

COMMISSIONING LITANY

Sending Church Version

Leader: Since the beginning of time, God has been writing a story, a grand narrative, that includes all people, all places and all things. This story reveals to us the nature and character of God, as well as God's relationship with people and with the world.

Congregation: God is the King of the Universe. God created all things, loves all things and holds all things together.

Leader: The story of God also reveals God's plan to redeem the world. God is at work to lovingly bring his creation back into relationship with him, and employs his covenant people in the process. God called the nation of Israel to be set apart as God's chosen people, to act as priests to the world in order to draw others into loving relationship with God.

Congregation: God calls the Church to be set apart as well, inviting the Church to the tasks of service and mission for the sake of God, God's people and God's world.

Leader: In a world where we are so busy and things around us often seem so wrong, it can be easy to miss how our stories are woven into the grand narrative of God. Many days most of us are just trying to do the best we can to get work done and hold things together. We don't give much thought to where we fit into the overarching story of how and where God is at work in the world because our lives are full and our minds are preoccupied.

SERVE Participants: Together, during SERVE, we take a step back and consider the bigger picture of the story of God, the story of how God is restoring and redeeming the world.

Leader: God's restoration began when he created a covenant with Abraham and Sarah: God would be their God, and they and their descendants would be God's people.

SERVE Participants: This promise extends to us: we join in God's work as God's people.

Leader: God provided for Moses and the Israelites, meeting their needs in surprising and sustaining ways by giving them water, manna and quail.

SERVE Participants: God will provide for us: God is faithful to meet our needs and care for us.

Leader: God chose David to serve as King of Israel. Even though David was sinful and imperfect, God forgave David, loved David and continued to use David.

SERVE Participants: God uses us even though we are imperfect: God's forgiveness and love will never give up.

Leader: God sent the prophet Amos to bring Israel back to their calling to worship God and to promote justice and righteousness, working toward God's reign of shalom.

SERVE Participants: God calls us to be ambassadors of justice and righteousness, joining the Spirit's cause against racism, injustice, poverty, sickness and all of the brokenness and chaos of this world.

Leader: In order to insert himself directly into his story as it unfolds here on earth, God came down in flesh as Jesus Christ. Jesus lived, died and rose again as the only possible way for God's restoration to be fulfilled.

SERVE Participants: The life, death and resurrection of Jesus works transformation in our lives, joining our lives to his as we are restored and redeemed by his sacrifice.

Leader: God used many people, like Lydia from Thiyatira, to advance God's story of restoration through worship and hospitality.

SERVE Participants: God commissions us to continue the advancement of God's grand redemptive story, the gospel, to the people we will encounter on SERVE.

Leader: The gospel is about a kingdom that continues to play out in our lives and in the world today. It's about you, and me, and all of creation growing more and more in resemblance to the world to come. As the people of God, we are commissioned to live on earth in a way that models the life God desires, cultivating God's love, justice and shalom in this world.

Congregation: As your church family, we stand behind God's commission for you as you join others from the body of Christ to engage the Holy Spirit's work in this world. We promise to pray for you and support you in every way, encouraging you as you go and celebrating with you as you return home. We look forward to how you will bring back new ideas and increased passion for how to live into God's story in our own community.

SERVE Participants: We long for the completion of God's redemptive story. We eagerly accept the invitation to join the Holy Spirit's work in restoring this world so God's kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

Leader: The good news is that we know the end of God's story: one day God will make all things perfect. Racism, injustice, poverty, sickness and sin itself will be no more for God's redemptive story will finally be made complete. This is good news indeed.

All (Leader, Participants, and Congregation): Until that day, we will enter into the story of God as participants, together as the Church, in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!