

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

November 4, 2023



"for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." -

Revelation 7:17



Adoration of the Mystic Lamb - Hubert van Eyck (1366 -1426)

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT

NCH 293 (v.1)

GREETING

PRESIDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP

STUDENT MINISTER

On our pilgrimage of faith, in a changing and uncertain world –

We do not walk alone: You, Oh Lord are with us.

We remember all those who taught us faith –

That cloud of martyrs whose example burns bright in our memory.

God of grace, by whose love the world exists –

Show us Your face once again and reveal to us Your glory as we worship you. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

“REJOICE IN GOD’S SAINTS”

UMH 708

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The waters of baptism remind us of God's willingness to forgive us of all our sins; they invite us into this time of confession. Let us pray. Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being,

whose face is hidden from us by our sins, and whose mercy we forget in the blindness of our hearts:

Cleanse us from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with reverent and humble hearts we may draw near to you, confessing our faults, confiding in your grace, and finding in you our refuge and strength; through Jesus Christ your Son, Amen.

Friends of God, we are forgiven. Let us now walk in the light of God's eternal love. **Amen.**

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

STUDENT MINISTER

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a way comfortable to you and your neighbor. Be mindful that some of our siblings may prefer non-contact ways of passing the peace, so kindly ask before hugging or shaking hands.

Peace be with you! **And also with you!**

Let us share this peace with one another.

Service of the Word

POEM

THE CHILD ANGEL

TAGORE

This poem reminds us that we are all God's children.

They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair, they know no end
to their wrangling.
Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child,
unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence.
They are cruel in their greed and their envy,
their words are like hidden knives thirsting for blood.
Go and stand amidst their scowling hearts, my child,
and let your gentle eyes fall upon them like the
forgiving peace of the evening over the strife of the day.
Let them see your face, my child, and thus know the
meaning of all things, let them love you and love each other.
Come and take your seat in the bosom of the limitless, my child.
At sunrise open and raise your heart like a blossoming flower,
and at sunset bend your head and in silence
complete the worship of the day.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Creator God, shower upon us Your wisdom and knowledge. As we receive Your word, may we understand what You have called us to do. We live to fulfill Your purpose so we can see Your kingdom. Illuminate our hearts and reveal to us Your glory. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

REVELATION 7:9-17

NRSV

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Receive these words of hope from the scriptures. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

REV. DR. CATHERINE E. WILLIAMS

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT MINISTER

Sovereign God, You have commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Help us to do that in community and beyond.

Help us understand the problems our fellow siblings are going through and find ways to help them in ways they need it most. We name these concerns now in the silence of our hearts.

Help us to love one another even in our differences.

Allow us to receive their love as well. Let us not permit grievances to block giving or receiving love, in Your name we pray, Amen.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Presider: God be with you!

People: And also with you!

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to our God.

Presider: Let us give thanks to the living God.

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

Blessed are you, God of all creation. You are the Source of all mercies and the Wellspring of love beyond our wildest imaginations. We open our hearts in adoration to you and bring to you our whole selves whom you formed in the image of love in the world. Amazingly, when we distort that image, you call us back again and again, forgiving us, delivering us from sin and death, feeding, healing, reconciling, making covenant, and setting before us the way that leads to life. Therefore, with your people in all ages, in communion with the saints, and with the whole company of heaven, we join the glad song of unending praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of grace and glory. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you and blessed be your name, gracious God, for you gave us Jesus, who showed us what the kin-dom of God looks like. He fed the hungry, healed the afflicted, and ate with the scorned and forgotten of this world. He washed his disciple's feet and gave a holy meal as a feast of his ever-present love.

On the night before he died, he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Drink from this, all of you; for 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."

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us his body and blood. Feed and nurture us with his grace so that, in union with Christ, we may become a living offering to you.

Call to our minds the faith of all our ancestors, from ancient times all the way up to the present. In these moments, with the visions clear in our minds of those who are with us, who stand behind us encouraging us to stand firm in our faith and trust in you and to walk with boldness in the ways you lead us forward. Transform us into the likeness of Christ as we faithfully serve others and as we look forward to that day when we will feast together with all the saints gathered as one at your table.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRESIDER

We have a few COVID related options for those who wish to partake. If you wish to receive from the ministers, take an empty cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. All bread is gluten free.

A minister will pour grape juice into your cup. Eat, drink, and dispose of the cup in the waste baskets at the side aisles as you return to your seat. Or you may take one of the sealed celebration cups with the wafer on top and juice beneath; hold them out to the minister for a blessing.

If you are unable to come forward, please signal the ministers and we will come to you at your seat. Those who prefer not to partake in Communion are invited to a different kind of divine encounter through an interfaith prayer of blessing. If this is your preference, we invite you to meet the minister at the baptismal font.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at this table where Christ is the host.

COMMUNION SONG

“I COME WITH JOY”

UMH 617

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

PRESIDER

Join me in prayer:

God of mystery and wonder, at this and every table you dissolve the distance between the ordinary and the holy; you break the barrier separating the common and the sacred. We thank you for this thin place, this holy space, this well of grace that has satisfied us this day. **Amen.**

*CLOSING SONG

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

NCH 299 (1,2&4)

*BENEDICTION

SENDING & POSTLUDE

May we remember those who have come before us.

May we recognize those who are among us.

*And may we seek to be an example
to those who come after us.*

Cover Art: Eyck, Hubert van, 1366-1426; Eyck, Jan van, 1390-1440. Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58312> [retrieved June 21, 2023]. Original source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghent_Altarpiece#/media/File:Retable_de_l'Agneau_mystique_\(7\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghent_Altarpiece#/media/File:Retable_de_l'Agneau_mystique_(7).jpg).

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****The worship planning team creates all other parts of the liturgy except where noted.***

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THE WORSHIP TEAM SEEKS:

To serve the universal church of our Creator.

To minister to the unique and diverse needs of the seminary community.

To foster an expansive culture of worship that values difference and challenges the normative.