



PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

PC(USA) World Communion Sunday Liturgy

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 2, 2016

Lectionary Texts:

Lamentations 3:19–26

Psalm 137

2 Timothy 1:1–14

Luke 17:5–10

Call to Worship (Lamentations 3, Psalm 137)

One: Sing to the Lord, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting!

Many: But how can we sing the Lord's song when so many are without?

One: Sing to the Lord, whose faithfulness renews us every morning!

Many: But how can we sing the Lord's song when so many are gone?

One: Sing to the Lord, who has not forgotten the melodies of salvation!

Many: Let us remember the joy of the Lord, and sing a new song together!

Opening Prayer

Almighty God,

even as the drums of warfare beat on through the night,

even as the cries of injustice linger in the morning,

even as the hustle of busyness rumbles through the day,

quiet our hearts. Still our thoughts. Join us in our worship.

Remember us in your mercy as we try to remember you,

through the proclamation of your good news, in story and in song,

and through the hospitality of your gracious table.

Welcome us again, one Lord,

Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn Great is Thy Faithfulness (GTG 39)

Call to Confession

Great indeed is the faithfulness of God, and yet our hearts are not so reliable. We wander. We argue. We forget. We divide ourselves with anger and bitterness and falsehood. Let's try to come back together again, and let's start with the truth. Let's confess our sins, to God, and also, to each other.

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, mother of mercy, father of grace: You have called us to one table, but we have pursued our own course. You have promised us the abundance of all creation, but in our greed, and in our envy, the world goes without. You have promised us the bread of life itself, but in our pride, and in our arrogance, the world goes hungry. You have promised us the waters of peace and justice, but in our violence, and in our discord, the world goes thirsty. And now we are famished, too, Lord. Have mercy on us. Forgive us, again. Transform us, *at* this table, and *for* this table, and send us *from* this table as servants of your righteousness, by the power of your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon (at the font)

Even when our cups run dry, God's grace overflows.

Even when our plates are empty, God's generosity overflows.

And even when our hearts feel barren, God's love overflows.

Friends, you have been called and claimed by the God of all things,

and by the abundance of God's grace,

and by the power of God's love,

your sins have been forgiven.

Go in peace.

Amen.

A Time with Children

Invite the children forward and introduce World Communion as a special meal that is shared with Christians all over the world. Talk with the children about special meals: the guests invited, the food that is prepared and the things that are done to make it

special—decorations, good china, silverware and linens. Gather close to the table and ask the children to identify the things that look different or special about the table. When the table looks special, like it does today, everybody knows that something special is going to happen. Ask them to identify other countries, denominations and churches that might be celebrating World Communion today. Hold hands around or near the table. Remind the children that when we gather at this table today we remember that Jesus loves us and that we belong to the family of God that stretches all around the world. Ask the children to repeat the following prayer after you to end the children's time:

**God of us all,
we remember our brothers and sisters around the world today.
Help us to treat all people as your children.
Amen.**

-Contributed by Holly Purcell Albrecht

Sharing the Peace of Christ

Prayer for Illumination (Luke 17:5–10)

Almighty God,
give us ears to hear your story in these words of Scripture;
give us eyes to see your story in the faces of those that surround us;
and give us faith enough, that by your grace,
we might serve you until the end of our days.

Amen.

Scripture

Hymn I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table (GTG 770)

Affirmation of Faith (adapted from the Belhar Confession)

We believe in one holy, universal Christian church,
the unity of the communion of saints of the entire human family.
And we believe that that this unity of the people of God
must be manifest and active,
in that we love one another;
that we give ourselves willingly and joyfully to one another,
that we share one baptism together,
that we eat of one bread and drink of one cup together,
that we confess one name, one Lord, for one cause, with one hope,
which is the height and the breadth and the depth
and the love of Christ, forever and ever. **Amen.**

Call for Offering

We approach the table today but we don't approach it alone. We approach it on this World Communion Sunday with Christians around the world, in congregations large and small, speaking every language and one language. And so part of our approach this morning is to remember in our offering our connection to the work of the church in every corner of God's creation. We do this using the PC(USA) Peace and Global Witness Offering, which goes to support advocacy, education, and educational outreach with communities of faith all across the globe. Truly, God has blessed us with the rich, varied, and abundant gifts of creation. From God's abundance, let us also give abundantly.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious God,
you create more than we could ever hope to return.
You share more than we could ever hope to deserve.
And yet, we pray, accept these humble gifts.
May they honor and glorify you in all creation,
and may they empower us for the work of witness and service,
for the sake of justice, and for the sake of peace,
now and forever. **Amen.**

Eucharist

Invitation

This table is for all of us,
near and far, high and low, east and west and north and south.
This table is for all of us, but it is not our table.
It's not a Presbyterian table. It's not an American table.
It's God's table, for all of us, and it's a table of grace.
So come and take your place at the table.
You are welcome, you are invited, you are called:
come, let us share this meal together.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

One:

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise,
O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe.
Even when we were dust, when our story begins in dust,
you were there, your word was there,
your breath into the lifeless void.
And upon your word all creation sprang into life.

When we were in the wilderness, terrified, timid,
you were there, your word was there,
with manna just enough for today,
with water even from the driest rock,
with the abundant grace upon which our story always rests.

And when we fell short, slaves to power and greed,
you were there, your word was there,
on the lips of prophets, and in the hearts of servants,
in stories of revolution and revelation and liberation,
calling us even now to acts of courage and witness and peace.

Therefore we praise you,
joining our voices with choirs of angels,
with prophets, apostles, and martyrs,
and with all the faithful of every time and place,
who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Many:

**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.

One:

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Indeed blessed are you, O Christ, our Lord,
for risking yourself among us, vulnerable and rejected;
for teaching among us, teaching the radical hope of God;
teaching grace to a world bent on vengeance,
teaching love to a world bent on destruction,
teaching peace to a world bent on tearing itself apart.

You were there, your word was there, even to the point of death itself.
Even faced with terror and hatred and the brokenness of the world,
you rose again, to new life, to new creation, to resurrection,
that we might know something other than the dust,
that we might expect something other than the end,
that we might work for something other than ourselves.

And so you speak to us us again,
with these abundant gifts of bread and wine,
with which we joyfully celebrate your dying and rising,
as we await the table of the Kingdom yet to come,
and as we dedicate ourselves again to you,
thankful, and transformed, as living and holy sacrifices,
that our lives may proclaim the one crucified and risen.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Many:

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

One:

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us,
and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,
that the bread we break together, and the cup we share together,
may retell our common stories together
and reshape our common bonds together,
and remember our common grace together,
in the communion of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ,
the one in whose life and death you have torn down our divisions.

And so may we be one with all who share this feast,
on this day, of all days, with all your children at every corner of your table.
May we share this abundant cup with all those who thirst for your justice.
May we share this abundant bread with all those who hunger for your
righteousness,
May we be united with every corner of your story,
united in hope, united in vision, united in purpose,
united in ministry in every place.

As this bread is Christ's body for us,
send us from this table to be the body of Christ in all the world.
Send us with a spirit of courage, a spirit of power and love,
that we may be witnesses in all creation
to the unending story of your word breathing life into the dust.
Keep us faithful, and fruitful, and hopeful, and peaceful,
until we come at last to the one table of your Kingdom,
to feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm,
with you and with your Word, through Christ and in Christ,
the one who came for us, died for us, and rose for us,
the one who prays even for us, the one who first taught us to pray,
saying: **Our Father...**

Breaking the Bread

The words of institution are spoken here.

Hymn during Communion Come to the Table of Grace (GTG 507)

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God, we offer our thanks,
for the whole communion of saint's witness to this feast,
and for the ministry of churches around the world who gather with us today.
By this broken bread may we each be restored for the work yet to come.
By this shared cup may we each be claimed for the proclamation of your
Kingdom.

At this shared table may we be united as children of your promise,
children of your word, dying and made new again,
sent boldly together into the world as servants of your peace.

Amen.

Closing Hymn O Christ, the Great Foundation (GTG 361)

Charge and Benediction (from the table)

You were called to this table.

You were fed at this table.

You were united at this table.

Now, you are sent from this table
into all the world.

Go therefore into the world, with courage.

Set a place for all who hunger.

Fill the cup of all who thirst.

And as you go,

May the Spirit of power and love attend you,
may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ uphold you,
and may the great faithfulness of our God sustain you,
now and forever.

Amen.

Written by **Matt Gaventa**, the Pastor of Amherst Presbyterian Church in Amherst, Virginia, and the chaplain at Sweet Briar College. Matt is the 2012 recipient of the David H.C. Read Preacher/Scholar Award from Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, and his writing has appeared in *The Christian Century*, *WorkingPreacher*, and on the Day 1 Radio Broadcast. He lives in Lovingston, Virginia, with his wife and son, Sarah and Charlie.