

## COMMUNION LITURGY AT THE 2025 PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNium

The Rev. Peggy Jean Craig, Presiding

### INVITATION

The most provocative part of the Communion Liturgy is when the liturgist shares these words from scripture: "On the same night he was betrayed..." Did you catch that? "The same night he was betrayed." Not just any night. It was perhaps the worst night of his human life. He knew he was going to be cheated, tricked as it were, betrayed by one of his own, and turned over to the chief priest and temple police. And it would not end well. At least not at first. But on the same night he was betrayed, he took the bread and after giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to the disciples saying, "Take, eat, this is my body broken for you."

Even on that worst nightmare of a night, he trusted God that love would win, that goodness would triumph over evil. And he turned that nightmare into blessing, into forgiveness, into the bread of life. Good news for all those who have ever been betrayed - even better news for those of us who have betrayed, or let down or disappointed the One we call Lord and those we love. For there is a wideness in God's mercy. And we who may deserve a guilty verdict are offered forgiveness and the bread of life.

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! Scripture tells us that people will come from east and west, north and south, and sit at table in the kin-dom of God. Friends, look! (motioning to the gathering here) people HAVE come from east and west, north and south, literally all over and sit at table together in the kin-dom of God.

According to the gospel of Luke it was when the risen Christ was at table with his disciples that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them that their eyes were opened and they recognized him. May our eyes be opened and may we recognize the presence of the risen Christ even as we break bread this night.

This is the Lord's table, and it's the Lord who invites you,  
and it doesn't matter if you are black or white or brown or yellow,  
if your gay or straight or trans or cis,  
if you're doubting or believing,  
if you're rich or poor,  
unhoused or housed,  
if your dreams feel like a series of endless nightmares,  
or something more than you could ever imagine,  
if you're Presbyterian or Cumberland Presbyterian or have no idea what those things mean,  
this is the Lord's table,  
and it is the Lord who invites you.

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gratitude, praise, hearts lifted high, voices full and joyful... these you deserve. For when we were nothing, you made us something. When we had no name and no faith and no future, you called us your children, you did not abandon us.

And look, you prepare a table for us offering not just bread, not just wine, but your very self so that we may be filled, forgiven, healed, blessed and made new again. You are worth all our pain and all our praise.

So, now in gratitude, we join our voices with those of the Church on earth and in heaven saying: (May be sung.) Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Lord God, as we come to share the richness of your table, we cannot forget the rawness of the earth. We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry. Your world is one world and we are stewards of its nourishment. So, Lord, put our prosperity at the service of the poor.

We cannot take this cup and forget those who are thirsty. The earth and its weary people cry out for justice. So, Lord, put our fullness at the service of the empty.

We cannot hear your words of peace and forget the world at war; a world torn with violence, hatred and division. Show us, Lord, how to turn weapons into welcome signs, and the lust for power into a desire for peace.

We cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our own divisions. We are one in spirit, but not in fact. History and hurt still dismember us. So, Lord, heal your Church in every brokenness.

For us you were born, for us you healed, preached, taught and showed the way to heaven; for us you were crucified, and for us, after death, you rose again. With you is mercy and the power to change.

So as we do in this place what you did in an upstairs room, send down your Holy Spirit upon us and on these gifts of bread and cup that they may become for us you body, healing, forgiving, and making us whole, and that we may become for you, your body, loving and caring in the world until your kin-dom comes. Amen.

#### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

On the same night he was betrayed, among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to those around him saying, "This is my body broken for you."

And later he took the cup of wine and said,

"This is the new relationship with God, made possible because of my death. Take this - all of you - to remember me.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Amen