

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

November 15, 2023



But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

- Amos 5:24



Victoria Falls, called Mosi-oa-Tunya by local speakers of Sotho, is Africa's largest waterfall. Its flow is so powerful and so constant it's name in Sotho means "The Smoke that Thunders" referring to the volume of the mist and the deafening noise of the crashing falls

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

“GIVE ME A CLEAN HEART”

NCH 188

GREETING

PRESIDER

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

STUDENT MINISTER

L: O God, open us to the powerful winds of your Spirit.

All: Open us to the words of justice and truth.

L: Open our mouths to the taste of freedom and love.

All: Open our arms to the experiences of our siblings.

L: Let us praise the God who formed the mountains, created the wind, and gave birth to us in the divine image.

All: Let us sing to the One who made the stars and turns deep darkness into morning and day into night.

L: Let us turn to God, hating what is evil and loving what is just.

All: So, may justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen!

***OPENING HYMN**

“O FOR A WORLD” (V 1, 3 & 5)

NCH 575

***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. May the waters of your forgiveness cleanse us 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[SAT. ONLY]

ACTS OF SELF CONDEMNATION

RAYMOND FARRELL

Here we have a contemporary paraphrase of Amos' words in today's scripture reading.

To go to a building
With some sort
Of religious symbol
On it and spend time
Repeating platitudes or rehashing
The details of religious teachings
And then leave while failing
To put one of these shibboleths
Into practice in daily life
Is merely an act
Of self condemnation
Which many have deluded themselves
Into thinking is godliness
At its finest.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Divine Spirit, may your words from times remembered and your words spoken to our hearts today break down barriers that keep us from hearing you. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Amos 5:18-24

NRSV

A reading from the Book of Amos, chapter 5, verses 18 through 24.

Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light; as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.

Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

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

SERMON

DR. NELSON RIVERA

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT MINISTER

Let us pray. Almighty God, you created us in your own image. When we look at our world and know the plans you have for us we see a great chasm. So much evil, injustice, and oppression remain in our world. We name now in the silence of our hearts the injustices weighing on our hearts today.

Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression. Grant that we may reverently use our freedom. Help us to employ it in upholding your righteous ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

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 that 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. Remember also those whose names are written in this book of remembrance. 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.

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.

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. 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.

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.

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

PRESIDER

God of water, earth, wind, fire, and spirit, thank you for this nourishment 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

“O GOD OF EVERY NATION” vs. 1,2

UMH 435

*BENEDICTION

SENDING & POSTLUDE

INSTRUMENTAL

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

Cover Art: Victoria Falls Photographer: De Agostini Editorial/Getty Images

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-31/biggest-african-waterfall-at-24-year-low-imperils-tourism-power#xj4y7vzkg>

Call to Worship: By Rev. Anita Phillips and adapted from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/native-american-heritage-month-worship-resources>

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

Poem: Farrell, Raymond. “Acts of Self Condemnation Poem by Raymond Farrell.” PoemHunter.com. Accessed June 21, 2023.

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/acts-of-self-condemnation/>.

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.*

LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM

Equilla Curry, Chynaah Maryoung-Cooke '21, Patricia Hall, Jack Kasander, Cam Richesson '23, Deklan Rupp, Rev. Dr. Kellie Turner '18., and DV Yost.

Rev. Dr. Catherine E. Williams, Advisor

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.