**Disciples Identity Worship Resources**

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**Wholeness**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 139)

Leader: O God, You search us and know us.

People: You know when we sit and when we rise.

Leader: You perceive our thoughts from afar.

People: You are familiar with all our ways.

Leader: We praise You as our Creator,

People: Because we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Leader: We give glory to the Holy One!

People: Let us worship the Lord our God!

**Pastoral Prayer:**

Loving God, gentle spirit,

With every newly created thing – whether it be a breathing creature, curling fern fronds, or bobbing butterfly, you called it good. You called it so good, that this very goodness created more life, more being, more expressions of the goodness of you. We, oh God, are so grateful that your creative gift continues today. With every compassionate act, kind word, your healing can take root.

With every new, good idea that reflects your desire, your hope for growing wholeness unfurls before us.

We recognize that in the midst of your creation, your goodness; there remains points of sadness and disparity. Our aches and fears can sometimes make us wonder if we might shatter under the worry.

We pray today, and every day, that you are close by – close enough to hold our hand, still our anxiously beating hearts, and calm our flurried wonders. In those tender moments, remind us that your grace fills in our cracks. Your creativity offers us another possibility, another way of being.

Root us, Dear One, into your goodness, reminding us that you have created this whole creation to live as one whole reflection of your goodness. And when we falter, may we remember the one who came to show us Your way, the one who taught us how to love, to laugh, heal, and pray. So we together, as beloved members of your created goodness join our voices in prayer say, Our Father….

**Invitation to Offering**

In her book *Whole*, Sharon Watkins speaks of a church in California who has a unique ministry to the homeless. The homeless run a Saturday bicycle clinic on the church grounds, with parts donated by local bicycle shops. From scratch, these homeless mechanics build bikes that they give to the needy children of the neighborhood. These bikes give the children their first sense of independence.

How do you think of wholeness? In many ways, wholeness is when all people experience the fullness of life that God intends. When thinking of making the world whole, it is easy to become overwhelmed. However, things change when we hear stories like the homeless running a bicycle clinic so that children in their neighborhood can have a tangible sense of independence.

Our gifts to God matter. Our gifts to God enable this community of faith to be a witness to the wholeness that God intends for all people. As you give today, know that whatever you have to give does make a difference Give generously and let’s celebrate that our gifts, whatever they may be, do make a difference in bringing wholeness to a fragmented world.

**Communion Invitation**

Do you desire to be made whole? The answer is most likely yes. Do you desire to partner with God in bringing wholeness to the world? This may one of the most difficult questions one can be asked. It is hard to put aside our own desires, our own needs, and our own wants so that we may partner with God in healing the world. Being an agent of wholeness requires sacrifice. As we come to the Table, we come knowing that we are welcome because of the sacrificial love of Jesus. Sacrificial love requires us to live in a different way. Doing our part to bring wholeness to the world calls us to live in a different way. Today, we come to the table seeking to be made whole. We come to the table seeking to be transformed so that we may become agents of wholeness. All are welcome to come and know of God’s grace and love.

**Benediction**

We are Disciples, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. Go from this place seeking to be an agent of wholeness in the world. Go, willing to partner with God in creating the world anew. AMEN

**Welcome**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Who are we?

People: We are Disciples of Christ.

Leader: What is our purpose?

People: We are a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

Leader: Who is welcome here?

People: As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord’s Table...

Leader: Why do we do that?

People: ...As God has welcomed us. Amen.

Offering Invitation:

I love being a minister, and will usually talk your ear off about all the great things about this calling. *Usually.* The one place I’m tightlipped about ministry is on the airplane. It never fails, that dreaded question comes up “What do you do?” when you’re trapped next to a stranger for over an hour. I affirm honesty, so I take a deep breath and say “I’m a minister….” and then sit back and wait for 1 of 3 rather unwelcoming responses.

1. (Insert your own story here…for example these are three of mine) “They let girls do that? That’s adorable!” or “You’re too young to be a minister.” Or “Oh, guess I need to be on my best behavior then, huh?”
2. They start confessing everything they’ve ever done wrong, or what the church has done wrong. Or, and this is the worst,
3. I get silence. Either they’re afraid I won’t accept them, or they don’t accept me, the stony silence is the most uncomfortable response.

Acceptance and welcome are incredibly difficult things to do. The trouble with welcoming and acceptance is it’s not something you just give, or receive, it’s something we share with one another – it takes both sides. The only comfort I’ve found in the difficult task of extending authentic welcome is the reminder that even Jesus struggled with this. While traveling in a foreign land Jesus couldn’t be bothered by a insistent woman – he was downright rude to her. But she reminded him that when we freely share and welcome one another, there are even crumbs leftover for those we didn’t even intend to include. When we pause every week to share the presence of God in our lives through the daily needs we choose to let Jesus tell our story; we choose to give to ministries we support, but also the ministries of the broader church that we might not even know about. Through these gifts God’s gift of welcome is shared with others, but when we choose to share, the ministry of Jesus also has a chance to open our heart to accept God’s welcoming spirit into our own lives.

**Communion Invitation**

Most likely you are here because someone welcomed you here. It is difficult to walk into any church for the first time and the experience can be life changing in many ways, good and bad. When we greet another with a word of welcome, it’s not our welcome rather it is God’s welcome. We embody God’s welcome to all people through our words and our actions. The church is a place where there are no boundaries because of the broad, expansive welcome of the love of God. Every time we come to the Table, we are reminded of the broad expansive welcome of God. We are empowered to welcome all to the Table because God has first welcomed each and every one of us. As you come to the share in the bread and cup today, give thanks that you are welcomed, and be challenged to share that welcome with all God’s children.

**Benediction**

We are Disciples, a people who welcome as God welcomes. Go from this place sharing the boundary breaking love of God, reminding all of the good news of God’s love. AMEN

**Table**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We are gathered here as one community of God.

People: We are united in love and compassion.

Leader: We offer ourselves to the living God,

People: To be chosen, blessed, broken, and shared.

Leader: We witness to the power of our Savior Jesus Christ,

People: When we live in communion with others.

Leader: We come to worship ready to be filled,

People: And we leave overflowing with love to be shared.

**Pastoral Prayer**

Gracious and loving God,

Your table stands in our midst to remind us of your powerful love and grace. Draw us near today we come to worship you. Let us not forget the welcome that we receive today in your name. Let us not forget the challenge to share that same welcome.

We come today to offer ourselves to you, to remember that we are blessed. We come broken and we desire to be made whole. We recall the many tables around which your children sit. Some of these tables are overflowing with abundance. Some tables do not have enough. Empower us O’God to work together to see that your abundance extends to all tables around the world. Help us to see the pain right around the corner from us as well as teaching us to care for those whom we may never meet yet we still call brother or sister. Remind us that are your table there is always enough.

We confess, like Jesus’ first disciples, that where you see abundance we often see scarcity. We pray that you may change our view, that we begin to live from a place of abundance. May we be reminded that in your love, there is always enough to sustain us. Today, as we come to your Table, may we be empowered to share the love and grace we receive with others. May we become more aware of the pain in our community and the world, so that we may be greater agents of your reconciling love.

We join our voices together, in shared unity, to pray the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray Our Father…

**Invitation to Offering:**

We are called to Diaconia, the Greek word for service. We use this word for the humble service of our deacons. It is easy for us to think of this in relationship to communion; like so many of the bible serving at tables and offering hospitality is often all the first gift we can offer. But this term is not exclusively for the honorable hostessing practices we do. As we gather to share our offerings we remember that we are all called to serve and care for others seated at God’s global table. Through our tithes and offerings we’re able to serve our closest friends and neighbors through worship and Sunday school, as well as our neighbors who are often out of sight at the far ends of the tables. Please join with those around you in serving God’s people.

**Communion Invitation:**

I’ve noticed a new fad popping up around restaurants these days; the community table. Unlike the typical form of seating, where you and your party have a table all to yourselves, these community tables are rather large and are free to all who arrive. They’re not only faster, because you get to join any empty seats at the table, but they’re also usually a more pleasant dining experience. Joining others you can discuss there’s always room for one more, and you’ll meet some unlikely folks when you come to dine. And when we’re all gathered, we truly see the community of God; so come, there’s a seat and room for you at this table. other dish options or even give some input on what’s good. While they’re catching on, I want to let everyone know, that’s exactly what we’ve been doing for years! This table is the ultimate community table, where all are welcome.

**Benediction**

We are Disciples, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. Go and take the spirit of God’s table with you, sharing the love and grace experienced with all. Go, knowing that the Table gives us strength for our journey. AMEN