

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

February 28 and March 2, 2024



Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.

- Luke 10:42b



In this painting by Velázquez, we see Mary sitting at Christ's feet listening to Jesus' teaching in the background scene. Martha, painted as the main protagonist in this story and firmly put in the foreground, is seen preparing food in the kitchen.

Gathering as the Body of Christ.

CENTERING SONG

“MEDITATION ON BREATHING”

SARAH DAN JONES

Breathe in, breathe out...
When I breathe in, I breathe in peace
When I breathe out, I breathe out love

GREETING

PRESIDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP

STUDENT MINISTER

S. Minister: Faithful God, we seek to follow the ways of your son, Jesus.

All: Cleanse our hearts and minds from all that might be a distraction.

S. Minister: Renew in us a desire to worship you, so we may be an example of your love and grace to the world.

All: God’s steadfast love surrounds us. Let us worship God together!

*OPENING HYMN

“BLESS THE ARMS THAT COMFORT” (vs. 1 & 2)

MARY LOUISE BRINGLE

(MUSIC AND LYRICS ARE PROVIDED ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS WORSHIP BULLETIN)

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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

S. Minister: God, We’re so tired. We want to do justice, but the work feels endless, and the results look so small in our exhausted hands. We want to love mercy, but our enemies are relentless, and it feels like foolishness to prioritize gentleness in this unbelievably cruel world. We want to walk humbly, but self-promotion is seductive, and we are afraid that if we don’t look after ourselves, no one else will. We want to be kind, but our anger feels insatiable.

All: Jesus, in this never-ending wilderness, come to us and grant us grace. Grant us the courage to keep showing up to impossible battles, trusting that it is our commitment to faithfulness, and not our obsession with results, that will bring in Your shalom.

S. Minister: Grant us the vulnerability to risk loving our difficult and complicated neighbor, rejecting the lie that some people are made more in the image of God than others. Grant us the humility of a decentered but Beloved self.

As we continue to take the single step that is in front of us, Jesus, keep us from becoming what we are called to transform. Protect us from using the empire's violence – in our words, in our theology, in our activism, and in our politics – for Your kingdom of peace.

All: Keep our anger from becoming meanness. Keep our sorrow from collapsing into self-pity. Keep our hearts soft enough to keep breaking. Keep our outrage turned toward justice, not cruelty. Remind us that all of this, every bit of it, is for love. Keep us fiercely kind. Amen.

Presider: This is God's promise, the sign and seal of your redemption: You have been called by God, claimed in Christ, set free through the Spirit. Believe this good news: In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

***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.

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

Let us share this peace with one another.

Service of the Word

POEM **“MARY, SISTER OF MARTHA, AT YOUR FEET FOR THE FIRST TIME”** **A. SKEVINGTON**

This is the first of three poems where Jesus visits the home of Martha and Mary, and Mary sits at His feet.

Attention is given to how hard it is for us to be still – to be.

You came in search of rest
away from the road,
that bright, shadeless road,
where so many came,
and you gave so much.

You came and sat down
in the cool room,
the shutters pulled
against the heat,
and Mary sat, too,
and it was enough.

Just sat, quietly, at your feet,
her face turned up to
yours as she listened.
And you saw how the light
fell across her,
as if for the first time.

And this is what you want,
what you long for.
Not the elaborate
preparations we would make,
not ourselves swept and
scrubbed to perfection,
our acts and our
thoughts impeccable
in lifeless rows,
but to be, here in this light,
to be, here at your feet...

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

God, let your Word shine in our hearts by your Holy Spirit. Make it so bright and warm that we always find our comfort and joy in it. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 10:38-42

NRSV

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at Jesus's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her, then, to help me."

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, but few things are needed—indeed only one. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

The Word of God, for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT MINISTER

We give you thanks, O God, for calling us your children. In solidarity with our siblings across your creation, we cry out: "Save, O God, your people!"

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for your creation. May this earth, our home, the moon and the sun, the grass, the trees, the water, the sky, be sustained by you and preserved from our greed.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for your human family. May we stop fighting and seek peace, walking in the path of your shalom, in which we shall not stumble.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for your church. May it be what you have called it to be: a refuge for the poor, a home for the displaced and the forgotten, a house not of scarcity but of abundance.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

We pray for loved ones. Turn their mourning into joy, given them gladness for sorrow, teach us how to comfort them, even as you comfort us.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

O God, may we be satisfied by what we receive from your hands, even as we long for the fullness of your grace to redeem and restore your fractured family; through Jesus Christ and in the power of your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

*THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Presider: God is with you!

All: And God is with us all.

Presider: Open wide your hearts.

All: We open them completely to the Spirit of God.

Presider: May God's love nurture your wandering spirits each day.

All: May God's light sustain your souls each night.

This is a season of wilderness-

The season we grasp to understand the Divine just a little more.

This is the time for us to reach inwards to find the self that God sees.

This is the chance for us to gaze outwards, caring for the Christ in our midst.

The Lenten roads are long yet full of gifts.

The Lenten paths often seem chilly

Yet warm with the winds of the Spirit.

The Spirit of God is the light that leads us in the hushed nights.

The Christ is our companion on the journey in the intense sunlight of day.

We remember his time in the wilderness –

The struggles. The hunger. The peace.

And as we seek the Divine in our midst. On this journey, we crave the bread of life. On our desert roads, we thirst for the fruit of the vine, the cup of blessings.

Through Jesus the Christ's story, we remember the night before his arrest, The night of serenity, solemnity, and love. Jesus took in his hands bread from the table. He broke it and blessed it. Eat in remembrance of me, he said.

And after supper, As the night grew long, Jesus took a cup, and filled it with the fruit of the vine. As he blessed it, he spoke aloud to them. Take and drink and always remember me.

May the Spirit who traveled with Christ in the wilderness, and fills us with the hope of God surround and bless these elements. May the Spirit speak to us in this season of wilderness. Becoming our strength on this journey. And filling our lives with love. **Amen.**

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.

COMMUNION SONG**“TAKE UP THY CROSS”****UMH 415**

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION*PRESIDER**

Divine Light of Our Journey-
 In a spirit of gratitude we give thanks for this time at your Holy Meal.
 This time at the Table filled us with strength,
 Knowing that as we continue on this Lenten journey,
 We will find your peace surrounding us.

Amen.***CLOSING SONG****“JESUS’ HANDS WERE KIND HANDS”****UMH 273*****BENEDICTION****SENDING & POSTLUDE**

*With humility and contriteness of heart, make room for
 the One who created you, redeemed you, and ever sustains you.*

Cover Art: Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, by Diego Velazquez.1618. © National Gallery London, Bequeathed by Sir William H. Gregory, 1892 <https://christian.art/daily-gospel-reading/luke-10-38-42-2022/> Accessed July 19, 2023.

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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.*

BLESS THE ARMS THAT COMFORT

Mary Louise Bringle

CRANHAM
Gustav Holst, 1874–1934



1. Bless the arms that com-fort, strong to shoul-der
2. Bless the ears that lis-ten, shar-ing joys and
3. Bless the feet that fol-low, like Na-o-mi's



care, gen-tle in their heal-ing, reach-ing
fears— laugh-ing in our tri-umphs, weep-ing
Ruth— con-stant friend through sor-row, speak-ing



through de-spair. Bless the hands that la-lor:
with our tears. Bless the eyes whose wis-dom
ho-ly truth: though our jour-neys lead us



Mar-tha's dai-ly deeds; Mar-y's pre-cious
sees through pride's fa-çade, cher-ish-ing our
far in time and space, God a-noints com-



oint-ment, balm for dif-f'rent needs.
weak-ness with the heart of God.
pan-ions, min-is-ters of grace.

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