

# MINUTE FOR MISSION

## Repairers of the breach

Here is a big question: What is “the church?” You might think that it is mighty strange for me, of all people, to throw out that question, but think about this: As the wider culture becomes less traditionally religious, the church — something we share as a congregation and individually hold dear in our hearts — becomes less understood, or misunderstood, by many. Like it or not, it’s a fact.

And as hard as it is to admit, sometimes we too fall into the trap of reducing “the church” to the buildings where people gather on Sunday mornings.

But let’s move past that idea of buildings, of structures. Of walls. Many of us learned in our childhoods that “the church” is the people — it is you and me. “Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors, see all the people.”

For those of us who are gathered today, this rhyme is a useful reminder that the church isn’t a building with a steeple (maybe) and some doors. The church is the people who come through the doors to worship.

But it is something more.

I think we might unlock something else in that simple rhyme. When we “open the doors” to “see all the people” we usually wiggle our fingers to remember the church as the people inside the doors. As we sit inside this building today, we need to open the doors and see ALL the people outside the doors: people whose homes and even loved ones have been washed away by hurricanes and floods, people trapped in systems of injustice and oppression, and people who will go to bed tonight hungry or without a roof over their heads.

The church’s makeup may be determined by opening its doors and welcoming people, but the church’s identity is defined by opening its doors and joining with the most

vulnerable of God's children in the world. The church's identity reflects the call of Isaiah to become repairers of the breach. It is through One Great Hour of Sharing that Presbyterians come together to open our doors to become the church with all the people we see.

We open our doors to join those dependent on outsiders for food, those who now receive seeds and silos to sustain a future for their children and communities; to partner with those whose land and livelihoods are threatened and who now receive legal aid and protection for the land that is rightfully theirs; and to work alongside those whose homes and loved ones have been lost to a catastrophic event, offering hands to help rebuild and prayers to help restore.

Let us open our doors, again and again, to see the vulnerable we've been called to stand with and to serve. Let us open our doors, again and again, to share through this offering the love of Christ by ministries of justice, compassion, and joy. Let us open our doors, again and again, to become, not THIS church on THIS corner, but CHRIST'S church in the whole world. Let's open our doors. And let's walk through those doors to share Christ's love. Let's give of ourselves, and let's pray.

### *Let us pray,*

*Mighty and merciful God,*

*in Jesus Christ you opened the doors to us. Make us a church whose doors open so that we go out to join in mission and ministry with all our neighbors in need.*

*Through the gifts we offer to*

*One Great Hour of Sharing, may your*

*light break forth before us, and*

*may we be called repairers of the breach,*

*restorers of streets to live in.*

(Isaiah 58)