



People Investing in People



Sunday, April 2, 2017

CELEBRATE

Promote Justice
Build Stronger Communities
Seek Economic Equity

For resources visit pcusa.org/sdop: hymns, liturgical suggestions, stories about community partners and more!



This year, as we celebrate SDOP Sunday, it is also “justice” Sunday which calls each of us as the Body of Christ to be unified in faith and action. In this resource, we offer six incredible stories of community building, self-reliance, and hope – these are stories of God in action. These stories are also profound stories of development, which show how our communities are busy in creatively addressing some of the many salient issues of our time.

In lifting up these stories, I pray that they will inspire, encourage and energize you and your congregation to be unified in Christ, engaged in faith and dedicated in your support.

Rev. Alonzo Johnson, Coordinator, Self-Development of People

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?” – Micah 6: 8

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People is a ministry that affirms God's concern for humankind. We are Presbyterians and ecumenical partners dissatisfied with poverty and oppression, united in faith and action through sharing, confronting, and enabling by participating in the empowerment of economically poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people, seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice.



SDOP Core Focus:

Promote Justice

Amos 5:24 – “Let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”

Build Stronger Communities

Isaiah 65: 21-22 “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”

Seek Economic Equity

Matthew 20: 1-16 “As a symbol for God, a landowner is persistently seeking laborers for his vineyard. What he promises each, regardless of how long they work, is enough wage to provide for life. This is not a parable about how to run a business but a parable that exposes the radical generosity of God and God's deep concern that everyone be able to sustain life.”

SDOP HYMNS

Two hymns celebrate SDOP's ministry. The first was written in 1996 by Jane Parker Huber; the second in 2008, by John A. Dalles. Both are included here, with permission to reproduce for ONE-TIME worship use.

Other suggested hymns:

Canto de Esperanza (Song of Hope)
I Am Gonna Live So God Can Use Me
Cuando el Pobre (When the Poor Ones)

IN YOUR CONGREGATION

- Invite participants of a nearby SDOP project to offer a “Minute for Mission” during your Sunday worship service. Contact the National SDOP office to learn of community partners that may exist in your area.
- Share these SDOP partner stories as a “Minute for Mission,” or as part of the Sunday morning sermon.
- If your Presbytery has a SDOP Committee (call the national office to find out if a committee exists in your Presbytery/Synod), invite one of its members to speak during your worship service. Call the national office to learn if there are national committee members in your area who could be invited to speak to your congregation.





FREE SDOP RESOURCES

On the SDOP website pcusa.org/sdop, you'll find stories about SDOP community partners, and a variety of resources, including SDOP:

- Sermons and Liturgy (which you can use to plan your Sunday worship service), and
- How Your Congregation Can Help (this resource shares ways that your congregation can partner with the ministry of Self-Development of People)

The following print resources can be ordered by calling the Presbyterian Distribution Center at 800-524-2612:

- SDOP Trifold Brochure PDS #25422-17-001 (includes basic information needed to apply for a grant and stories about SDOP partners).
- Wallet card PDS #25422-07-001 (includes basic information about SDOP in a wallet size card).
- Poster Celebrate Hope PDS # 74350-05-005 (colorful SDOP poster).

Call the National office for additional printed resources 1-888-728-7228 ext. 5792 or 5781.

Promote Justice...Build Stronger Communities...Seek Equity

Jobs not Jails

Neighbor to Neighbor is a coalition of people that works with other groups to promote investment in jobs and education rather than prison. This coalition began a project called Jobs Not Jails that strives to change public policy to decrease incarceration rates and to help reintegrate ex-offenders into society.

Jobs Not Jails is a campaign led by community members to invest in jobs, education and mental rehab reform instead of developing more prisons.

The community organizes to identify policies that need to be changed and works with pro bono legal assistance to introduce new legislation.

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) entered into partnership with Jobs not Jails by awarding it a \$15,000 grant. “More than 7,000 lives are being transformed, thanks to a grant from the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People”- Lena Entin, Organizer with Neighbor to Neighbor.



Hispanic Affairs

The Hispanic Affairs Project is the only organization in western Colorado authorized by the Justice Department to provide legal assistance in immigration proceedings charging just nominal costs to immigrants. The project played a direct role in policy change at the state level in contributing to the passage of a new law to stop “notarías” that for years have provided legal immigration services without the training nor the authorization to do it.

Project members have organized to develop and strengthen their capacity through leadership development, education and advocacy. They have focused on issues affecting Hispanics in the region on immigrant rights and other labor abuses.

“The support of The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People has been crucial for Hispanic Affairs Project in this period of time. We received the accreditation to provide the immigration legal assistance, but we had not the financial capacity to build the infrastructure for this program; thanks to Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP), we had the capacity to go ahead with our leadership development, community organizing and advocacy, at the same time we advance in this critical need for many families in our communities.” - Ricardo Perez, Executive Director of the Hispanic Affairs Project.



Capital Park Women's Empowerment

This Sewing Cooperative at Capital Park is comprised of a group of refugee Somali women who are training to become master seamstresses. In addition to repairing clothes, they design, produce and market their uniquely designed bags. Because of limited English, group members have only been able to secure low-paying jobs. This project located in Columbus, Ohio creates opportunities for the women to forge their own path in building economic independence.



“We’ve created some new products and recently took them to a three-day festival in downtown Columbus. We are so grateful for the Presbyterian Committee of the Self-Development of People support! It has truly made a huge difference in the lives of many women! As Somali women say, “Horomaarka Haweenka Soomaliyeed!” We are Somali women moving forward!” - Beth Stock, the group’s director.

The Sewing Cooperative has been supported by a number of organizations including the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. Last year, SDOP

provided a \$10,000 grant to help the group grow its business.

Community Group for Youth Development

This youth group was awarded with a grant thanks to the partnership between the Presbyterian Committee on the Self Development of People and CE-MUJER, our intermediary partner in the Dominican Republic. This group of young people is committed to self-sufficiency through the creation of a loan program for small business cooperatives. One includes the opening of a hot dog stand. The profits of the small cooperatives help them cover transportation fees, school supplies and family expenses. The community is recognizing their work.

One of the group members expressed “With this project we learned to have more responsibility as a group. It has benefited in my personal development with my transportation expenses and to help my family economy.”



Brandworkers

Brandworkers trains Workplace Justice Campaign workers of food production plants to advocate for themselves for wage equity, improved safety in the workplace and elimination of wage theft.

Most of the workers are immigrants and they are taken advantage of by their employers. By receiving training, members are ready to advocate for themselves. The workers are empowered to gain better conditions in their workplace.

The improved safety conditions reduce accidents and protect lives. Wage theft and wage equity improves the salary and benefits for the workers thus allowing them to better care for themselves and their families.



Multicultural Alliance

July 16, 1979 is a day the Navajo Nation in New Mexico will never forget. An earthen dam gave way releasing 1,000 tons of solid radioactive mill waste and 90 million gallons of acidic and radioactive liquids into the Rio Puerco. From there, the waste traveled downstream across nine Navajo chapters as well as the community of Gallup. Residents described a “wave of green liquid” heading their way covering them as they headed toward home.

The Uranium Tailings Spill is still listed as the largest uranium spill in the United States. Recently the Red Water Pond Road Community Association hosted its annual commemoration near Church Rock.

“In 36 years, we’ve had three minor cleanups in the area but the contaminated waste is still here,” said Edith Hood, with the association. “We’ve been told by the Environmental Protection Agency that they are waiting on the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to complete its review of the area before additional cleanup work can be done.”

Among the organizations actively connected to the region is the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE.) This grassroots initiative involves several groups working to remove the uranium contamination and prohibit future mines in the area. Participants include Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, community people in the affected area, Navajo Nation, the Post 71 Uranium workers and ranchers who have been affected by the uranium mining industry.

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People awarded MASE a \$15,000 grant to assist in cleanup and public awareness efforts.



WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR SDOP SUNDAY

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Let us pray for those in the world who are suffering, in places nearby and in far-away countries;

People: God of mercy, hear our prayers

Leader: For those whose lives and futures are uncertain;

People: God of creation, hear our prayers

Leader: For the people where poverty is widespread and whose citizens long for relief and the opportunity to develop their own solutions;

People: God of justice hear our prayers

Leader: For those who seek comfort and hope in the face of despair;

People: God of healing and compassion, hear our prayers

Leader: For the people who face discrimination and lack of opportunity;

People: God of empowerment, hear our prayers

Leader: For those in places where needs are unimaginably great and sufferings are unspeakable;

People: God of peace, hear our prayers

All: God of life, help us to be your messengers for unity and love in all that we do, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

INVOCATION

God of justice, compassion and peace, we come before you this morning in a spirit of gratitude and praise. As we gather in our communities of faith, we give thanks for the gifts of calm hearts and still minds, given to us through the presence of your Holy Spirit, as we hear your message and receive your guidance. Remind us, Lord, of our connectedness and our responsibilities to each other. As we gather in worship, may your divine love inspire us to lead lives of kindness, peace and justice. May your Holy Spirit bring hope and empowerment to communities of need everywhere, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Offered by: REV. REBECCA REYES (SDOP National Committee Chairperson)

As we approach this time of confession anoint us with a Spirit of courage to do kindness, grace to accept others and wisdom to walk humbly with you. Creator and Sustainer of all life and activity, we come at this moment to confess the hurt we have caused to ourselves, to our neighbors and to our world.

We come to confess our actions of disrespect to each other, our lack of kindness to strangers and our forgetfulness of your grace and love.

In your mercy we pray. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God of all nations, we praise you that in Christ the barriers that have separated humanity are torn down. In Jesus, you have shown us how to be generous.

Yet, we confess to you our share of the guilt for a world filled with injustices, poverty and great suffering. Forgive us for our self-centeredness, and grant that both our church and our nation may respond in kind to the cries of those in need. For the sake of Jesus Christ . . . AMEN

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

Hear the good news of the Gospel:

The God who challenges us is also the God who encourages us . . .

The God who confronts us is also the God who accepts us . . .

Be assured that God is with us, accepting, guiding, and forgiving.

Thanks be to God . . . AMEN

SERMON

Rev. Alonzo Johnson – Coordinator, Self-Development of People

I pray that this sermon is helpful for you whether you use it in its entirety or pull pieces and ideas from it.

Matthew 9:35-10:4

35Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

10Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. 2These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

What could it possibly mean to be harassed in this context? We know harassment usually as something that one person does to another. But here, in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of this gospel, what could it mean to be harassed?

People were hungry and desperate for hope. Some members of the crowd, as we know were hungry both metaphorically and literally -- but we also know that all were hungry in a spiritual sense. In scanning crowd membership given to us in Matthew's Gospel, we see that folks are ailing, folks are hurting, they have been afflicted with everything from blindness to hemorrhaging issues, many had children, many had problems, (and as a father of teenagers, sometimes children equal problems!). We know that the people had physical problems and maladies which serve as an indication that they have spiritual maladies, we know that troubles and problems have an emotional and spiritual component to them.

These folks were hurting, harassed by life. Have you ever been harassed by life's problems? Often when we are harassed, we experience stress, there is usually a feeling of futility, things just piling and piling up that we never seem to get any rest.

There is a story about a woman who was hanging up laundry in the backyard and she was accompanied by her two sons that were noisily playing cowboys. They ran up and down the yard, screaming louder and louder. Both boys were making “Bang! Bang!” noises with their plastic revolvers, when all of the sudden one of the boys turns to his mother, points the plastic gun at her and yells “Bang!” At that moment, mom

fell to the grass and laid there. Upon seeing this, her next door neighbor, who was dismayed at what she was seeing ran to the mother's rescue, as she reached out to try and wake the mother, the neighbor in desperation says "are you alright?" the mother grabbed the neighbor gently still laying on the ground with her eyes closed and said "shhhh! This is the only rest that I am able to get all week!"

Being harassed often means that we rarely find places for rest, for relief. Let's face it, harassment is oppressive. In Matthew's day, we know that many were oppressed physically, socially many were looking for a pack leader, a healer, a redeemer -- a savior. Like "sheep without a shepherd". Being like "sheep without a shepherd" is powerful idiomatic bible speak thus indicating that people are without a leader, and when folks are without leadership and guidance, life is out of control. There is an urban slang expression for this kind of living it is life that is "off the chain" which means that things are wild and chaotic and out of control. There is no leadership.

In a world like the one we live in, this metaphor of "sheep without a shepherd" speaks directly to our times. It seems that we are living in a world and time where there seems to be no shepherd, in the words of African author Chinua Achebe, we seem to be living in a time where "things fall apart." Think about those who were not watching as the water system poisoning crisis in Flint hit. Think about education and the struggles of impoverished young people in our country today, hard to concentrate on schoolwork when there is no food in your belly. Some of our young people have parents in prison – not just daddies, but mommies too.

When I was a volunteer chaplain in a prison some years ago, I had an argument with one of the inmates and held quite the grudge, a few days later, one of the inmates said "I heard about the argument you had with Jones," I replied "yeah what's his problem If he wants to stay mad let him" The young inmate said "Chaplain Alonzo, you must go talk to him" and I said "Why should I?" and the young inmate said "Alonzo, you don't realize this, but for many of us here, you are the closest thing that we have had to a father – a man that loves us."

There is Jesus, a man that loves us, compassionate, broken hearted and empathetic to the needs of the people. A people ignored, a people harassed, a people where life seemed to be constantly "off the chain." Notice, Jesus' heart breaks for the people, they are his people – God's people, created in God's image and full of potential. To see them struggle is difficult, but Jesus sends his disciples to be communal hope for a people who know pain.

In reading this text, I think often of one of the taglines for the Self Development of People ministry which reads "People investing in people." I think about the fact that Jesus Christ calls the disciples to engage and care for those who are hurting in the community. Jesus is calling people from the community to care and walk alongside people from the community. This is people investing in people!

The disciples are called to this powerful ministry of cultivating hope. Cultivating hope, not giving hope but helping grow and nurture it! Nurturing means doing the work together of digging the soils, planting the seed and taking care of the crop. There is a Russian proverb that says "pray for rain with a hoe in your hand." What powerful imagery Jesus uses concerning the harvest, it speaks to the incredibly powerful, organic and communal character of the gospel and how care, healing and hope are those which implies relationship, presence and investment.

Which brings us to the disciples. When you hear the word "disciples" what do you think of? When I hear it, I think of students, followers, believers, learners, and even practitioners right? One may even think of

the idea of “interns.” You get the sense that “disciples” connote more of a relationship, a deep connection, a sense of purpose and duty. Rarely ever do we think of disciples as volunteers, to be a disciple means that living the gospel is being committed to both learning from and living the message and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls some very regular and ordinary people to this ministry of hope and gives them power and authority to challenge the evils (evil spirits oppress) of oppression, nihilism, and poverty to help people find meaning and purpose in their lives. It is with his harvest hands that Jesus creates wholeness and helps people live lives of dignity and self-determination.

We see so much the face and anti-poverty ministry of Jesus in our SDOP community partners. Because Jesus’ heart breaks for the people, our hearts must also be broken. Having said this, Jesus also breaks his body so that all can be fed. In SDOP, we see our partners taking the initiative to be disciples of hope and possibility in their communities.

We see communities, who, like Jesus are broken hearted when they see their people harassed by life through struggle, inequities, violence and poverty. As God’s people, we are called to be harvest hands so to speak so that we are doing what is required of us in cultivating relationships and hope for people. This is what justice is about and the words for justice in both Hebrew and Greek are synonymous with “righteousness.”

We see the justice and hope cultivated in Massachusetts where Neighbor to Neighbor’s Jobs Not Jails program led by community members who invest in jobs, education and mental rehab reform instead of developing more prisons.

We see justice and hope cultivated in the Hispanic Affairs project where hard working and caring community members will no longer have to face the harassment and

We see justice and hope cultivated in Capital Park Women’s Empowerment in Columbus Ohio where amazingly talented Somali women use their gifts and skills to build economic independence.

We see justice and hope cultivated in the Community Group for Youth Development in the Dominican Republic where self-determining young people decide that their lives will not be “off the chain,” and that they, through small business will have what they need to get education and learn the ways of self-sufficiency.

We see justice and hope nurtured in the Multicultural Alliance where grassroots communities work to remove contaminants from the soil and prohibit future mines in the area.

We see justice and hope in the protection of wages, employment rights, safety and workplace justice through the community of the Brandworkers in New York City.

Jesus does not call volunteers, he calls those who are ready to engage in community and be committed to the work of transforming lives through empowerment and partnership. Jesus handpicks us, and calls us to do the cultivating of hope and justice in all of our communities.

CHARGE

Go now in peace. Be a servant to both those you know and love, and to those who are strangers. Be a witness to God’s compassion for all people. Be a worker for God’s justice, and a partner in the self-

development of people.

BENEDICTION

Go now in the name of God, in whose image we are all made; and in the name of Jesus Christ, who knew everyone as a neighbor; and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who gives equal comfort to those who have all that they need and those who need much. Amen.



A ministry of the



For resources visit pcusa.org/sdop: hymns, liturgical suggestions,
stories about community partners and more!

502.569.5781

www.pcusa.org/sdop

Self-Development Of People Ministry

CELEBRATE HOPE!

John A. Dalles

DUKE STREET

Cel - e - brate hope! Come, — ga - ther near!
With Christ our friend, whom — we a - dore,
The work at hand, is — hea - ven — sent;
By the re - turn of — dig - ni - ty,

The spi - rit of the Lord is near! For Christ has
We shall be - friend and bless the poor! Bind up the
Our mis - sion is em - pow - er ment! In one great
May we build up com - mu - ni ty, With a con -

come — good — news to — preach: Good news for
wou - nds of — bro — ken — ness! Bring li - ber
ho - ur, — may — we — share, An off - er -
cern — for — hu - man - kind, Till we are

all! Good news for each!
ty to the o - pressed!
ing of las - ting care!
one, as God de - signed.

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JUSTICE IS A JOURNEY ONWARD

Jane Parker Huber, 1994

AUSTRIAN HYMN 8.7.8.7 D

Franz Joseph Haydn, 1797

1. Jus - tice is a jour - ney on - ward, up - ward e - ven
 2. When we hear a cry for jus - tice from the depths of
 3. Em - pa - thy with - out firm ac - tion turns to emp - ty
 4. Jus - tice is a jour - ney on - ward, up - ward, out - ward,

through the pain. Jour - neys have their hills and val - leys;
 hu - man need, Our re - sponse puts love in ac - tion,
 sen - ti - ment, But the call to free God's peo - ple
 spread - ing still. Christ has set us on this jour - ney,

still the dreams and goals re - main. We are peo - ple
 fol - low - ing our Sav - ior's lead. Where we sec - op -
 leads to self - de - vel - op - ment. When the struc - tures
 claim - ing us for God's own will. Let us share our

freed from bond - age by our Mak - er's will and power.
 pres - sive sys - tems, peo - ple hun - gry, crushed by fear,
 need re - shap - ing, or our neigh - bor is down - cast,
 neigh - bor's bur - dens far a - way or face to face.

We must now re - spond with ac - tion, in this place and for this hour.
 We must be the voice of jus - tice, and the hand to help and cheer.
 Let us seek a bright - er fu - ture, fair - er than the days gone past.
 So may we, by tak - ing ac - tion, be a part - ner through God's grace.