

OUR
PARTNERSHIP



A SERVICE
OF CELEBRATION

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

The Text of a Service in Celebration of the Ecumenical Partnership Between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

GATHERING

Hymn of Adoration

[The opening of the service may express the coming together of the people of our two churches in various ways, including a procession in which they or their representatives are integrated, or by the use of appropriate symbols or movement. A processional hymn may be sung or an opening hymn may follow the Declaration.]

Greeting

Christ is our peace!

In Christ we are reconciled to God.

Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, now and for ever!

Declaration

Sisters and brothers, as the people of God gathered in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, and affirming our place in the one universal church, let us worship God and celebrate with joy our ecumenical partnership.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Gracious God, our creator and friend, you are beyond our imagining and yet closer than our innermost thoughts. We thank you for your goodness toward all that you have made. We rejoice that you have made us one in Jesus Christ by our baptism, and that we are born from above by water and the Holy Spirit. With the church in every time and place, we praise you, Holy God, Blessed Trinity. Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

[The readings below are suggested for this special service, but readings from the lectionary for the day might be used where that is appropriate.]

First Reading Jeremiah 31:31-34

Act of Praise Psalm 96

[The psalm might be read, sung antiphonally, or presented as an anthem.]

Second Reading I Corinthians 1:10-18

Gospel Reading John 17:20-26

Sermon

Prayer of Confession

When I declared not my sin
my body wasted away through
my groaning all day long.

*I said, "I will confess my sins to the Holy One";
then you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

Let us ask God for the forgiveness we need.

Merciful God, you have made us in your own likeness and called us to be your people. But our thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are our ways your ways. We hold your will in contempt. We deny your presence in us. We abuse the creation given into our trust. We divide the human family that you have made one. We glory in class and race, and without remorse we enshrine brokenness in the church of Jesus Christ. Forgive us, heal us, and bless us anew with the true liberty and unity of those who have been set free by your grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Any one who is in Christ
is a new creation; the
old has passed away,
behold, the new has come.

*All this is from God,
who through Christ reconciled us
and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

Peace

The Peace of God be always with you.
And also with you.

[The people may greet one another with embraces or other signs of reconciliation.]

An Affirmation

[Based on the *Report* adopted by the General Assembly and the General Synod in 1985.]

We affirm that God, in Jesus Christ, has given the gift of unity to the church, and has made all one who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

We affirm that all who have received Christ are called to manifest the unity of the church, for the sake of reconciliation among all Christians and all other persons throughout the world.

We affirm that our two churches, in all their diversity, are kindred in Christ, members together in the one church of Jesus Christ, and that we have been called by God to labor for unity among all Christians.

We affirm the new threshold to which, by God's grace, our historic partnership has come, even while we acknowledge our participation in the continuing divisions within Christ's body.

We affirm that "Christ is our peace" and that God, in Christ, calls us to fuller communion for the sake of our witness and service to a suffering world that cries out for justice, healing, and peace.

We affirm as essential to our common journey as God's people: The treasuring of Scripture and the apostolic faith, life in a worshiping community united by baptism and nourished by holy communion, and self-giving discipleship in and for the world.

We affirm that our brokenness is already transcended at the table of Christ, where we are called to repentance, discover anew our unity in Christ, and receive God's grace to witness to the saving presence of the crucified and risen Christ. Amen.

Hymn

Prayers of Intercession

[Prayers might be offered for the entire human family and for the faithful witness of the church in every land.]

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

Presentation of the Gifts

Sisters and brothers, let us bring to Christ's Table the gifts of our life and labor and present ourselves before God.

[The offering, including the bread and cup for the Table and symbols of the partnership of our two churches, might be presented with an appropriate doxology or other music.]

Invitation

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; anyone who comes to me shall not hunger, and those who believe in me shall never thirst." All who are baptized and confess Jesus Christ are welcome at this Table.

In company with all who hunger and thirst for righteousness, we come to this Table to know the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Communion Hymn

"We Claim No Worthiness"

[This hymn, commissioned for this service, was written by Paul R. Gregory in celebration of our partnership. See back page.]

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is right to give you thanks, Eternal God, for in you the whole universe lives and moves and has its being. You have made us in your own resemblance, redeemed us in Jesus Christ our Lord, and called us to be one people. Therefore, with our sisters and brothers in faith throughout all time, we praise you:

*Holy, Holy, Holy,
God of love and majesty,
the whole universe speaks of your glory,
O God, most high.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name
of our God!
Hosanna in the highest!*

We thank you for the prophets and martyrs in every age on whose lips your word has found a home. We rejoice that you called forth a covenant people to show your love for the whole human family.

Without excuse, we exiled your word, abandoned your will and set at enmity the peoples of the earth. Yet your relentless love for us remains steadfast.

In the fullness of time, you embraced us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the only one begotten by you before all worlds.

Born of our sister Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, our Savior became as we are, but lived without sin. In spite of the world's hostility, this is the only charge laid against your anointed one: Jesus went about doing good.

We rejoice that at table, on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take this and eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After the meal, taking a cup, Jesus again gave thanks to you and shared the cup with the disciples, saying: "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Drink from this, all of you. This is poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins."

Under cover of night, your Word Made Flesh was arrested, tried, ridiculed, beaten and delivered up for death on the cross. The tomb, by your grace, became the womb of the resurrection of the Lord of life. The church, raised to life by the living Christ and baptized by your Holy Spirit, lives in mission and proclaims before the nations:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Bountiful God, at this table of remembrance, we ask you to bless us and this bread and cup with the presence of your Holy Spirit, that in our eating and drinking we might share in the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

Through this meal, make us one. Nourish us for faithfulness in the church of the Redeemer you have sent to reconcile us to you and to one another.

Amen! Thanks and praise are yours,

Eternal God,

now and for ever.

Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

[These or other appropriate prayers might be said for the bread and the cup. Where it is the custom, lay elders or deacons may offer the prayers.]

Gracious God, we thank you for this bread, made from scattered grain into one loaf. We break it now in remembrance of the costliness of your great love for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that in eating it, we may be fed the food of eternal life. Blessed are you, Holy God, for bringing forth the bread of heaven on earth. Amen.

Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ.

Pouring of the Cup

Gracious God, we thank you for this drink, made from the scattered grapes of fruitful vines. We pour it out now in remembrance of the outpouring of your great love for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that in drinking it, we may receive the cup of eternal life. Blessed are you, Holy God, for bringing forth the cup of heaven on earth. Amen.

Through the cup of blessing we participate in the new life Christ gives.

Sharing of the Meal

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come, for all things are ready.

[These or other appropriate words might be said as the bread and cup are received by the congregation.]

The body of Christ, broken for you.

Amen.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Merciful God, we thank you that in this meal our eyes have been opened and our hearts set aflame by our recognition of the risen Christ in our midst. Send us forth with joy, a redeemed and reconciled people, empowered by your Holy Spirit for service in all the world. Hold us in the shelter of your love, and welcome us at last in the eternal home that you have prepared for those who are called by your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMISSIONING

Dismissal

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

With gratitude for the blessings of God in the witness and service of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, and with renewed commitment to growth toward unity in our ecumenical partnership, let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God!

Hymn

[Where appropriate, the closing hymn might precede the dismissal.]

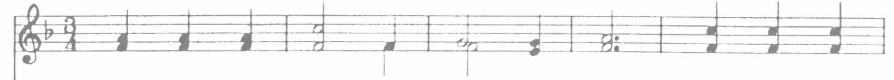
WE CLAIM NO WORTHINESS

Paul R. Gregory, 1986

QUEBEC (Hesperus)
Henry Baker, 1866

In moderate time

L.M.



1. We claim no worth-i - ness as we come to the
2. Our Sa - viour prayed we'd live as one to show the
3. We've prized our struc - tures and our past, loved our small
4. As we par - take of life poured out, that earth might
5. Then let us know You in this hour, and know each



ta - ble Christ has spread, but seek more tru - ly Christ's to be,
world Your sav - ing pow'r. We own in this we've scarce be - gun
parts be - yond Your whole. Win us this hour to truths that last,
know Your love and grace, bless us with one - ness lived with - out
oth - er as Your own. Lead us in un - i - ty, whose power



made one a - gain thru wine and bread.
to let Christ's spi - rit come to flower.
to all that serves Your King - dom's goal.
that church - ly pride that hides Your face.
makes but one claim, Your love a - lone. A - men.



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