

2017 GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Promotional Sundays

July 31, 2016 | October 30, 2016 | January 29, 2017 | April 30, 2017

(Lectionary texts are used as the basis for worship materials. Hymn suggestions are from the Chalice Hymnal – CH – and Chalice Praise – CP.)

July 31, 2016

Newsletter/bulletin text on or prior to July 31

Get this on your calendar!

In just under 12 months, Disciples from across the United States and Canada will be gathering in Indianapolis as ONE. In Jesus' priestly prayer from John 17, he prayed, "20 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one." (NIV)

The General Assembly is a gathering that reminds us that the Church is more than our congregation or our region. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) includes many kinds of people and many points of view, but at our best, we are essentially and intentionally ONE in our belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

On July 31 – the fifth Sunday – let's show our unity by wearing red and/or a chalice. If you are selfie-savvy, you can even post a photo on social media using the #DOCWeAreOne tag instituted by a young Disciple in Kentucky for just that purpose.

Begin planning now to attend the 2017 General Assembly July 8-12 in Indianapolis. Registration is open at <http://disciples.org/ga>

(Logos can be downloaded from the Promotions page on the website.)

Possible hymns

- *They'll Know We are Christians* (CH 494) Note: This hymn's lyrics will be used to tie together all the worship services at the 2017 General Assembly.
- *I Love Your Church, O God* (CH 274)
- *Give Thanks* (CH 528)
- *You Are My All in All* (CP 78)

Communion meditation July 31 (Psalm 107:1-9, 43)

In one of the lectionary texts for today, Psalm 107, we hear, "1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble." We are here at the Lord's Table because of God's steadfast love. It is here we learn the love of

God and are moved to “say so” – taking that love out into a hurting, fragmented world that so needs to hear that it is redeemed. Jesus knew we would need strength for the task. In his priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus prays for each and every one of us. But it is not without purpose. He wants us to share his love as ONE that the world may believe. Thanks be to God!

Offering meditation July 31 (Luke 12:13-21)

Our story today from Luke 12 calls us not to store up our treasures here on earth, but rather calls us to become rich in the things of God. Part of building our “godly wealth” is study and worship. Part of it is gathering together to share joys and burdens. Part of it is prayer and part of it is action. Jesus was thinking of all this when he prayed his priestly prayer in John 17 – “that they may be one.” Our God calls us to act in a way that invites others to see the love of God through us. Through study, worship, sharing, prayer and action we give God – and each other – gifts beyond measure. May we offer more than money in this act of praise and worship. May we be made ONE that others may believe.

Liturgy July 31 (Colossians 3:1-11)

L: Seek the things that are above

P: So the world may know we are ONE

L: Set your minds on things that are above

P: So the world may know we are ONE

L: There is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

P: And in Christ we are ONE.

October 30, 2016

Newsletter/bulletin text on or prior to Oct. 30:

Celebrate our ONEness!

Have you heard the African term “Ubuntu”? If you haven’t, it is a concept that essentially says “I am because you are.” In our individualized Western culture it is a challenge to understand, but as Disciples, we have a head start. Community is essential to our understanding of life as ONE in Christ. Paul says, “If ONE member suffers, all suffer together with it; if ONE member is honored, all rejoice together with it,” in 1 Corinthians 12 (NRSV).

The 2017 General Assembly offers a chance to celebrate and rejoice as ONE and learn about the good Disciples are doing in the world. It is an opportunity to share our stories and hear from our sisters and brothers in God’s ONE family. And we will hear the results of Mission First!

On Sunday, Oct. 30, we have an opportunity to show we are ONE by wearing red and/or a chalice. Take it another step and post a “selfie” on social media with the tag #DOCWeAreOne to join Disciples across Canada and the United States in declaring our unity.

Register for the 2017 General Assembly (July 8-12) now at <http://disciples.org/ga>

(Logos can be downloaded from the Promotions page on the website.)

Possible hymns

- *They'll Know We are Christians (CH 494)* Note: This hymn's lyrics will be used to tie together all the worship services at the 2017 General Assembly
- *One Bread, One Body (CH 393)*
- *Give Thanks for Life (CH 649)*
- *Lord, Be Glorified (CP 42)*

Communion meditation Oct. 30 (2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12)

Paul writes to the Thessalonians with joy for the spiritual growth they have shown and boasting about their growth to the whole community. We come together here as ONE at the Table of our Lord to celebrate what we do in community. Jesus prayed in his priestly prayer in John 17 that we “may be ONE” so the world will believe. Part of that ONEness is celebrating together what God is doing in and through us. That celebration extends to our whole congregation, our region, our general Church and the church in the world. In about 9 months we will celebrate seeing God's work through our sisters and brothers across the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at the General Assembly – celebrating that we are ONE in mission and ONE in our love for God.

Offering meditation Oct. 30 (Luke 19:1-10)

The story of Zacchaeus is just fun. It is easy to visualize a short person trying to see the parade and since most of us started out as children, we can relate! But what started out as a curiosity and somewhat comic incident of a grown man climbing a tree turned into a moment of great gratitude. Zacchaeus had a change of heart, a change of attitude toward his possessions and former actions. We, too, have the opportunity to change our ways to those that show more clearly whose we are. Zacchaeus chose to give half of his wealth to the poor. While most of us could ill afford such a gift, there is a lesson here. We show our priorities through our gifts of time and treasure. And through those we have the opportunity to show the world that we are ONE – called to serve, called to share, called that others may believe.

Liturgy Oct. 30 (Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4)

L: Then the Lord answered me and said:

P: Write the vision

L: Make it plain

P: so that a runner may read it.

L: There is still a vision for the appointed time.

P: God, give us vision to serve

L: Vision to love

P: Vision to be ONE!

January 29, 2017

Newsletter/bulletin text on or before before Jan. 29

Be a witness for ONeness!

One of the last things Jesus did with his disciples was to bless them with the priestly prayer that appears in John 17. He prayed that, "I'm praying not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me because of them and their witness about me. The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind." (The Message)

In July we will gather as ONE for the 2017 General Assembly in Indianapolis. Thousands of Disciples gather from across the United States and Canada to demonstrate our unity in service to the Christ. We will hear inspiring messages, elect a new General Minister and President, hear about the results from Mission First! and learn together.

Bible studies on the theme text (John 17:20-21a) from scholars at Disciple-related seminaries are available online so you can go deeper into the scripture.

January 29 is the fifth Sunday of the month, so let's show the world we are ONE by wearing red and/or a chalice. Take it a step further and post a "selfie" on social media with the tag #DOCWeAreOne.

Early registration discounts expire April 1, so get registered today for a 20 percent savings at <http://disciples.org/ga>

(Logos can be downloaded from the Promotions page on the website.)

Possible hymns

- *They'll Know We are Christians* (CH 494) Note: This hymn's lyrics will be used to tie together all the worship services at the 2017 General Assembly
- *Built on the Rock* (CH 273)
- *What Does the Lord Require?* (CH 659)
- *Blessed are the Persecuted* (CH 187)
- *We Are an Offering* (CP 152)

Communion meditation Jan. 29 (1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

In First Corinthians, Paul said, "The world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified..." And notice that God chooses us, in spite of our human-ness, to be and share the Good News from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. Here at this table of love, we are refueled to go out. From here we are called out into a world hurting and full of fragmentation. We do not go alone. In his priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus himself prays that we "may all be ONE" so that the world might believe. Here we remember his gift. Here we are made ONE. Here, though the world may call us foolish, we hear again that "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength." Come to the Table fragmented, leave as ONE body made whole.

Offering meditation Jan. 29 (Micah 6:1-8)

The message from the prophet Micah is clear. As early as 750 BC, when scholars believe this passage from the Hebrew Bible was written, God was not interested in showy gifts but rather in our humble service. Our devotion to God requires more than “paying our dues” in the form of a tithe, though that is an important way to pool resources to help others. Our devotion to God requires actions both large and small to show God’s love to all God’s children, both those in this room and those outside our doors. Christ prayed in his priestly prayer in John 17 that we “all may be ONE” and in that way, invite others to believe. Showing our ONENess, may we commit here and now to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

Liturgy Jan. 29 (Matthew 5:1-12)

L: Blessed are the poor in spirit,
P: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven - when we share the love of Christ.
L: Blessed are those who mourn,
P: for they will be comforted - when we share the love of Christ.
L: Blessed are the meek,
P: for they will inherit the earth - when we share the love of Christ.
L: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
P: for they will be filled - when we work with the love of Christ.
L: Blessed are the merciful,
P: for we will receive mercy.
L: Blessed are the pure in heart,
P: for we will see God.
L: Blessed are the peacemakers,
P: for we will be called children of God.
L: Blessed are we when we work as ONE to show the love of Christ.
P: Amen and amen.

April 30, 2017

Newsletter/bulletin text on or before April 30

Less than 70 days

The 2017 General Assembly is just over two months away and there are a multitude of ways to get ready to be ONE with a few thousand other Disciples.

- Study the ONE text: John 17:20-21a using the studies provided by seminary scholars
- Pick out the ONE learning community that most interests you – and while you’re at it, pick ONE Sunday afternoon workshop, too
- Be ready to worship as ONE
- Look for the notice of the ONE docket being posted online so you can read about all the ways we fulfill our call to be ONE
- Get your red clothes or your chalice couture on and post a selfie with #DOCWeAreOne

Register now at <http://disciples.org/ga>

Possible hymns

- *They'll Know We are Christians* (CH 494) Note: This hymn's lyrics will be used to tie together all the worship services at the 2017 General Assembly
- *God is Here!* (CH 280)
- *Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread* (CH 398)
- *Holy Light* (CP 171)

Communion meditation April 30 (Luke 24:13-35)

In Luke's story about Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, Jesus reveals himself in the breaking of bread. In our remembrance of him each week, we have the opportunity to re-discover the joy of life together in mission and service. We are reminded again that Jesus himself prayed that we might be ONE so that others will believe. We are called to model the way of Christ as we head out the door into the world. And that is not always easy. The person at work who does not seem to respect you. The cancer that chips away at life. The depression that is always just under the surface. The regrets that haunt you. But the beauty of this table, the Lord's Table, is the way Jesus reveals himself in love – calling us to hope. Calling us to forgiveness. Calling us to the love that has no end. In community here, we are transformed into the ONE body of Christ, empowered to be God's loving hands and feet in the world.

Offering meditation April 30 (Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19)

The psalmist writes, "What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? ...You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord... in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!" What, indeed, do we have that we can return to the God who gives us all blessings? We have the gift of unity in mission and service. Jesus himself prayed on our behalf that we may be ONE so that the world might believe. Acting as ONE body in his service, we can change the world. As ONE we can work for wholeness. Bring your bountiful gifts of service and your thankful offerings to the Lord in praise of God's abundance.

Liturgy April 30 (Acts 2:14a; 36-4, 1 Peter 1:17-33)

L: On Pentecost, Peter said, "For the promise is for you,
P: for your children,
L: and for all who are far away,
P: everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."
L: Again Peter proclaims, "Now that you have purified your souls
P: by your obedience to the truth
L: so that you have genuine mutual love,
P: love one another deeply from the heart.
L: You have been born anew, ...
P: through the living and enduring word of God.
L: Jesus prayed,
P: "I ask not only on behalf of these,
L: but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,
P: That they may all be ONE."
L: May we live to show the Way of Christ that the world may know
P: God loves us all.