

OPENING WORSHIP

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

***This Service was adapted from *Lord, Have Mercy* by Merkel and Keveren, and Word and Table I as found in *The United Methodist Hymnal* by Rev. Les Oliver and Rev. Jeanne Williams.

THE INVITATION

Narrator: It's a disappointing moment, isn't it, when you realize that what you've broken can't be fixed? That what's been done can't be undone. You want to run away as far as you can. But instead, we are invited to the table of Christ. This is a table of mercy – not judgment. To remember not what you have done – but to experience what Christ has done.

Celebrant:

This table is a place of love; a place of mercy and forgiveness. All who love Christ and truly repent of their sin, are welcome to eat at this table.

Music Response from: *“Lord, Have Mercy”* (Music, Merkel/arr.by Keveren)

Solo: Jesus, I've forgotten the words that you have spoken; promises that burned within my heart have now grown dim. With a doubting heart I follow the paths of earthly wisdom. Forgive me for my unbelief, renew the fire again.

Music Response: *Congregation and Choir*

Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, have mercy on me.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant:

Let us pray. We give thanks to you, our Lord and God, for the gift of your creation; for the stories of your covenant people throughout the Old and New Testaments. Help us to remember your love. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name:

Spoken in unison: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, Creator God of all the mysteries of life.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Celebrant:

You are holy and so is your son, Jesus Christ.

We remember that through Christ – his suffering, his death, and his resurrection – you gave birth to your church, liberated us from ourselves, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Narrator: Bread is a very common food. We find it at about every meal. I think that's why Jesus chose bread to remind us. Take a piece of bread...smell its aroma. And remember that it is Jesus and Jesus alone whose life sustains us. "I no longer live," Paul writes, "but Christ in me."

Celebrant:

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Solo: I have longed to know you and your tender mercies;
like a river of forgiveness, ever flowing without end.
So I bow my heart before you, in the goodness of your presence;
your grace forever shining like a beacon in the night.

Music Response: *Congregation and Choir*

Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, have mercy on me.

Narrator: Some stains just won't come out. We have stains on our clothes. We also have stains on our souls. We try and we try, and we can't make ourselves clean. This cup is the blood of Christ. It makes us clean. But not only that, it gives us back our joy, our hope. There is a fountain.

Celebrant:

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.

Spoken in unison: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Celebrant:

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.
By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

Our Father, who 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Music Response: *Congregation and Choir*

Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, have mercy on me.

Narrator: In the gospel stories, Jesus doesn't drink when the cup comes back to him. "Not yet," he says, "not until everything is finished." So we flee to the table, not in grief, but in hope. Jesus is still working. Things aren't finished yet. But they will be. Until then...remember.