk Collegiate Ministries Association as we seek to support campus ministers, chaplains, and their student faith communities, visit ukirk.org/donate.

Prayer of Dedication

Lord, bless the gifts presented today. Some are given out of abundance, others are given despite unfulfilled needs. Use these gifts in tangible ways to reveal your love here in your kingdom on earth. May they be used to provide the essentials of life and the things that make life sweeter. In all their use, may you be glorified. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Gracious God, every person, place, and thing are yours. We bring these requests, knowing that you hear and believing that you care.

Creator God, thank you for the beauty and majesty of the earth. Thank you for the natural resources that sustain us. Renew and replenish them. Direct the decisions and deeds of the individuals, groups, and organizations that impact the environment, directly or indirectly.

God of justice, in every nation, in every corner of the world, rescue the oppressed, provide for those in need, and deliver your people from violence in our homes and our communities. Motivate us all to participate with you in bringing godly justice to the earth.

God of peace, rule in the hearts of leaders everywhere: government and religious, social and civic, corporate and non-profit. Guide them in the ways of compassion and equity, honesty and morality. Move us toward a society that cares and provides for all people.

God our Healer, restore those who are suffering in mind, body, or spirit. Quench the doubts and fears that consume our minds, replace them with faith and hope. Liberate bodies from pain, addiction, and deterioration, grant them relief and renewal. Meet the needs of physical bodies that are changing, growing, aging, and being stretched to the limit. Uplift those who are downtrodden in spirit, remind them of your love, and revive them by the power of your Spirit.

Lord our Shepherd, we pray for everyone moving from one phase of life to another. Guide them along the way. Align our hopes and aspirations with your will. Revive and recreate relationships to fulfill your purpose. Provide the resources needed for new endeavors and for sustaining the necessities of life. Money and materials. Connections and opportunities. Sound advice and decision-making.

Sustaining God, we pray for young adults that are excited and nervous, growing and learning, transitioning, and repositioning. As they search for confirmation of their identity, beliefs, and values, direct them through the pitfalls of freedom and lure of risky behaviors. We pray for parents and loved ones that are proud and filled with anxiety, happy and fearful. We pray for all of us as we learn and grow in life and faith; hold us close in the space of "almost but not yet."

Silent Prayer

The New Zealand Anglican Lord's Prayer¹
Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Song *See suggestions on page 6.*

¹ *The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* by the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand (HarperOne, 1997).

Benediction

May you leave here with the confidence that God orders your steps.

May God's peace follow you into new classrooms, new jobs,
new experiences, and new places.

May God's wisdom flow in you with every test, project, deadline, obstacle, and decision,
And may you never feel alone as you make each transition.

Go out with joy and be blessed!

Song Suggestions

Hymns and other pieces covered under CCLI.

Gathering

- #49 "Every Praise" (Hymnal: One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism)
- #405 "What a Mighty God We Serve" (OLOFOB)

Proclaiming

- "Psalm 23 (I Am Not Alone)" by People & Songs ft. Josh Sherman (Joshua Sherman, Laurel Taylor, Steven Musso, The Emerging Sound) https://youtu.be/bpTXb_-sir8
- "Who You Say I Am" by Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan
- "Transition" by Lily McKellar and Mark McKellar

Responsorial

- #57 "You Are Alpha and Omega" (OLOFOB)
- "Doxology Hallelujah" by Aaron W. Lindsey, David Binion, and John Gray <https://youtu.be/XEA0F7c1sGQ>

Commissioning

- #702 "Christ Be Beside Me" (Hymnal: Glory to God)
- #543 "God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me (O, Christ Surround Me)" (GtG)
- "We Say Yes" by Ian Yates, Joel Pridmore, and Sam Blake

Sending

- "Benediction (As You Go)" by Selah (Charity Gayle, Jennie Lee Riddle, and Todd Smith) https://youtu.be/39Bzch5VR_k
- #472 "Let the Church Say Amen" (OLOFOB)
- "God is Good" by Jonathan McReynolds <https://youtu.be/-f9uGdJYPeA>

Sermon Starter

1 Kings 19:4-8

Elijah is in a time of transition. He has recently defeated the prophets of Baal and seems to be feeling inadequate saying, "I am no better than my ancestors..." Elijah is lamenting to God but is extremely tired. Before he goes to the next place God is calling him to, he needs to rest and fuel up for the journey.

Our transitions in life are the same. We often struggle with feelings of inadequacy, imposters syndrome. Thinking that the work we do in the world, the work we do for ourselves, and even the work we do for God simply isn't enough. God reminds us that in times of transition that we are enough. We have the ability to take the next steps if we rest in God and fuel up for the journey. God is with us every step of the way.

Our fuel is centered on the promises of God. With each new adventure in life, we can be reminded that God is with us. The preacher can use the promises of God to help young adults focus on how God provides for them at each transition. These promises are like the fuel that Elijah receives by way of food and rest. They fill us with hope for the journey, assurance when we are apprehensive, and peace when things are chaotic. For a concrete example of one way to share God's promises, visit pcusa.org/collegesunday and download the resource on supporting young adults all year long.

The preacher should also think about making the sermon inclusive to college-aged young adults. All 17+ year olds are not headed to college and may in fact feel excluded or less than because of their choice to enter into the job arena or to take a gap year. The preacher should consider some of the transitions listed below:

- Transitions out of high school
- Transitions to college or trade school
- Transitions to jobs, careers, or internships
- Transitions to a gap year
- From childhood to young adulthood
- From dependence to independence
- From living at home to campus living (with friends or on your own), or from campus/dorm living to an apartment or house
- Leaving old friends, making new friends
- Navigating, establishing, and/or reaffirming their identity, core beliefs, and values

Sermon Illustrations

Rev. British Hyrams created a pen pal program between students and homebound or isolated members of NC Central's partner churches who support the ministry as a service project that could be done safely by students in the midst of COVID-19.² At the end of the semester she asked participating students to share their experiences (the ones who had heard back from their pen pals), and she received the following from Mia, a recent graduate in Graphic Design. Although not all of the students bonded with their pen pals as significantly as this student, Mia shares how connecting with one another can offer support and encouragement during every season of life:

"Nancy and I have been keeping in touch by sending at minimum two emails to one another every other week, yet there were times when we would send 5, 6, 7 or more - honestly, I began to lose track of the exact number! We have talked about everything under the sun from social justice, fitness routines, volunteering efforts, church involvement, politics, careers, travel history, family background, personal development, leadership positions, overcoming obstacles and so much more. She is one of the most selfless, loving and involved people that I've ever met. Nancy truly inspires me and I am beyond blessed that this ministry placed her in my life. This opportunity in fellowship with her makes me feel like I'm reconnecting with a long-lost friend.

"I told Nancy a few months ago that the more smiles I can put on people's faces, the better, and to let me know if she knew of anyone else that would be interested in me serving as their pen pal, too. She then introduced me to her friend, Walter, and now I serve as his pen pal as well. The three of us typically send three-way emails similar to a three-way phone call which allows the three of us to chit-chat with each other. This pen pal experience is priceless, life-changing, rewarding and comforting to say the least. Although I have graduated, I will keep in touch with my pen pals until the end of time because I love them to pieces. Feel free to share this story with the church either generally or specifically! (Preferably specifically because Nancy deserves recognition for simply being the phenomenal person that she is.)"

Also

- In this testimony originally written for the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators, current NC Central student Alyah Yardan speaks of how God has provided for her through campus ministry, and how she stands on the promises of God as she ministers to others. (The retreat she mentions was an Alternative Spring Break trip with other campus ministries from across NC.) <https://apcenet.org/2021/01/31/a-testimony-from-campus-ministry/>

² Editor's Note: This worship resource was originally published in the summer of 2021.

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- This video from Flint River Presbytery features students and campus ministers from UKirk at Mercer, The Abbey at Columbus State, The Pres House at Georgia Southwestern State, and The Center at Valdosta State. In it you'll find several illustrations of the importance of campus ministry. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSdn-0qtx4Y>

About the Authors

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Other Resources

The following resources are available at pcusa.org/collegesunday.

- More full orders of worship for College & Young Adult Sunday:
 - *Belonging & Becoming* (Jeremiah 1:4-10) by Rev. Dorothy Piatt-Esguerra
 - *Listening for Jesus' Instructions* (Matthew 14:22-33) by Rev. Colin Pettigrew and Natarsha P. Sanders
- Compiled ideas for supporting college students and young adults all year long.
- Compiled litanies for celebrating and commissioning college students, young adults, and their leaders.

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