

Rev. Cindy Holtrop

Calvin Symposium on Worship 2018

Seminar on Mental Health and the Practice of Christian Public Worship: An Exploratory Conversation

Resources for Engaging Mental Illness in the Church

1. Organize a Mental Health Team (see www.pathwaystopromise.org, P2P)
2. People need more than a friendly church; **they need friends.**

The **Way of Companionship**: Companionship asks us to walk “side-by-side” a person and to share the journey toward health and wholeness. Through the side-by-side presence and orientation and through participation in the other four core practices of companionship – listening, providing hospitality, “neighboring,” and expanding the circle of care – we become more acutely aware of a common humanity, of our experience of frailty and suffering, but also of the eternal significance of each human heart. (see Pathways to Promise for training materials)

Worship Materials

<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/faithhopelife/worship-and-spiritual-resources>

Site contains worship resources for Christians:

Prayers, meditations and liturgies

- [Sample Prayers for Faith, Hope, and Life](#) - Prayers for use in faith gatherings focusing on hope and resilience.
- [Prayers on Mental Health](#) - Prayers for use in faith gatherings with an emphasis on mental health and substance use challenges.
- [Litanies](#) - Litanies directly addressing the issue of suicide and the desire to end or take one's life.

Sermons and homilies

- [Sermon Starters](#) - Scripture ideas with short commentaries about Biblical characters in their most discouraging times and how they eventually found a path toward a fruitful and productive life with God.
- [Story of Hope and Healing](#) - An inspiring story suitable for a sermon illustration, highlighting how a member of a faith community facing severe depression and thoughts of suicide received support and encouragement from her pastor to seek hospitalization, and how the faith community rallied to embrace her during her recovery.
- [Children's Sermon](#) - A children's message for mental health Sunday.

Scriptural resources

- Sermon on Psalm 88: A Psalm for Realists not Optimists, Cindy Holtrop: <https://network.crcna.org/disability-concerns/psalm-88-psalm-realists-not-optimists>
- Sermon on 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Greg Sinclair: <https://network.crcna.org/disability-concerns/suffering-and-comfort-mental-illness>

Prayers

God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you give breath to each person you made.
You treasure the gifts of each unique person.

But when life becomes a burden rather than a gift,

God of life, hold us.

When darkness strangles the will to live, when days become endless nights,

God of light, shine on us.

When no one seems to understand, when we walk and wait alone,

God of love, embrace us with your presence.

Where there is despair, bring hope; where there is shame, give value and worth;

where there is emptiness, bring fulfillment; where there is suffering in mind and body, bring healing.

God of hope, hear our prayer for life.

(Cindy Holtrop)

Loving God, we pray for all who face cognitive, emotional,
relational, physical, or behavioral impairments and distress.

We pray for those who bear pain for loved ones, themselves,
or those in their professional or congregational care.

May all draw strength, wisdom, and hope from you.

We thank you for discoveries of approaches and interventions
that alleviate suffering and promote flourishing.

Embolden us to welcome the many ways in which your care
and healing may come to and through us.

Grant us gratitude for your willingness to enter into our pain,
trust that your faithful love does not depend on our feelings,
grace and hospitality to welcome,
compassion to serve faithfully,
strength to bear the weight of confidentiality,
restraint from actions and words that alienate,
wisdom to discern appropriate responses,
fervency in translating our hopes and fears into prayer,
assurance of your abiding love,
and hope in your everlasting promises.

Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

(Charlotte Witvliet, *Worship Sourcebook*)