

**ITEM H.109
FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
A. Finance		E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance	J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
B. Justice		F. PC(USA), A Corporation	P. Plenary
C. Leadership		G. Audit	
D. Worshiping Communities	X	H. Executive Committee	

Subject: 2016 Programmatic Emphases and Liturgical Dates

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee approve the following list of Special Days and Programmatic Emphases for 2016. These days will be listed in the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar* and other materials. New requests for 2016 are marked with an asterisk.

Dates	Programmatic Emphases or Liturgical Designation	Baptism	Eucharist
January 6	<i>Epiphany of the Lord</i> (Wednesday)		X
January 10	<i>Baptism of the Lord</i>	X	X
January 11	Human Trafficking Awareness Day (Monday)		
January 17	Race Relations		
January 18	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins (Monday)		
January 24	Criminal Justice		
February 7*	<i>Transfiguration of the Lord</i> ; Souper Bowl of Caring; Chaplains Sunday ¹	X	X
February 10	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>		X
February 14	<i>1st Sunday in Lent</i> ; Health Awareness and Prayer for Healing and Wholeness ¹³ ; Camp and Conference Ministries		
February 21*	<i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i> ; Universal Day of Prayer for Students ²		
February 28	<i>3rd Sunday in Lent</i> ; Justice Advocacy ¹²		
March 4	World Day of Prayer (Friday)		
March 6	<i>4th Sunday in Lent</i> ; Celebrate the Gifts of Women		
March 8	International Women's Day (Tuesday)		
March 13	<i>5th Sunday in Lent</i> ; Self-Development of People		
March 20	<i>Passion/Palm Sunday</i> (<i>Holy Week begins</i>)		X
March 21	<i>Monday of Holy Week</i>		
March 22	<i>Tuesday of Holy Week</i>		
March 23	<i>Wednesday of Holy Week</i>		
March 24	<i>Maundy Thursday</i>		X
March 25	<i>Good Friday</i>		
March 26	<i>Great Vigil of Easter</i>	X	X
March 27	<i>Resurrection of the Lord / Easter</i> ; One Great Hour of Sharing	X	X
April 17*	International Day of Farmers' Struggles ³		X
April 22	Earth Day (Friday)		
April 24	Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day (Sunday)		X
May 1	Older Adult Week begins; Wills Emphasis		X
May 5	<i>Ascension of the Lord</i> ; National Day of Prayer; Holocaust Remembrance Day (Thursday)		X
May 6	May Friendship Day (Friday)		

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May 8	Mother's Day		X
May 13	1001 Worshiping Communities (Friday)		
May 14	Fair Trade Day (Saturday)		
May 15	<i>Day of Pentecost</i> ; Pentecost Offering	X	X
May 22*	<i>Trinity Sunday</i> ; Presbyterian Heritage; Cross-Cultural/Intercultural Church ⁴	X	X
May 29*	Innovation Sunday ⁵		
June 12	Disability Inclusion		
June 18*	222nd General Assembly, June 18–25 ⁶		
June 19	Presbyterian Men ¹⁴ ; Father's Day		
June 26	Active Life		
July 3	Immigration Sunday		
July 17	Smaller Membership Church		
July 24	Metropolitan/Urban Ministry		
August 6	Hiroshima Day (Saturday)		
August 7	Homelessness / Affordable Housing		
August 14	Collegiate Ministries ¹⁵		
August 21	Youth in the Church and World		
August 28	Public Education		
September 4	Season of Peace begins		
September 5	Labor Day; A Social Creed for the 21st Century (Monday)		
September 11*	Christian Education Week begins / Christian Education Celebration ⁷		
September 18	Theological Education / Seminaries		
September 21	International Day of Peace (Wednesday)		
September 22	Global Week of Action against Gun Violence begins (Thursday)		
September 23	Native American Day (Friday)		
September 25*	Evangelism; Gifts of New Immigrants ⁸		
October 2*	World Communion Sunday; Peace & Global Witness Offering ⁹		X
October 9	Domestic Violence Awareness		
October 16	World Food Day (Sunday)		
October 23*	Children's Sabbath; Educate a Child, Transform the World ¹⁰		
October 24	United Nations Day (Monday)		
October 30*	Reformation Sunday; Living Missionally ¹¹		
November 1	<i>All Saints' Day</i> (Tuesday)		X
November 4	World Community Day (Friday)		
November 6	Christian and Citizen		
November 8	Election Day (Tuesday)		
November 13	Caregiver Sunday		
November 20	<i>Christ the King / Reign of Christ</i>	X	X
November 24	Thanksgiving Day (Thursday)		
November 27	<i>1st Sunday of Advent</i>		
December 1	World AIDS Day; Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness (Thursday)		
December 4	<i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i>		
December 10	Human Rights Day (Saturday)		
December 11	<i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i>		
December 18	<i>4th Sunday of Advent</i> ; Christmas Joy Offering		
December 24	<i>Christmas Eve</i> (Saturday)		X
December 25	<i>Nativity of Jesus Christ / Christmas Day</i> (Sunday)		X

Background: The following guidelines were approved at the September 2005 meeting of the General Assembly Mission Council (now Presbyterian Mission Agency Board).

Guidelines for programmatic emphases: the *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*

The life and worship of the local church finds its rhythm in the seasons of the church year as they reflect the life of the Lord and relate to our faith narrative found in Scripture. At the same time, the people of God do not live in isolation. The context of Christian ministry and worship is the world in which we live. The faith community proclaims that God is sovereign over all creation, acts in history, is revealed in Scripture, and is at work in our world today. Each congregation has the responsibility through its session to respond to the work of God's Spirit in the life of the community, presbytery, and region. Our sense of Christian vocation leads us in a variety of responses through mission service and spiritual formation. Programmatic emphases are those opportunities for churchwide participation and focus on the whole church's mission together.

The following criteria reflect the theological and liturgical grounding in which our programmatic emphases are rooted.

1. Approved emphases will demonstrate a commitment to the liturgical calendar, the lectionary, and the programmatic needs of the denomination.
2. The church's liturgical calendar—with particular attention to Advent and Christmas, the Season of Lent and Easter Sunday, as well as historic feasts of Epiphany, the Transfiguration, the Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and the Festival of Christ the King—provides a historical and theological framework for shaping the rhythm and life of our church.
3. Ecumenically shared emphases will receive primary consideration.
4. The Mission Work Plan of the General Assembly Mission Council provides a framework for understanding churchwide mission. In order to give substance and meaning to these designated observances, programmatic emphases should relate to and be supported by the Mission Work Plan.
5. In order to be fair to all Presbyterian Mission Agency programs, requests will be reviewed for overlap and redundancy. Each program team will normally have no more than one programmatic emphasis and is responsible for providing interpretive resources.
6. Since the church in God's world must be cognizant of its relationship with other world religions and the culture in which it exists, major Jewish, Islamic, and secular holidays also will be included.

Notes: Invitations, forms, and guidelines were sent to all ministry area directors and coordinators, leaders of the six agencies, and leaders of covenant networks, who were asked to provide a rationale and explanatory comments if they had requests for continuing existing special days or were seeking to add new special days.

New Requests

¹**Chaplains Sunday.** Request from Evangelism and Church Growth. We want to remember our PC(USA) chaplains and the blessings that they offer. These men and women illustrate the sacrifices expected not only of chaplains but of all our military personnel and their families. This date falls between Christmas and Easter and also avoids patriotic weekends when so many are away and not in church.

²**Universal Day of Prayer for Students.** Request from the Office of Ecumenical Relations, Office of the General Assembly. This date is set by the World Student Christian Federation.

³**International Day of Farmers' Struggles.** Request from the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) of Compassion, Peace, and Justice. Farmers feed the planet but are surprisingly also among the poorest and hungriest people in the world. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), around half of the world's hungry people are from smallholder farming communities, surviving off marginal lands prone to natural disasters like drought or flood. Since 1996 the Via Campesina (a PHP partner) has, in memory of 19 Brazilian landless peasants who were brutally assassinated, celebrated April 17 as the International Day of Farmer and Peasant Struggles, organizing actions to highlight the struggles taking place in different parts of the world.

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⁴**Cross-Cultural/Intercultural Church.** Request from Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries / Presbyterian Women. May 22 is the Sunday after Pentecost. Pentecost marks the beginning of the church as a cross-cultural, intercultural community of faith whose members praise God in many languages. We continue the celebration of the intercultural church that is multiracial and multilingual.

⁵**Innovation Sunday.** Request from PMAB member Kevin Yoho and to be supported by resources provided by Evangelism and Church Growth. An Innovation Sunday should be designated as Sunday, May 29, 2016. With appropriate texts and liturgies, innovation could be a motivating and engaging worship theme for pastors. Innovation Sunday would validate the spirit and practice of innovation and effectively resource initiatives that celebrate and incentivize sustaining (and even disruptive) innovation in mission, to the glory of God.

⁶**222nd General Assembly, July 18–25.** Request from the Office of the General Assembly. The General Assembly reviews the work of synods, resolves controversies in the church, is responsible for matters of common concern for the whole church, and serves as a symbol of unity for the church. It seeks to protect the church from errors in faith and practice, is responsible for ensuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions, and presents a witness for truth and justice in our community and in the world community. The General Assembly also sets priorities for the church and establishes relationships with other churches or ecumenical bodies.

⁷**Christian Education Celebration.** Request from Theology, Worship, and Education. The first Sunday after Labor Day is the Sunday when many congregations intentionally recognize educational ministries that nurture Christian disciples through education, worship, and service. This Sunday, as well as the week that follows, is when many churches begin new education groups or classes, commission leaders and learners, plan and host welcome-back celebrations, and renew commitments for ongoing study and growth as Christian disciples.

⁸**Gifts of New Immigrants.** Request from Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries / Presbyterian Women. September 25, 2016 is Evangelism Sunday. This is also a good day to lift up the gifts of new immigrants in the PC(USA). Approximately 50 percent of the new worshipping communities in the church are racial-ethnic, new-immigrant, or cross-cultural/intercultural. And many of the new worshipping communities are led by racial-ethnic, new-immigrant, or women leaders. We celebrate and partner with the new church leaders and members who are engaged in transformative and faithful ministries in our church.

⁹**Peace & Global Witness Offering.** Request from Compassion, Peace, and Justice. The offering coincides with the date of World Communion Sunday. The Peacemaking Program and Special Offerings provide print and electronic leader materials for this offering, as well as for the Season of Peace, which can be used in the weeks leading up to this date.

¹⁰**Educate a Child, Transform the World.** Request from World Mission. The "Educate a Child, Transform the World" initiative was approved by the 221st General Assembly (2014). As a churchwide campaign, it will address national and international concern to provide quality education to 1 million children by the year 2020. The campaign is a joint effort of World Mission and Compassion, Peace, and Justice of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Children's Sabbath special emphasis, also on October 23, 2016, highlights providing quality education to children in the United States to help them come out of poverty. Educate a Child, Transform the World broadens that emphasis to global concern for children's education.

¹¹**Living Missionally.** Request from the Deputy Executive Director for Mission of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. "Living Missionally" was approved as an initiative by the 221st General Assembly (2014). This fifth Sunday in October, one of four months with five, is a fitting opportunity for a "service worship."

Change of Date Request

¹²**Justice Advocacy.** Request from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of Compassion, Peace, and Justice to move the emphasis date from the end of March to the end of February.

Name Change Requests

¹³**Health Awareness and Prayer for Healing and Wholeness.** Request from Compassion, Peace, and Justice to add “and Wholeness” to the end of the existing emphasis name, “Health Awareness and Prayer for Healing.”

¹⁴**Presbyterian Men.** Request from Presbyterian Men to change the emphasis name from “Men of the Church” to “Presbyterian Men.”

¹⁵**Collegiate Ministries.** Request from Evangelism and Church Growth to remove “Higher Education” from the emphasis name.