

CREATIVE IDEAS FOR COVERING WORSHIP LEADERSHIP FOR 13 WEEKS

Here is a sample of what those 13 weeks might look like when you cannot fill the pulpit:

Sunday 1 — A ruling elder proclaims the Word. We encourage presbyteries to provide training to their ruling elders to be able to proclaim the Word. Ruling elders are the spiritual leaders of the congregation, and we encourage them to step up during this time.

Sunday 2 — Invite a community partner to come in and share the mission of their organization.

Sunday 3 — Music Sunday. Select a scripture and have music that reflects that scripture.

Sunday 4 — Youth Sunday.

Week 5 — Invite a mission co-worker to share their work. This takes advance planning, and it can happen in person or online. This could involve paying an honorarium.

Week 6 — A ruling elder proclaims the Word. Check the temporary preaching list from the presbytery office.

Week 7 — Men's Sunday.

Week 8 — Do you have a retired minister or retired educator in your congregation? Ask them for one Sunday as a gift to the church.

Week 9 — Women's Sunday.

Week 10 — Invite another community partner to come in and share the mission of their organization.

Week 11 — Is there someone in your congregation who has a story of faith to share? Or several people? Give them a prompt to help shape their comments.

Week — You made it! Celebrate with a hymn sing and prepare to welcome your pastor back.

Week 13 — Call the EP or members of the Committee on Ministry to preach. If they travel, there would be appropriate expenses.

The *Presbyterian Outlook* [publishes liturgy for each Sunday of the year](#). Be sure to credit *Presbyterian Outlook*.



Other suggestions include:

- Invite a candidate under care of your presbytery to fill the pulpit one Sunday. Your presbytery can help you with this.
- Is there a PC(USA) seminary or one of our full-communion partners less than an hour away? They often have students who are approved to fill the pulpit. Reach out.
- Is there someone within your presbytery who serves on a PC(USA) national committee? Invite them to share about their work.
- We suggested the retired educator, but an educator from another congregation may be willing to come share a message or new ideas around Christian formation.

Worship doesn't have to happen just in the sanctuary. Worship around the tables in the social hall, with food and hands-on activities as prayers are prayed, scriptures are shared, and hymns are sung. The Word is proclaimed via your hands-on activities.

We encourage sessions to be proactive in preparing for these 13 weeks by setting aside the current honorarium for a pulpit supply into a separate line item in their budget monthly. We acknowledge that some presbyteries require congregations to set aside for sabbatical leave. But with creative worship ideas, congregations are not covering the cost of pulpit supply. We encourage sessions to be creative if they feel they can't include the funds into their budget to pay an honorarium. We also encourage sessions to reach out to their presbytery. Does the presbytery have funds that could help offset the expense of honoraria?

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