

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

November 8 and 11, 2023



*The sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them; the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God. - Micah 3:6b-7*



“Bearers of the Burden” - Vincent van Gogh 1881  
As we read Micah’s indictment of the powerful,  
may we remember those weighed down by the burden of their injustice.

# Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG “WE ARE NOT OUR OWN” vs. 1, 2, 3 & 5

NCH 564

GREETING

PRESIDER

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

**STUDENT MINISTER**

L: Holy God, you love us and comfort us, but you also challenge us. Your Spirit opens our minds to the work of justice.

**All: God of justice, help us to understand.**

L: Holy God, you identify with those who are marginalized, who are crying out to you and anyone who can stand with them.

**All: God of justice, help us to stand in solidarity.**

L: Holy God, you bless those who are often forgotten, and you inspire your people to rise above themselves.

**All: God of justice, help us to act.**

L: People of God, with what shall we come before the Holy One, and bow ourselves before the Lord on high? (Micah 6:3)

**All: God has shown us what is good. What does the Holy One require of us, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God?**

**\*OPENING HYMN**

**“O DAY OF PEACE THAT DIMLY SHINES”**

**UMH 729**

**\*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

[All are invited to turn toward the Baptismal Font.]

SM: The baptismal font reminds us of the transformative power of water and God’s promise of forgiveness. Let us join together in a prayer of confession.

**All: God of Justice, we confess for all of the times when we have spoken peace into the world, put on extravagant worship, and yet lived in a way that upholds injustice. May your restoring spark fill us and guide us through all of our sins against you and others, spoken and unspoken.**

Presider: God’s rushing waters of justice cleanse us and invite us to join in with God in the ongoing revelation of Her kin-dom.

**All: God’s love journeys with us and guides us. We are forgiven and sent to love all. 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 CONDEMNED**

**MEDIHA REHMAN**

*Let us reflect with the poet from the perspective of one treated unjustly.*

When tears evidence innocence  
I'll always be guilty of crimes I never do.  
Should I cry a river?  
Will then I be right?  
Or is the desert forever wrong  
Seeking water in the night  
You condemn with a glance-  
No question asked  
Justice is served before  
The accused is given a chance  
Ah! The world likes to believe  
That the Good trumps the evil,  
That justice always prevails  
But there are those of us who know  
That it is a ship that rarely sails...

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**STUDENT MINISTER**

Divine Spirit, may your words from times remembered and your words spoken to our hearts today break down barriers unaware. **Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**MICAH 3:5-12**

**NRSV**

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry  
“Peace” when they have something to eat, but declare war against those who put  
nothing into their mouths. Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and  
darkness to you, without revelation.

The sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them; the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God. But as for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob and chiefs of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong! Its rulers give judgment for a bribe, its priests teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and say,

“Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us.” Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

May we discern what God is saying to us. **May it be so!**

**SERMON**

**DR. JULIA O'BRIEN**

**\*HYMN OF RESPONSE “WHAT COMFORT CAN OUR WORSHIP BRING”**

LAMENT

What Comfort Can Our Worship Bring 199

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of two systems of music. The first system includes a treble clef staff with a melody line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Above the treble staff, the following chords are indicated: Dm, Gm, Dm, Gm, Cm, Dm, Eb, Gm, Dm, Eb, F7, Bb, Cm, Bb. Below the treble staff, three verses of lyrics are provided: 1. What com-fort can our wor-ship bring on bleak and emp-ty days to; 2. What sor-row can we dare to own, what an-ger, loss, and fears? Not; 3. O God, hear ev-ery long-ing sigh, as voic-es rise and strain, and. The second system also includes a treble clef staff with a melody line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Above the treble staff, the following chords are indicated: Bb, Eb, F, Gm, Dm, Gm, Dm, Gm, Cm, Bb, Dm, Gm. Below the treble staff, the lyrics continue: those who can-not bear to sing when pain is missed in praise? just in joy is God made known, but al-so in our tears. meet us in that hon-est cry where praise is voiced in pain.

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## Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

### \*THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Community of saints, beloveds of God, we are invited to come and gather at the table of love and liberation, to feast on the dreams of God, to be nourished by but a taste of what God desires to do among us.

God calls us from institutional halls of power, From shelters and the streets;

**God calls us from classrooms and pulpits, gay bars and prison cells.**

God calls us as we are, from wherever we are, to come and be in solidarity with Christ, who lives and loves on the margins.

**God whispers, “come” and live abundantly, turning from all that claims blessings flow from money, power, or control.**

Come, and love relentlessly; following Christ on paths of uncertainty, taking risks for one another, calling down unjust power from its throne and lifting up the lowly, the impoverished, the burdened.

**When these are the desires of our hearts, we open ourselves to God. Blessed are those, Jesus said, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

And so let us come to the table, expectant, eager, open to tasting the rich blessings of heaven born from unexpected places, and people, and experiences. In this meal, we remember the life, death, and resurrection of the One who still takes on flesh among us today. On the night he would be arrested, Jesus gathered his friends and companions. In the midst of a tense and dangerous time, they found each other at table, connecting over the story of God-enfleshed among them.

And as they did so, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread and shared it with his disciples saying, “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he also took the cup, gave thanks to God, and shared it with his disciples, saying, “Drink from this, all of you; this is the cup of the new covenant. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so we pray, Come Holy Spirit, Breath of God, Renewer of life, settle on these gifts and all who gather here, that we might be transformed in our remembrance of your radical love, your eternal embrace, and your grace that makes all things new.

**For the sake of our shared lives, the life of this land on which we live, and the lives of those yet to come, nourish us and renew our hope that soon Christ may rise again among us. Amen.**

#### INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRESIDER

Come, for all is now ready. If you wish to partake there are COVID related options printed in your bulletin. Please note that we use grape juice and gluten free bread at this table as a practice of inclusive hospitality. 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 and wish to receive an interfaith prayer of blessing, we invite you to meet the preacher at the baptismal font. Those joining us online you are welcome to partake now of whatever food and drink you have with you. We are now united at Christ's table.

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

"TASTE AND SEE"

AAHH 680

### *Going Forth as the Body of Christ*

#### \*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

PRESIDER

Presider: Let us pray

**All: God of water, earth, wind, fire, and spirit, guide us on the journey towards liberation. Lead us to live in ways that work with your loving spirit. Be with us as we move through the world this week. Amen.**

#### \*CLOSING SONG

"FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS" (vs. 2,3)

NCH #576

**\*BENEDICTION**

**SENDING & POSTLUDE**

**“FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS”**

**INSTRUMENTAL**

*May our prayers be never ceasing.  
May our hope lead to us new beginnings.*

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**Cover Art:** Bearers of the Burden, 1881 Vincent van Gogh Currently on display in the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterio, Netherlands  
<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=2023062168655512&code=act&RC=57753&Row=7>

**Call to Worship:** Adapted from <https://modernliturgist.org/project/justice-2/>

**Prayers of the Community:** Adapted from <https://www.episcopalct.org/mlk-day-collects-prayers/>

**Poem:** Rehman, Madiha. “The Condemned Poem by Madiha Rehman.” PoemHunter.com. Accessed June 21, 2023.  
<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-condemned-7/>.

**Communion Liturgy:** Adapted version of God calls us from <https://enfleshed.com/liturgy/communion-liturgies/>

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

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**LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM**

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Rev. Dr. Catherine E. Williams, Advisor

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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.*