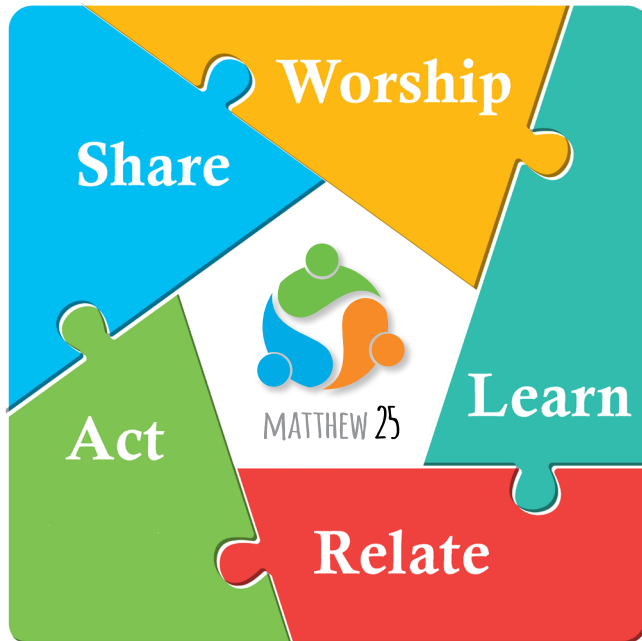




## Five Spiritual Practices to End Poverty



**Five Spiritual Practices to End Poverty**

*As disciples of Jesus Christ, Presbyterians engage in multiple components of a holistic effort to eradicate systemic poverty, address its root causes and build communities of well-being. With God's help, together we can work to eradicate systemic poverty if we:*

**Worship:** In our worship, prayers and faith life, we incorporate confessional, biblical, theological and ecclesial understandings of poverty.

**Learn:** In our Christian education and personal learning, we seek to understand the intersectional, systemic and root causes of poverty.

**Relate:** We engage in genuine, humble, mutual and equitable relationships across divisions, social status and groups as Jesus modeled.

**Act:** We prioritize listening to, and responding alongside, communities as they identify needs, organize for solutions and engage in advocacy for change.

**Share:** Recognizing that all gifts come from God and are to be shared, we share financial, building, time and other resources to create fair access and to right historical harms.



## Action Suggestions

While congregations will have myriad ways and various entry points to engage ministries, relationships and programs to eradicate poverty, this list provides a few salient options for a congregation that is looking for suggestions of how they might embody the call to Matthew 25 ministries. This list was compiled in the spring of 2022 by a collaborative team of denominational staff and mid council leaders.

**WORSHIP:** In our worship, prayers and faith life, we incorporate confessional, biblical, theological and ecclesial understandings of poverty.

- Begin to reach out, listen, build relationships and open conversations with other congregations and community partners to explore some possible **shared worship times** together around eradicating poverty and building communities of well-being.
- **Play short videos** to explore the complexity of poverty, during sermon, prayers of the people or minute for mission.
  - ◆ Poor People's Campaign, "Pain and Poverty in America": [pcusa.info/painandpoverty](http://pcusa.info/painandpoverty).
  - ◆ Matthew 25 videos: [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/matt-25-resources](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/matt-25-resources).
  - ◆ One Great Hour of Sharing programs' videos, trailers and clips:
    - Self-Development of People [pcusa.info/sdopvideos](http://pcusa.info/sdopvideos).
    - Presbyterian Hunger Program [pcusa.info/hungerprogramvideos](http://pcusa.info/hungerprogramvideos).
    - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance [pda.pcusa.org/situation/story-productions](http://pda.pcusa.org/situation/story-productions) and [vimeo.com/pdacares](http://vimeo.com/pdacares).
  - ◆ Peruse the World Mission video playlist ([pcusa.info/WorldMissionvideos](http://pcusa.info/WorldMissionvideos)) and this recent video about the work in Latin American and the Caribbean ([youtube.com/watch?v=45EhlwPHIAA&t=62s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=45EhlwPHIAA&t=62s)).

- Include **specific acts of dedication** related to poverty eradication at set times (such as fifth Sundays, communion Sundays, etc).

- ◆ Consider using assertions on what we believe about poverty eradication as affirmation of faith or other liturgical components.
- ◆ Include advocacy as part of worship through things such as Bread for the World's "offering of letters" [bread.org/offering-letters](http://bread.org/offering-letters).
- ◆ Collect items requested by local nonprofits (such as food, diapers, school supplies, winter clothes).
- ◆ After hearing from a local movement or organization through a minute for mission, continue to raise support and awareness of that group.

**LEARN:** In our Christian education and personal learning, we seek to understand the intersectional, systemic and root causes of poverty.

- **Invite local partner organizations** to speak to the congregation about the root causes of poverty that they seek to address, for Sunday school, Wednesday night suppers, etc. Be mindful that you might want to expand your circle of local partners working to end poverty, to include unexpected partners like the health department or a school of social work. Be mindful of which partners you can invest longer-term relationship building in, and which you are hosting simply to unpack some complexities around poverty in your region as a one-time educational event. Be clear what compensation or honorarium might be offered for speaking engagements versus what relationships/partnership work might grow out of connections.



## Action Suggestions

- **Offer simulation activities** and other active learning models. Be mindful to include “now what” or “next steps” to engage participants in some type of action that stems from the learning activity (i.e., a local organization to support, a local or national piece of legislation to call decision-makers about, etc.)
  - ◆ Racial wealth gap simulation from Bread for the World, [bread.org/library/racial-wealth-gap-learning-simulation](http://bread.org/library/racial-wealth-gap-learning-simulation).
  - ◆ The PC(USA) Africa game about children’s education challenges, contact World Mission’s Africa Office at 800-728-7228, ext. 5031. Read more at [presbyterianmission.org/story/helping-africas-children-pns](http://presbyterianmission.org/story/helping-africas-children-pns).
  - ◆ Use Hunger meal simulations to raise awareness and discuss hunger concerns. For suggested outlines of such meals, email [php@pcusa.org](mailto:php@pcusa.org).
  - ◆ For more traditional learning opportunities, see PMA Resources on Poverty for suggested study guides, curriculum and books.
- **Attend visits/travel delegations** to other communities (local or global) to raise understanding and build relationships, being mindful not to be in a tourist mindset but to enter into space as a learner willing to be transformed in order to act to end poverty
  - ◆ Presbyterian Peacemaking Program travel delegations, Feb. 3–17, 2023, Hong Kong and Philippines with a focus on forced migration and labor trafficking; March 13–20, 2023, to Puerto Rico, and April 28–May 7, 2023, with a focus on native lands in the American Southwest.
  - ◆ Find upcoming campaigns or rallies for state or national Poor People’s Campaign.
  - ◆ Use the map on the One Great Hour of Sharing page to locate partners that may be willing to receive visits.

**RELATE:** We engage in genuine, humble, mutual and equitable relationships across divisions, social status and groups as Jesus modeled.

- Study and then practice **models of community organizing and/or asset-based community development**.
  - ◆ Asset-based community development: ABCD Institute | DePaul University, Chicago.
  - ◆ Church-based community development, connected to community health evangelism, is explained here: Church-based community development - Tearfund Learn.
  - ◆ A program on faith-based community development is offered here: [northwindseminary.org/fbcd-degree](http://northwindseminary.org/fbcd-degree).
  - ◆ Clergy Leadership in Faith-Rooted Organizing: An Introduction – one-hour course from Faith in Action: [learn.faithinaction.org](http://learn.faithinaction.org).
  - ◆ Organizing for Justice: Essential Skills – four-day training from the Midwest Academy: [midwestacademy.com/training](http://midwestacademy.com/training).
  - ◆ Contact [php@pcusa.org](mailto:php@pcusa.org) or visit [presbyterianmission.org/cbco](http://presbyterianmission.org/cbco) to learn more about Congregation Based Community Organizing.
- Broaden your **outreach to new partners** to address poverty from a variety of angles/coalitions: consider the health department; schools of public health or schools of social work; mental health agencies; social service providers; social justice movement leaders.
  - ◆ To think about how to listen to and relate to your neighbors, and consider who are our neighbors, use tools, suggestions and resources from A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood: Mr. Rogers Day: [presbyterianmission.org/resource/a-beautiful-day-in-the-neighborhood-mr-rogers-day](http://presbyterianmission.org/resource/a-beautiful-day-in-the-neighborhood-mr-rogers-day).



## Action Suggestions

- **Join a facilitated small group** working on ending poverty; learn about issues and possible actions together.

- ◆ Peacemaking Program cohorts are forming soon. Contact [peacemaking@pcusa.org](mailto:peacemaking@pcusa.org).

**ACT:** We prioritize listening to, and responding alongside, communities as they identify needs, organize for solutions and engage in advocacy for change.

- **Identify trusted, community-based, anti-poverty local organizations and leaders** to join their campaigns and follow their lead on calls to actions and community meetings — not just politicians, but school social workers, health-care providers, community organizers, pastors in different denominations and various sectors of the community.

- ◆ Consider joining a community organizing entity. Some suggestions include Direct Action & Research Training Center Inc. (DART) in 10 states, Industrial Areas Foundation in 24 states, or Faith in Action in multiple locations.
- ◆ Consider joining the organizing efforts in your state with the Poor People's Campaign.

- **Advocate for legislation** that helps to end poverty locally, in your state, nationally or internationally. Be mindful not to assume we know what is best — let action arise from listening to and building relationships with impacted communities. Choose advocacy that best suits your congregation and set a goal to follow it for the length of time that makes sense. Reflect along the way.

- ◆ National foci recommended as legislative priorities by the Poor People's Campaign include many that have Presbyterian policy and programming history, such as Guaranteed Minimum Wage, Voting Rights/ Civil Rights and Immigration Reform. Choose one or more of the PPC priorities as your focus. For Presbyterian policy connections, see the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy.

- ◆ Global legislation advocacy, recommended by Bread for the World, could focus on the Global Nutrition Act.

- ◆ Office of Public Witness action alerts are available at [votervoices.net/PCUSA/campaigns](http://votervoices.net/PCUSA/campaigns).

- **Adopt a focused campaign** to address root causes of poverty in your community and across the country:

- ◆ **"End Cash Bail"** to stop those who are poor from having more impacts of the criminal justice system than those who can afford bail easily. Contribute to the Bail Project: [bailproject.org](http://bailproject.org). Read about Presbyterian involvement: [pcusa.org/news/2019/6/12/louisville-area-presbyterians-and-their-friends-ra](http://pcusa.org/news/2019/6/12/louisville-area-presbyterians-and-their-friends-ra).
- ◆ **"We Choose Welcome"** to support refugees in our community. Posters, resources and suggestions for advocacy are at [presbyterianmission.org/we-choose-welcome](http://presbyterianmission.org/we-choose-welcome). Download an action guide at [presbyterianmission.org/resource/choose-welcome-action-guide](http://presbyterianmission.org/resource/choose-welcome-action-guide).
- ◆ **"Support Affordable Housing"** through community organizing, funding local affordable housing trust funds in your city, and working through local nonprofit organizations. To learn more and/or to connect to models of community organizing working on affordable housing, visit [pcusa.org/cbco](http://pcusa.org/cbco), or watch a seven-minute video about housing and Matthew 25 commitments at [youtube.com/watch?v=c8EuFMPLJkM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=c8EuFMPLJkM).



## Action Suggestions

- ◆ **“Support Fair Food and Farmworkers”** through standing with the Alliance for Fair Food and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a long-standing Presbyterian partnership.

**SHARE:** Recognizing that all gifts come from God and are to be shared, we share financial, building, time and other resources to create fair access and to right historical harms.

- **Plan and then host congregational asset-mapping** to know what assets you have to share in the community
  - ◆ Use the Alban Institute worksheet for congregational asset-mapping.
  - ◆ Consider using a version of asset-mapping to map assets in the community as well, and to see what ways your congregation can companion, with cultural humility, for co-development (concepts in the book “Freeing Congregation Mission” by Farrell & Khylllep).
  - ◆ Take the IDI to help be mindful and reflective of issues of diversity, equity and justice in relationships and plans: [idiinventory.com](http://idiinventory.com).
- **Volunteer in the community to address community needs:** hunger, education, access to transportation, employment, hunger, tutoring, providing meals, offer space for community organizations and needs as appropriate.
  - ◆ If needed, use a mission discernment resource, such as “Finding Your Mission Focus”: [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/world-mission/mission-resources/mission-toolkits/mission-committee-toolkit/mission-committee-toolkit-learn](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/world-mission/mission-resources/mission-toolkits/mission-committee-toolkit/mission-committee-toolkit-learn).
  - Host or support a Summer Food Service Program: [fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program](http://fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program).
  - Start or participate in a community garden or host a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture); learn more in Food Sovereignty for All: [presbyterianmission.org/](http://presbyterianmission.org/)

[resource/food-sovereignty-all](http://resource/food-sovereignty-all).

- ◆ Support a feeding program with volunteers and/or financial support, or run one yourself. Soup kitchen: [endhungerinamerica.org/publications/mission-possible](http://endhungerinamerica.org/publications/mission-possible). Food pantry: [networks.whyhunger.org](http://networks.whyhunger.org). Other: Meals on Wheels, Backpack Program, etc.
- ◆ Share information about how community members can connect with food, housing, health and emergency service providers. Visit [211.org](http://211.org) or call 211, or gather and share a resource list of providers in your own community.
- Give to **restorative efforts**, organizations and movements to end poverty and build communities of well-being in your area or through the PC(USA).
  - ◆ [restorativeactions.org](http://restorativeactions.org) will receive the General Assembly offering, recommended by co-moderators.
  - ◆ Special Offerings support communities and people in particular situations of need.
  - ◆ World Mission global initiatives on poverty alleviation.
  - ◆ Community organizations and social movements in your area.