

Matthew 25 FAQ

1. What is the Matthew 25 movement?

The 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) challenged the PC(USA) to embrace Jesus' call in Matthew 25:31–46 to take our living faith into our communities and the world. What began as an invitation (2019), became an initiative (2020), and has grown into a movement (2024) that engages congregations, mid councils, and groups in the work of building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

2. How does the theme of “wholeness” relate to Matthew 25?

The idea of **shalom** (peace and completeness) is central to the movement's mission. **Wholeness** aligns with Matthew 25's vision by calling us to restore relationships, systems, and communities to reflect God's justice and love.

The theme of wholeness builds from the Matthew 25 vision, which calls us to build congregational vitality, dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty. Wholeness orients us toward what we are *building, cultivating, creating with God* in lives and communities. We *build* beloved communities in part by dismantling the harm caused by racist structures. We *cultivate* economic wholeness when we act to eliminate the destructive influence of poverty on people and communities. These actions can welcome abundant life (John 10:10), equity, and hope in our shared journey.

3. Who is part of the Matthew 25 movement?

- 85% of PC(USA) synods
- 51% of PC(USA) presbyteries
- 1,600+ congregations

4. Do mid councils or congregations need to sign up to be part of Matthew 25?

No, there is no longer a sign-up process. We reached our goal to sign up 20% of all mid-councils and congregations, The social science benchmark for success in any project. This was the tipping point that causes an idea or practice to spread and result in a movement.

Now, participation in the Matthew 25 movement is understood as a **covenantal commitment** to the vision. This means congregations and councils can engage in Matthew 25 without filling out a form. Instead, they are invited to live into the commitment by taking action and utilizing available resources.

5. How can my mid council or congregation start engaging with the Matthew 25 vision?

1. Read Matthew 25:31–46.
2. Review the current ministries of your congregation and/or mid council.
3. Respond to this question: What ministries are you currently engaged in that respond to the challenge of Matthew 25?

To some degree, every congregation is already engaged in the ministry and the work of Matthew 25. For congregations, you may want to study Matthew 25 with your session, review the resolution and then put it to a vote. For mid councils, you may want to invite a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency staff to preach.

Many congregations have created and printed their own Matthew 25 statements, using the [logos](#) from our website to display in their buildings, worship spaces, or newsletters. It's a way of claiming the call in a public and particular voice. Even without a formal "sign-on," you can shape a statement that reflects your community's theology, context, and hopes for the future.

- **Reflect:** Use Bible studies and discussion guides to explore the Matthew 25 call. Congregations can access Bible studies, discussion guides, film studies, workshops, and other resources at www.pcusa.org/matthew25.
- **Act:** Identify ways your congregation can build vitality, work against racism, or address poverty.
- **Connect:** Learn from other Matthew 25 congregations by joining our Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/matthew25pcusa>). Here you will learn how to participate in events and have the ability to share your experiences and hear from others who are engaged in the Matthew 25 movement.

6. What are the three core areas of the Matthew 25 movement?

- **Building Congregational Vitality:** Creating thriving faith communities that foster spiritual growth, connection, and outreach.

- **Dismantling Structural Racism:** Acknowledging and addressing systemic racial injustices through education, advocacy, and action.
- **Eradicating Systemic Poverty:** Addressing the root causes of poverty and advocating for just economic systems.

7. What does it mean to build congregational vitality?

Vitality isn't a number. It's not about how many members you have, or how large your budget is, or even how many baptisms you celebrate each year. Rather, it's a mindset and commitment to re-energize and live out your church's faith in your community and the world. Vitality is a passion for following Jesus — growing in faith and discipleship, embracing people beyond your church walls, working for justice and reconciliation, and serving your neighbors in need. It's a way of life that sees with Christ's eyes and uses your collective gifts to really make a difference. Of course, every community is different and faces its own challenges. Growing in vitality always requires prayer and discernment to figure out how you are called. We believe that "Where Christ is, there is the true Church" (F-1.0303). Matthew 25 shows us that Christ is with people who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick or in prison. If we wish to serve Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) must be with these same people in our witness, work and worship. In this we encounter Christ, the life of the world, and congregations find true vitality.

8. How does the Matthew 25 movement address poverty?

When we describe a problem as systemic, we mean that it pervades our entire culture and is deeply ingrained in the structures of society. In our country, people who are poor tend to stay poor because the deck is stacked against them at every turn. To embrace the Matthew 25 movement to eradicate systemic poverty means that we aspire to address the root causes of poverty in our communities and world. For example, many churches have food pantries and that is a much-needed blessing for their members and communities. However, to address the root causes of poverty, we must work at what is creating the situation of poverty and hunger to begin with — the laws and policies that are unjust and exploitative of people who are poor. It means fighting greed. It means tackling injustices in housing, health care, education, access to food, environment, zoning, and many other issues. It means appealing to legislators, community leaders, and visionaries to make a difference. It means boldly standing up for people who don't have a powerful voice themselves. Again, Jesus urges us to open our eyes and hearts — and then take action.

9. How does Matthew 25 relate to dismantling racism?

In Matthew 25, Jesus addresses the nations and focuses on “the least of these,” revealing his concern for groups of people who experience marginalization because of how others respond to their most basic needs — food, water, clothing, welcome, healing and freedom. Harsh judgment is pronounced on those who lack compassion and fail to act justly toward people who are marginalized. Today in our country, people of color are among the most marginalized communities because of racism. Studies on racism reveal that people of color are disproportionately impoverished, imprisoned and denied access to economic and educational benefits enjoyed by white Americans. It is also worth noting that the Greek word for “stranger” in Matthew 25 is *xenos*, the root of our word “xenophobia,” meaning hatred or prejudice toward people from other cultures or countries. Racism violates God’s command to love one another. Matthew 25’s principle to treat marginalized people with love and justice is the basis for the lofty goal to dismantle the sinful practice of systemic racism. When you embrace antiracism work, you are pledging to stand up and find inspired ways to chip away at this terrible injustice in our world.

10. We are already active in our community. Why should we join the Matthew 25 movement?

Very simply, there is power in unity. By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, you are helping to strengthen the work and witness to Jesus Christ in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and you help us become a more unified and relevant presence in the world. The Matthew 25 movement also demonstrates our understanding as Presbyterian Christians that we are “saved to serve.” By committing to become a Matthew 25 church, you are responding to Christ’s urgent call to be a church of action, where God’s love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. Our re-energized faith can unite and connect all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus in the church and in the world.