

Straight from the "Hart"

October 1, 2023 -- World Communion

Prepare – to See Jesus

 **HARTLAND**

Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve

Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are happy you are participating in today's worship through this service script.

Our thanks to the worship team, especially Karen Nowak and Debbie Kirkpatrick for setting up the displays you see in honor of World Communion Sunday and the fall harvest season.



Along with World Communion Sunday, our focus will be on the story of the Emmaus Road which takes place late in the day of Christ's Resurrection.

Affirmation from the Emmaus Road

(P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

P: We had hoped for an earthly leader that would bring victory and remove pain and sorrow once and for all. But we continue to see suffering, injustice, violence. Doubt swells in our throats, choking off our praise.

C: Jesus stays with us in every part of our journey, no matter how full we are of doubt or fear.

P: His light is the only light we need. His word, his still small voice is the only sound we need to lead us to the place we should be. His companionship is the only warmth we crave to help us on our way.

C: His presence is the only company we need as we walk this narrow road.

P: The Holy Spirit will open our eyes to see our Lord in all his beauty and loving power.

C: Our hope is revitalized as our eyes are opened to see his victory over the cross of death.

ad and blended from portions of "Easter Affirmation" by John Birch, faithandworship.com;
"Prayer of Lament: We Had Hoped" (based on the Emmaus Road) by Nathan Bierma;
and "Prayer based on the Road to Emmaus III" by John Witvliet,

We come to Communion Worship today with a special awareness that we don't come alone. On this World Communion Sunday. We participate with Christians around the world, in congregations and homes large and small, speaking every language yet with the one language of love for Christ. God has blessed us with the rich, varied, and abundant gifts of creation. We want to continue to participate in this great global movement of God through our local church and beyond. From God's abundance, let us also give abundantly.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we join with other Christian faiths in many nations in remembering Christ's sacrifice for us. From the abundance of your many gifts, redeem, restore and remold us until we are made new. Accept the offering of our lives, as thanks and praise for the life we have received; and help us to use them wisely to fill one another's lives with love. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

ad. from Barbara Dunlap-Berg, USA, 20th cent. alt. in U M Book of Worship (UM BOW)

Call to Worship

We meet in different buildings; we live in different towns. We speak different languages and sing different hymns. We wear different clothing and have different gifts and talents. Yet -- as we gather together for worship, we become one family in Christ. Let us join with all our brothers and sisters around the world in worship and true communion with God and each other this day.

ad. From © 2011 Mary Frances McClure in U M Worship & Song, Leader's Ed.

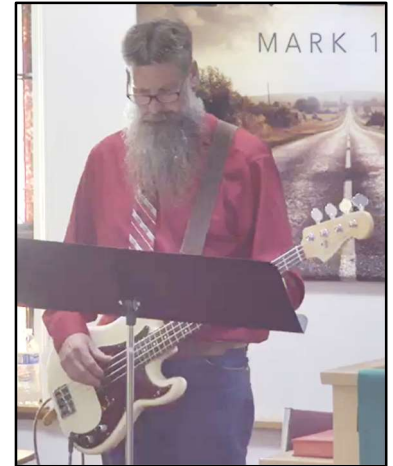
In honor of World Communion Sunday, let's sing O Church of God United

O Church of God, United

Words: Frederick B. Morle, 1953

Music: Gesangbuch der H.W.k. Hofkappelle, 1784, alt.

1. O Church of God, united to serve one common Lord,
proclaim to all one message, with hearts in glad accord.
Christ ever goes before us; we follow day by day
with strong and eager footsteps along the upward way.
2. From every land and nation the ordered ranks appear;
to serve one valiant leader they come from far and near.
They chant their one confession, they praise one living Lord,
and place their pure dependence upon his saving word.
3. Though creeds and tongues may differ, they speak,
O Christ, of thee; and in thy loving spirit we shall one people be.
Lord, may our faithful service and singleness of aim
proclaim to all the power of thy redeeming name.



Theme

A host joked, “You’ll know it is time to go if we ever serve you cold lamb.” Then he explained that in the olden days, welcome visitors were given a hot meal, but those who weren’t were offered only the “cold shoulder of mutton.” And it allegedly where we get the phrase “giving someone the cold shoulder”, which means we treat them in ways that they will not feel welcome. One of the reasons people do this is that they are not comfortable with people who are not like themselves, and that is a shame for while there may be risks, the greater risk is often that we miss out on the value that strangers may have to offer.

Once upon a time, a king decided to set aside a special day to honor his greatest citizen. When the big day arrived, there was a large gathering in the palace courtyard. Four finalists were brought forward. The king would select the winner. The first was a wealthy philanthropist whose great humanitarian effort had given much to the poor. The second was a celebrated physician who had rendered faithful and dedicated service to the sick for many years. The third was a distinguished judge who was noted for his wisdom and just decisions. The fourth person was an elderly woman. There was a look of love in her face, understanding in her eyes, and quiet confidence. But her manner and dress indicated she was from a humbler part of society. She hardly looked the part of someone who would be honored as the greatest citizen in the kingdom.

The king asked who this strange woman was, with a tone that revealed his discomfort and distaste and surprise that someone who appeared as such could even be considered. What could she possibly have to offer? Then one of his advisors gave the answer: "You see the philanthropist, the doctor, and the judge? Well, she was their teacher!" This woman had no wealth, no fortune, and no title, but she had unselfishly given her life to produce the best and brightest of the land. And because the king jumped to discomfort and cold shoulder approach toward someone who was strange to his ways, he almost missed out...

One of the Greek New Testament words often translated "hospitality" is *philoxenia* (feel-oh-zee-nya) which literally means "friend (love) of the stranger, foreigner, outsider". The rules of hospitality were quite strong in the days of Jesus (and really throughout history) in that part of the world. When a meal was prepared, others were welcomed. An eastern proverb says, "The guest in the house is its lord." One of the first greetings a Palestinian host will give to his guest is "This is your house" and it is repeated often, and if the guest requests something the host will grant the favor and say, "You do me honor.", and the whole sentence would be if adding the unspoken part: "You do me honor *to let me serve you*". Therefore, not only friends, but strangers were also welcome, and in fact, (at least in some traditions), even enemies were to be welcomed, and protected while they were in the home. The intent and meaning of the word goes far beyond a "warm welcome" of hospitality. This strong sense of a deep and complex moral code built into the hearts of the people, and for us in the Judeo-Christian tradition, it is born out of a faith heritage as God's definitive will for how his people will act toward others.

Intro to and Bible Reading 1

Through Moses, God tells his people that he owns everything that they can see, which means that no matter who we are or where we live or what we have decided we think we own, we are always, at best, a guest on God's world. God chose his favorite above all others, but at the same time he plays no favorites and can't be bought. The people he chose were to emulate the way God treated them when they were the unchosen outsiders. Then through a parable, Jesus affirms that this practice has not changed, that we are still to be gracious to those we see as having less standing, or are foreigners or different than ourselves.



[Moses] See, the sky, the heaven beyond the sky, the earth and everything on it all belong to the Lord your God. Only the Lord took enough pleasure in your ancestors to love them and choose their descendants after them — yourselves — above all peoples, as he still does today...

The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awesome God, who has no favorites. He secures justice for the orphan and the widow; he loves the foreigner, giving him food and clothing. Therefore, you are to love the foreigner, since you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. All that the Lord your God asks from you is to fear the Lord your God, follow all his ways, love him and serve the Lord your God with all your heart and all your being; to obey, for your own good, the [commands] and regulations of the Lord. You are to cling to him and swear by his name. He is your praise, and he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things, which you have seen with your own eyes... The Lord your God has made your numbers as many as the stars in the sky!

[Jesus] “Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you made me your guest, I needed clothes and you provided them, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. ... Yes, I tell you that whenever you did these things for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did them for me!”

Selected verses from Deuteronomy 10:14-19, 12-13,20b-22 CJB
(with “the Lord” subst. for “Adonai”, “commands” for “mitzvah”),
Matthew 25:34b-36,40b CJB

Music Picking up on this general theme, the hymnwriters lift up the Universal rule and love of God in Jesus. Let’s sing together how Christ makes us all one family of faith.

In Christ There is No East or West

(to tune of O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing)

Words: John Oxenham (vv 1,2,4), 1913; (v 3) Laurence Hull Stookey, 1987

v 3 © 1989 UM Publishing House

Music: Carl G Glaser; arr. By Lowell Mason, 1839

1. In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north;
but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.
2. In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;
his service is the golden cord close binding humankind.

3. In Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, and neither slave nor free;
both male and female heirs are made, and all are kin to me.

Music Of course what we wish in music has not fully make its reality in this world, so we pray God will continue to fill us with his wholeness. Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing... **Fill My Cup, Lord (2x)**

Words: Richard Blanchard, 1959

Music: Richard Blanchard, 1959; arr. by Eugene Clark, 1971

© 1959 by Richard Blanchard, assigned to Sacred Songs © 1964 Sacred Songs

Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord.
Come and quench this thirsting of my soul.
Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more;
fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole.
(Repeat)

Prayers Lord, there are so many things for which we seek you. We will not find that needed justice in our apathy; we will not find that elusive wholeness with our quarreling; we will not find our hoped for unity with our doctrines; we will not find our misplaced love with our hating; we will not find that rest we crave in our overflowing planners; we will not find the peace you offer in our well nursed grudges. Perhaps the secret is to stop chasing you to be filled and satisfied for what you can give, and to seek you yourself – it is your presence that we long for. Thankfully, you are not far off nor hidden. We also know that you are most easily found when we find you together, when we are humble enough to look in the faces of others, even those we may find most strange and unfamiliar. We find you when we squeeze closer together, making room at the Table for all your people. We find you in the brokenness of the Bread and in the breaking of our hearts. We find you in the pouring out of the cup, investing the life you have given us in others.

Petitions And so we spend ourselves in prayers for others - Specifically, we pray for * Jan Martin's friend Darlene Tidmore is now home with visiting nurses with several health problems * Jan's brother Reese still looking for a lawyer for situation with Calvin * Jan's son Brian hurt his arm and is consulting a doctor Monday * Jerry Weaver asks for blessings and prayers for the family and friends of Jim Drennan (59) who died recently in a work related accident * The Gordoniers ask for friend Al who is having yet another medical procedure (after the car accident weeks ago) * Terri Priess reports that Becki Wren fell (nothing broken) and spent a few days at St Joe's and is now (recovering) in Care Tel; * Sally Santeford (friend of pastor). requests prayers for friend Wes Wilcox (cancer), and * Laura Walker -- had her

second mastectomy and double reconstruction using abdominal tissue on Monday. It is going to be a long recovery. Surgery was 12 hours with 3 days in ICU. * We dedicated a quilt mid-week for Mary Jo Bell's friend Michael Brilinski (cancer) We continue to pray for * Bert Honour's request for the family and friends of Bob Wachol, who recently passed away suddenly, * for Mike Kenel's close cousin, Pastor Mark Williams, who had heart surgery postponed. * and for those not named out loud but are on our hearts and mind, we lift to you in this next moment of silence.

Now most merciful Father, send your heavenly blessings upon your people, that we may dwell together in unity and love. Keep us all from self-will and discord. Enable us to faithfully fulfill our ministry to each other and our mission for others. By your means of grace, may all our words and deeds seek your glory and the advancement of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Intro to and Bible Reading 2:

Paul prays that believers will be able to grasp the powerful grace at work within them. It enables us to become the mature work of art that God has made us in Christ. We are reborn from above, spiritually transformed, renewed, and ready to be used for the good works he has already planned out for us. We can live the good life he has made ready for us to live. So when he heard of their faith, that Christ was residing in their hearts, he wrote: (See Ephesians 2:4-9, Colossians 1:28-29)

And I pray that the eyes of your heart, [the very center and core of your being], may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit] so that you will know and cherish the hope [the divine guarantee, the confident expectation] -- to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in his holy people, (God's people), and [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing and incomparably great [active, spiritual] power is in us who believe. That power is the same mighty strength he exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at His own right hand in the heavenly realms. For this (reason) I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me.

Ephesians 1:18-20, Colossians 1:29 (AMP, AMPC, NIV)

Music The work that God makes possible through Christ's resurrection power is not meant to be done in isolation, but it is done in cooperation with all believers, and built on the work of the faithful who went before us and is our legacy to those

who come after us. In other words, World Communion is not only about our connection with God, not only about our connection with people across the world, but our connection with people throughout time... If comfortable, let's stand before the sermon and sing **Sing with All the Saints in Glory**

Words: William J. Irons, 1873

Music: Ludwig von Beethoven 1824; arr. by Edward Hodges, 1864

1. Sing with all the saints in glory, sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story, to the former days belong.
All around the clouds are breaking, soon the storms of time shall cease;
in God's likeness we, awaking, know the everlasting peace.
2. O what glory, far exceeding all that eye has yet perceived!
Holiest hearts, for ages pleading, never that full joy conceived.
God has promised, Christ prepares it, there on high our welcome waits.
Every humble spirit shares it; Christ has passed th'eternal gates.
3. Life eternal! heaven rejoices; Jesus lives, who once was dead.
Join we now the deathless voices; child of God, lift up your head!
Patriarchs from the distant ages, saints all longing for their heaven,
prophets, psalmists, seers, and sages, all await the glory given.

Sermon Prepare – to See Jesus

Cleopas (Klee-oh-puss) and his unnamed wife or friend have been following Jesus for a while. They went to Jerusalem – the traditional center of God's presence, promise, and purpose for this year's Passover festival, which was more exciting than most. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead it, the conflict with religious leaders reached a tipping point. Like all the others, they had come with high hopes and expectations, and now it was late afternoon/early evening that Sunday of Passover and they were retreating from their religious center back to their obscure, insignificant hometown. We aren't even sure where it was except that it was located on the Emmaus road that went into Jerusalem.

This pair was feeling what many of the perplexed Jesus hopefuls were feeling that day, and what many struggling faithful feel today. Moving from high hopes and expectations to trial and crucifixion; they were devastated. And they didn't know what to make of the already buzzing rumors about an empty tomb and angels and a risen Lord.

The freshly risen Jesus comes up alongside and walks with them. They were kept from recognizing him. Many explanations are offered. Some say it was because they

When we don't recognize Jesus

were walking into the sunset and the glare made it difficult to get a good look. It is not likely, but it makes for a nice metaphor – believers are not to walk into the sunset, into the darkness; but to the Son (s-o-n) rise, to the new dawn breaking into our lives. Others say Jesus used his powers to prevent them from seeing who he was. Yet others note that a resurrected body is different from our earthly body – perhaps enough that the connection was not immediately clear to them. He would be the last person they would expect to see. Others quote the next verse where their faces were downcast and say they were in such grief and sadness that they never really lifted their heads to make eye contact with him, and / or their eyes were swollen with tears and dust and it just made it hard to see clearly.

Whatever the literal reason, even more important is the metaphoric life lesson, that (like Peter walking on the sea in the storm) it is often hardest to recognize and focus on Jesus' presence with us when we are *overly* caught up in our own problems and challenges. And yet, it is in our problems and challenges that Jesus loves to come out of his way to join and journey with us. Jesus asks what they are talking about.

They stopped walking, as I said, faces downcast. Perhaps perplexed by this stranger who had interloped into their private conversation. And bewildered too -- as if there was any other topic in the world besides what had happened in Jerusalem that last few days – Cleopas blurts out, “Are you the only person from Jerusalem who didn't know what was happening?”

Of course, Jesus knew – better than they did. His question was not to catch up

Importance of listening, talking it out

on the latest news that he missed while lying in the tomb. He asked in order to draw out into the open what was buried in their hearts. Listening gives people an opportunity to speak out loud their deepest joys and disappointments – it is a first step to catharsis, to clarity, to healing; and to finding our way back to the presence, promise, and purpose of God.

They reveal what they felt about Jesus -- that he was a powerful prophet of God. That they hoped he was the Messiah who would redeem his people.

By Oxford Languages: Redeem means to compensate for the faults or bad aspects of something. A bad game was redeemed (made worth watching) only by the outstanding play of one of its players. Redeem also means to gain or regain possession of something. When used in connection with God and Jesus, Jesus good character redeems our faults, our sins – and though God owns everything,

there is a sense in which he buys us back from the power of sin and death by the payment of Jesus' death. Until people understood what happened on Good Friday, no one fathomed how much God loved and to what lengths and cost he would pay to free his people from sin and death's ownership over them.

Cleopas continued, "We had *hoped* (past tense) the Jesus was the One, but instead our religious leaders (who you would think would be on board with a Messiah) handed him over to Rome to be killed. And this was all three days ago – but now there were rumors of an empty tomb and angels declaring he was alive, and some friends (disciples) had gone and found the empty tomb, but they did not see Jesus HIMSELF. The original grammar emphasizes "himself", showing that they had not yet heard of (or at least believed) any actual Jesus sightings; so they were skeptical of the "risen" rumors. The reports did not cause hope and joy, they only added to the confusion.

Their doubt is grounded in misunderstood expectations. Many relationships

The danger of errant expectations

are damaged and even broken because expectations are not clear. It was clear, even in the Scriptures that were available to them then, but the scholars and therefore the people, had focused only on the parts of the passages that predicted the glory and victory of the Messiah. They ignored and/or explained away the darker side of the Messiah's mission. The idea of syncing a victorious Deliverer with a suffering, God-smitten and dying king was preposterous, even monstrous thinking – even to most of the Lord's closest disciples.

Many still want to see only certain aspects of Jesus' life and teaching. The parts that bail us out from *our* bad decisions and actions and the parts that seem to put people unlike us "in their place", and the promises that some allege will lead us into a life of ease. And when we face consequences for our own choices, when others prosper when we don't want them to, when life isn't so comfortable after all, we can get frustrated, angry, confused -- filled with grief and doubts and Jesus may even become a past tense in our life -- I have an old friend who at one point blogged, "I tried the 'Jesus thing'..." past tense and filled with skeptical doubts...

It seems understandable for the pair on the road to believe as they did, given the well-accepted

Importance of God's Word

religious thinking of the day. Nevertheless, Jesus gently begins to explain all the prophecy concerning himself from Moses on -- not by proof texting here and there but by demonstrating a consistent divine purpose throughout the Old Testament.

He shows them that there is a dark side, that the Messiah's suffering they had just lived through was not only a possibility, but a necessity. The combination of the terribleness of sin and the deep love of God made the cross inevitable. God is not defeated by, but triumphs through the suffering of his Son.

And as these two on the road realized that the Messiah's suffering and death should not have demolished their expectations, but was part and parcel of the predicted path of their Redeemer, hope again began to burn in their hearts...

At some point they resumed walking, for they have arrived home, and it is getting late. Roman roads were not lit with streetlamps nor headlights, nor the protection of lockable vehicles. They *were* lined with nocturnal predators (animals) and robbers. It is clear Jesus wants to stay, but he never forces himself on us. He always waits for the invitation to come in.

You've got to hand it to this pair on the road. This hasn't exactly been their week. They've been away to Jerusalem for a week in what must have been a crowded, loud, exhausting festival – and then to have it end the way it did – most people would probably want to get in the door, throw their luggage in the hall, kick off their shoes and plop down to quiet, long, but restless sleep. The temptation, as good as the talk may have been, would be to let this stranger go on and find his own accommodation. But we heard the deep-seated moral code about hospitality and the friendly love of the stranger.

They couldn't have possibly grasped how this rule of life would broaden their horizons, what they would learn to appreciate and love about others and about life, and especially in this case, for it was Jesus himself who was welcomed in, and the guest suddenly becomes the host and begins the meal in the typical Jewish way.

He took the food / bread, looked to heaven and broke it while re-

Look for Jesus in the routine of your life

citing a typical opening prayer of thankful grace, such as "Blessed are you O Lord, for the provision of this food". Perhaps there was something familiar about how Jesus said the words and handled the bread, (remember these people had been following Jesus for a while) or perhaps God just decided it was time to open the eyes of their heart – but whatever the reason – as one person put it – "when they welcomed the stranger, they welcomed the Lord", and now they suddenly realized it was the risen Jesus -- and then he disappeared. He had accomplished his purpose for them.

It seems they lost their appetite, or maybe they ate quickly, but in their excitement, they ignored the normal concerns about evening travel, and they made their way back to Jerusalem and to the 11 disciples along with others who had gathered and told them that they had seen the risen Lord. The testimony of angels, women, Peter, and now even these two from the road were not sufficient to completely reassure the perplexed followers that Jesus had arisen. (See Mark 16:12) They were discussing this when Jesus suddenly appeared with them and offered another traditional Middle Eastern greeting of hospitality where the host says, “Peace be on you”. and the guest replies, “And on you, peace”. It isn’t until Jesus comes to us personally and we invite him in that we can even begin to wrap our head around the actuality of the resurrection and his presence with us.

But because he lives, Paul declares his hope for us – you heard it read before the sermon – that the eyes of our hearts are opened to see the certain hope we have in him, in each other, in our future; and made aware of the indescribable mighty resurrection power that God that can still work in and through each one of us.

Find his resurrection power within

Our two travelers stopped their journey into insignificance and confusion and discouragement and darkness and worry and despair and started back towards the presence, promise, and purpose of God where we find clarity, hope, light and worship. Their journey changed from shattered hopes to endless possibilities. All because Jesus Christ was risen from the dead, He lives and gives real life, and wants to walk with you on whatever road you are on, speaking to you through the Word (the Bible), and through the words and lives of those who know him. He is waiting to break bread with you, eager for you to see him and recognize him as he is...

And if we open our eyes, we find that is often on the ordinary road, the ordinary meal (the meal with Jesus was not a religious feast meal, just a routine supper), it is often in the routine and mundane times of life – that if we are open to it, if we prepare ourselves for it, we will see him. And it may be that we also experience him in the formal family and church family faith traditions and customs, such as participating in Communion. [Pastor puts on stole]

Communion

In honor of this day, there will be more and varied responses in the liturgy.

Let’s begin by singing a hymn praying we can relive seeing Christ in our Communion meal as that couple did in their meal that home that evening.

O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread

Words: Charles Wesley, 1745

Music: USA folk melody; arr. by Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938; harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1988
Music © 1966, harm. © 1989 J Fischer and Bro, Co

1. O Thou who this mysterious bread didst in Emmaus break,
return, herewith our souls to feed and to thy followers speak.
2. Unseal the volume of thy grace, apply the gospel word;
open our eyes to see thy face, our hearts to know the Lord.
3. Of thee communing still, we mourn till thou the veil remove;
talk with us, and our hearts shall burn with flames of fervent love.
4. Enkindle now the heavenly zeal, and make thy mercy known,
and give our pardoned souls to feel that God and love are one.

The following Liturgy was adapted and blended from a World Communion Liturgy at umcdiscipleship.org, The Great Thanksgivings for Easter and World Communion in UM Book of Worship, and "Litany for Christian Unity" in the UM Hymnal

(Normal font - Pastor, **Bold font: Pastor with People**)

Invitation

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, whoever believes that Jesus is born of God and loves him is made a child of God. We know we are children of God if we love God and keep his commands.

Our faith in Christ is the victory that overcomes the world.

There is no trial, no distress, no persecution, no famine, no poverty, no peril, no violence that can separate us from the love and life of Christ.

In all these things and more, we are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us.

All who desire this victory -- the love of the death-defying risen Christ residing within them -- are welcome to participate in the Communion table. Let's prepare our *minds* with an Affirmation of what we believe as expressed in the Apostle's Creed.

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Confession

Now let's prepare our *hearts* by a time of confession. God of power and majesty: You raised Jesus Christ and delivered him and us from death's destruction. We praise you for all your gifts of new life. We have tried to prepare our lives for an ongoing encounter with you, and though the symbols of that preparation are gone, for all that we have discovered, for all the victories over sin and evil you have won in our lives, and even for all that we continue to struggle with in our wilderness – anticipating growth and future victories that you will win in us, we give you thanks as we continue to confess, seek your forgiveness, and lean on you throughout our journey.

Assurance

By your cross you destroyed the curse of the tree, by your burial you slayed the dominion of death, by your rising you enlightened the human race. By your living you are present with us and persist in lifting up all of us who follow you, the risen Christ to new life.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. ALL: GLORY TO GOD, AMEN.

Music With the assurance of God's forgiving love and his desire to walk with us in new life, we approach the table, if not in body, with heart and mind, and today, with all participating Christians around the world. Let's rejoice in that by singing

I Come with Joy

Words: Brian Wren, 1968

Music: The Southern Harmony, 1835 © 1971 Hope Publishing Co.
harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1987 © 1989 UM Publishing House

1. I come with joy to meet my Lord, forgiven, loved and free,
in awe and wonder to recall his life laid down for me,
his life laid down for me.
2. I come with Christians far and near to find, as all our fed,
the new community of love in Christ's communion bread,
in Christ's communion bread.
3. As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends.
The love that made us makes us one, and strangers now are friends,
and strangers now are friends.

The Great Thanksgiving

Communion is a remembering that -- the risen Christ is with you.

And also with you.

Death is conquered! Sin's power is broken. Give praise to our victorious God!

We lift our lives in praise!

Blessed Almighty God, we are yours, all our lives, our thanks, our praise, we give it all to you -- all our bodies, hearts, minds, and voices.

We are yours!

Yours the blessing, yours the praise, from the unimaginable silence before creation, beyond the farthest reaches of time and space, you are God, boundless in love and power. Who are we -- that you should notice us? -- that you should love us? -- that you should call us into covenant with you, our sovereign God? You set before us the way of life, and not only us, but you made from one every nation and people to live on the face of the earth, and guide those who follow you to a land of promise.

We are awed by the light of your glory! It fills heaven and earth.

Yet your covenant with humanity is a covenant we continually broke, and break; but you continually sustain.

You are all mercy!

You demonstrate it is Jesus Christ who comes in your name.

Hosanna in the highest!

He is the worthy Lamb of God who died and rose again. He was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread, and in the power of the Holy Spirit your church continued in the breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup, through which you renew your communion with your church throughout the world, and strengthen it in every nation among every people Jesus was worthy in his birth, worthy in his living.

Worthy in his loving! Worthy in his serving!

Worthy when you preached good news that God's kingdom has drawn near, and you gathered disciples, then and now; to learn and show the world what life in God's reign means: Healing for the sick. New life for the dead, cleansing for the lepers, freedom for the possessed, new birth, new hope, new creation breaking in for all. Once we were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

Now pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed and enlivened by his blood; commissioned to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth and to make disciples of all nations, and today his family in all the world is joining at his holy table, proclaiming with one voice the mystery of faith:

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

And then with one heart, one mind, one in you, Holy Spirit, move us to pray for the church and the world: We pray that we, with Mary, Peter, Cleopas and others, that all Christians will be strengthened in their faith in Christ, the Savior of the world.

Listen to us, O Lord.

We pray that you sustain and guide all Christians with your gifts along the way to full unity.

Listen to us, O Lord.

We pray for the healing for all who are sick, torn, or weary.

Listen to us, O Lord.

We pray for understanding, that we may share the truth with others.

Listen to us, O Lord.

We pray for the resources and the will to share the resources you have gifted to us.

Listen to us, O Lord.

We pray that all who are possessed, oppressed, distressed, depressed and downcast may be set free.

Listen to us, O Lord.

We pray for unity in the fullness of your love.

Listen to us, O Lord.

Music

And listen to us, O Lord, as we seek to live out the prayer, even as we sing what you have taught us to pray. **Lord's Prayer**

Words & Music: Albert Hay Malotte
arr. by Fred Bock © 1976 G Schirmer, Inc.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
 for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen.

The Bread and Cup

So, now Lord come and fill us through this feast, this day, and every day so that we will remember your sacrificial love right up to that day we eat it anew at the marriage supper of the Lamb and our rejoicing shall know no end.

We remember our hope, and we praise you with our lives.

We remember the night we betrayed you, when you took the bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to your disciples, saying "This is my body broken for you. Remember me."

We will remember. [Take and eat].

We remember when you took the cup, praised God and shared it, and worthy when you said, "This is my blood shed for you for the new covenant. Remember me."

We will remember. [Take and drink].

Communion Blessing

All blessing, honor, glory, and power be yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

Amen!

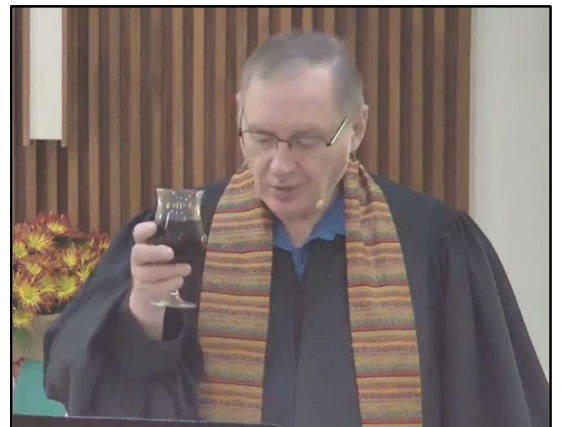
Music Now as comfortable we stand and musically recap the day and then the series....

I Come With Joy

Words: Brian Wren, 1968

Music: The Southern Harmony, 1835 © 1971 Hope Publishing Co.
 harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1987 © 1989 UM Publishing House

4. And thus with joy we meet our Lord. His presence always near,
 is in such friendship better known; We see and praise him here,
 we see and praise him here.



5. Together met, together bound, we'll go our different ways,
and as his people in the world, we'll live and speak his praise,
we'll live and speak his praise.

Series Blessing Now the Father having fed us with the body and blood – the life of Christ, uniting us with him, and filling us with the power that raised Jesus from the dead. We are sent rejoicing with all believers to: Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

18th Cent. aphorism, attr. to John Wesley

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan, © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Go to the world! Go into ev'ry place.
Go live the Word of God's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen**

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