



The king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

- Esther 7:1-2



Haman pleads with Queen Esther

Gathering as the Body of Christ.

CENTERING SONG

“HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD”

CHRIS TOMLIN

The splendor of a King,
clothed in majesty
Let all the Earth rejoice
All the Earth rejoice

He wraps himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Cuán grande es Dios
Canten hoy, cuán grande es Dios
Y todos lo verán, cuán grande es Dios

GREETING

PRESIDER

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

STUDENT MINISTER

All my heart will give thanks to You, Eternal One.
I will tell others about Your amazing works.

**I will be glad and celebrate You!
I will praise You, O Most High!**

***OPENING HYMN**

“LET ME ENTER GOD’S OWN DWELLING” vs. 1, 3 & 4

NCH 67

***CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

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

S. Minister: The baptismal font reminds us of God’s promise of cleansing and forgiveness. In that confidence, let us lift our voices in a prayer of confession.

Leader: We are called to examine our faithfulness to God’s covenant with us. God, in whose presence we gather, promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and shame. Let us confess our sin to almighty God.

All: **Eternal God, whose Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path, we recognize and confess that we have failed to respond fully to your gracious presence in our lives. Through Jesus Christ you have offered us new life, fulfillment, and the freedom to serve you. We confess that we are captive to sin, that our sin binds us with false pride, and that the wrong we do is made worse by the good we leave undone. Reconcile us to you and to all people. God of mercy, forgive all our sin and strengthen us anew for life as you intend it; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Let us bring before God the prayers of our own hearts in a moment of silence.

Presider: God hears the confession of our hearts and lips. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven all our sins, and by the Holy Spirit we are empowered for new life.

All: **We believe the good news of Jesus Christ. 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, such as hand on heart, “namaste” hands, bow, shake hands, hug, or a way of your own choosing.

Peace before us,
Peace behind us,
Peace under our feet.

Peace within us,
Peace over us,
Let all around us be peace.

Let us share this peace with one another.
La paz sea contigo. **Y también contigo!**

Service of the Word

POEM

INSTRUCTIONS ON NOT GIVING UP

ADA LIMON

The relief of a flower blooming in spring, despite all of the difficulties it has experienced, is reminiscent of the freedom and relief the Jews experienced once Haman’s plans were defeated.

Reader

More than the fuchsia funnels breaking out of the crabapple tree, more than the neighbor's almost obscene display of cherry limbs shoving their cotton candy-colored blossoms to the slate sky of Spring rains, it's the greening of the trees that really gets to me.

When all the shock of white and taffy, the world's baubles and trinkets, leave the pavement strewn with the confetti of aftermath, the leaves come. Patient, plodding, a green skin growing over whatever winter did to us, a return to the strange idea of continuous living despite the mess of us, the hurt, the empty. Fine then, I'll take it, the tree seems to say, a new slick leaf unfurling like a fist to an open palm, I'll take it all.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Almighty God, in you are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Open our eyes that we may see the wonders of your Word; and give us grace that we may clearly understand and freely choose the way of your wisdom; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

ESTHER 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

NRSV

A reading from the Gospel according to Esther, chapter 7, verses 1 through 6, 9, 10 and chapter 9, verses 20 through 22.

The king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me-- that is my petition-- and the lives of my people-- that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

DR. JULIA O'BRIEN

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT MINISTER

Lord our Strength, please empower us with the perseverance we need to continue working to improve our city. Sometimes it seems we are taking one step forward and two steps back. Strengthen our fortitude to keep pressing on, no matter what the obstacles and challenges. May we be steadfast and unwavering in our prayers for this city, and in our practical actions to turn things around. Encourage us, we pray, by showing us ways our work is bearing fruit. We thank You for Your strength. **Amen.**

Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo, santificado sea tu nombre. Venga tu reino. Hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo. Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día. Perdona nuestras ofensas, como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden. No nos dejes caer en tentación y líbranos del mal. Porque tuyo es el reino, tuyo el poder y la gloria, por todos los siglos. Amén.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

*THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you. / *Y también contigo.*

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord. / *Los elevamos al Señor.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise. / *Es digno y justo darle gracias y alabarle.*

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

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.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; 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 on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Renew our communion with your Church throughout the world. / *Renueva nuestra comunión con tu Iglesia por todo el mundo,*

Through the power of your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with others, and one in the work of ministry to all the world. / *Mediante el poder de tu Espíritu, haznos uno con Cristo, uno con los demás, y uno en la obra del ministerio a todo el mundo. Amen.*

INVITATION TO THE TABLE**PRESIDER**

Come, for all is now ready. We have a few COVID related options for those who wish to partake. If you wish to receive from the ministers, take an empty eco-friendly cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. (Or take a cup that already has a piece of gluten-free bread in it, or 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 ecumenical prayer of blessing. If this is your preference, we invite you to meet the preacher 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**"THE OPEN TABLE"****MARK MILLER**

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION*PRESIDER**

God, through this meal, we pray that your grace would empower us to do justice, to offer mercy, and to do so with humility. You have given us your Son as an example, and your Holy Spirit as Advocate. Give us the courage to do your work in the world. Amen.

CLOSING SONG*"SOMOS PUEBLO QUE CAMINA" vs. 1, 2 & 5****NCH 340*****BENEDICTION****SENDING & POSTLUDE**

May we find peace when chaos is in our every breath.

May we find strength when our power is threatened.

May we speak when we have the answers.

And may we be filled with the empowering, life giving Spirit.

Cover Art: <https://crossroadsbible.net/tag/esther-78/>

Call to Worship: Psalm 9:1-2. The Voice.

Prayers of Confession and Assurance: United Church of Christ. Book of Worship: United Church of Christ. Cleveland: United Church of Christ, Local Church Ministries. 2012.

Poem: Limon, Ada. "Instructions on Not Giving Up." Poets.org. Copyright 2017. <https://poets.org/poem/instructions-not-giving>

Prayer for Illumination: <http://www.caldwellpresby.org/docs/resources/Prayers%20for%20Illumination.pdf>

Prayers of the Community: 2020. "Connect US." June 22. Accessed June 8, 2021.

<https://connectusfund.org/15-powerful-prayers-for-our-community>.

Communion Liturgy: Adapted from Discipleship Ministries. "Acción de Gracias Bilingüe por El Domingo de Comunion Mundial."

Discipleship Ministries: The United Methodist Church. July 26, 2007. Accessed June 9, 2021.

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/accin-de-gracias-bilingue-por-el-domingo-de-comunin-mundial>

Prayer after Communion: Hillyer, Chelsey. "A Liturgy of Holy Communion focusing on Mercy and Justice." Moumethodist. Accessed May 26, 2021.

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

LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM

Mwat Aseḏeh, Equilla Curry, Liz Fulmer, Patty Hall, Stephanie Oelrich, Cam Richardson, Rev. Scott Siciliano, Beth Taylor, Rev. Kellie Turner,
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.