

Celebration of Worship
Communion Teaching Service

World Communion Sunday

October 2, 2011

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Stewardship announcement and luncheon RSVPs

Choral Acclamation

Time Now to Gather

Chancel Choir

Call to Worship

Rev. Kelly Love

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord.

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

Today's order of worship is very different.

Today the entire service is designed as a communion service – communion is not just one part of the service at the end. Perhaps you recognized the words of this morning's Call to Worship as the words used to begin the communion liturgy in the United Methodist Church and many Christian denominations. That piece of the liturgy, the piece that I used for the call to worship this morning, is called the "introductory dialogue." It is the only part of the communion liturgy where the pastor addresses the people, and the people respond back to the pastor. In every other part of the communion liturgy, we are addressing God in prayer – either by the pastor speaking on behalf of us all, or by the whole congregation speaking parts together.

I think people don't necessarily understand the communion liturgy. Maybe you don't even hear it, really. I'm hoping this special service will offer an opportunity for you to renew and strengthen your understanding of what we do when we share in this sacrament.

I am so acutely aware of my need to be nourished by God. Our communion elements are food. They are tangible, literal nourishment. So every time I participate in communion, the sacrament conveys to me a powerful message that God nourishes my life. Communion is sustenance for the Christian journey.

Anyone will tell you that people remember hymns more than anything else they hear in church. So, today's communion includes hymns that express the meaning of the communion liturgy.

Would you stand and join now in singing our hymn of praise.

* Hymn of Praise

I Come with Joy, verses 1-4

UMH #617

INVITATION

You have probably heard me and other pastors say that in the United Methodist Church we celebrate an open communion, which means you don't need to be a member of this church or any church. One way our open communion is different from other Christian denominations is that we don't expect that you have necessarily been baptized in order to take communion. We don't have requirements based on membership or baptism, and we especially don't expect people to be perfect Christians before they come to the table. In a United Methodist theology, there is no such thing as someone who is unworthy to take communion. But the church's intention is that those who come to the table come because we love Christ, we love God – and, in the official language of the United Methodist Book of Worship, we “intend to lead a Christian life.”

The words of “invitation” to the communion table in the hymnal say:

“Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.”

This church doesn't currently practice a formal prayer of confession in every worship service, but our prayer time does acknowledge our need to confess the places where we fall short. Our prayer time is part of preparing our hearts for communion.

Call to Prayer

Prayers of the People- -FWS #2201

Silent Prayer – Words of Assurance – **The Lord's Prayer** (Hymnal #895)

Passing the Peace

Response

Come and Fill Our Hearts

FWS #2157

Ministry of Music

Mountains Are All Aglow

Chancel Choir

Scripture

Exodus 12:1-14; Matthew 26:26-29

Children's Moment

This is Where Children Belong

FWS # 2233

(Children are invited to stay in the service to celebrate communion with the congregation.

Children under 3 have the option to go to the nursery.)

(Please register your attendance on the pew pads and send them back down the row.)

Offering: Special Offering is for India Project & Volunteers in Mission Support

Offertory Prayer

Offertory

Let Us Break Bread Together

*Doxology

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

FWS #2195

*Prayer of Dedication

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

TAKING THE BREAD AND CUP

Communion includes four actions, which follow the four actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. The four are: taking the bread and cup; blessing the bread and cup; breaking the bread; and giving the bread and wine to the people. Take; bless; break; give.

So here I “take” the elements – I simply make sure they are ready.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING –

Now we join in blessing the elements – the second part of the “take; bless; break; give” sequence.

As I mentioned earlier, except for the short introductory dialogue, the entire communion liturgy is a long prayer we pray to God. It is a prayer of thanks, so the communion liturgy is named “the great thanksgiving.” The words in this prayer are actually meant to change as occasions change. So our words today acknowledge that this is World Communion Sunday, a day when we remember that communion provides common ground for diverse Christians across the globe.

Whether I am standing up here or sitting in the congregation, I love the feeling of immersing myself in an extended experience of prayer. I love that our communion prayer, the Great Thanksgiving, spans all of time – from creation to today, and to whatever we imagine comes after this life, and however we imagine Christ to come again. I hope that you, too, can settle in to the feeling of being immersed in the power of this liturgy.

The communion prayer always goes back to the beginning of creation.

FOR GOD’S ACTS OF CREATION

Let us pray:

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
Always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.
From one people you have made every nation and people
to live on all the face of the earth.

And so,
with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Now let us sing of God's work in creation – please join in our next hymn.

Sung Response: *God the Sculptor of the Mountains* verses 1-3 FWS #2060

FOR GOD'S WORK THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

After expressing our thanks to God for God's work in creation, we give thanks for Jesus – for who he was, and for how he has touched or changed our lives.

Let us continue in prayer:

Holy are you and blessed is your son Jesus Christ.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection,
you gave birth to your church,

delivered us from the bondage of sin and the power of death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

He commissioned us to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth, in ministry with and
for all nations,

and today his family in all the world
is joining at his holy table.

Now let us sing of God's work through the life and ministry, death and resurrection
of Jesus Christ - please join in our next hymn

Sung Response: *God the Sculptor of the Mountains* **add'l verses**

FOR THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, and OFFERING OURSELVES

The "Great Thanksgiving" communion prayer goes on to remember the events of the Last Supper, and then to express our intention to offer ourselves to the world in a similar way to how Jesus offered himself to us and to the world.

Let us continue in prayer:

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,

he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these
your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice
in union with Christ's offering for us
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Now let us sing Jesus' words of the Last Supper and how we offer ourselves in response.
Please join in our next hymn.

Sung Response: *In Remembrance of Me*

FWS #2254

FOR THE PRESENT WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The final part of the "Great Thanksgiving" prayer gives thanks for the ways that the Holy Spirit works through us and in our world today.

Let us continue in prayer:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.
Renew our communion
with your Church throughout the world,
and strengthen it in every nation and among every people
to serve faithfully in your name.
By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world.

Through Jesus the Christ, and the Holy Spirit,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Now let us sing of the current work of the Holy Spirit. Please join in our next hymn.

Sung Response: *O Spirit of the Living God*

UMC #539

BREAKING THE BREAD

Now I break the bread – the third act in the “take; bless; break; give” sequence.

*GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

And then we come to the fourth act – the giving of the bread and cup. We Methodists don’t really teach anything about how to receive communion. Which is okay – there is really no wrong way to do it. But if you ever feel awkward, here is what is traditional. Hold out your hands, and the server will place a piece of bread in your hands as they say words like “this is the body of Christ, for you.” You can then respond by saying “Amen,” or “Thanks be to God.” Our habit here is to receive communion by intinction, which means that after the server hands you a piece of bread, you dip it in the cup. It is appropriate, if you want, to also say “Amen” or “Thanks be to God” after the server says something like “the cup of salvation”, and you dip your bread in the cup.

Now I will serve our communion servers, and we will all share in this holy sacrament.

*Communion Hymns

Sing Alleluia to the Lord
Eat this Bread

FWS #2258

UMH #628

*Parting Hymn

Now Let Us from This Table Rise

UMH #634

BENEDICTION

This morning the words of my benediction are a variation on the closing words of the Great Thanksgiving:

May God bless you to be united with Christ, and united with each other;
and may you go forth now to be united in ministry to all the world.
Go in peace.

*Response

I Come with Joy, verse 5

UMH #617

*Postlude

Praise The Lord!