



*“you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you” - Jeremiah 1:7b (NRSV)*



“The beginning is the most important part of the work.” - Plato

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

“MEDITATION ON BREATHING”

UU 1009

Lyrics: 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

God
Creator, Hoverer
You speak and we form
You breathe life and we awake
You said “it is good” and we believe

God

**The Red Sea before us, shouting impossibility
They say we can’t, we shouldn’t, and we wouldn’t
Words seeded from our youth, the limits and the lies
There must be truer truths in us to confound, resist, defy
Created from nothing, said something, made everything**

This God
The Lord will fight for us, so we need only to be still
Still our soul, stand out loud, trusting that God is
El Roi, God who sees, bears witness to a name
At her sound, she leaps, demands possibility
Immanuel, God with us, for us, within us

God

**You said “it is good” and we believe
You breathe life and we awake
You speak and we form
Creator, Hoverer
God**

***OPENING HYMN**

BE THOU MY VISION vs. 1, 2

UMH 451

***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.

All: As we begin a new year in the shelter of God's love,
let us be truthful about our lives,
about our living, and about our limits.
Let us confess to God and each other that truth as we pray,
first together, and then in silence.
Holy God, we open our hearts to you this day,
and offer the truth of our lives:
We have withheld love from others and ourselves.
We have let fear keep us quiet in comfortable places.
We have refused to respond to our neighbors' cry.
We have not put our whole trust in you.
We have struggled to be who you made us to be.
God of new beginnings, look upon us with mercy and compassion.

Presider: Let us bring before God that which weighs on our hearts in a moment of silence. Hear the Good News: we are forgiven! We are freed to show up in the world, and be the loving, brave, gracious, hopeful people of God! Alleluia! Amen.

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

STUDENT MINISTER

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a non-contact way that's 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

“THE SEEDLING”

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Dunbar, acclaimed as one of America’s earliest great Black poets, envisions the growth of the seedling from little seed to blooming flower.

Reader [Pause for 2 deep breaths.]

As a quiet little seedling
Lay within its darksome bed,
To itself it fell a-talking,
And this is what it said:

"I am not so very robust,
But I'll do the best I can;"
And the seedling from that moment
Its work of life began.

So it pushed a little leaflet
Up into the light of day,
To examine the surroundings
And show the rest the way.

The leaflet liked the prospect,
So it called its brother, Stem;
Then two other leaflets heard it,
And quickly followed them.

To be sure, the haste and hurry
Made the seedling sweat and pant;
But almost before it knew it
It found itself a plant.

The sunshine poured upon it,
And the clouds they gave a shower;
And the little plant kept growing
Till it found itself a flower.

Little folks, be like the seedling
Always do the best you can;
Every child must share life's labor
Just as well as every man.

And the sun and showers will help you
Through the lonesome, struggling hours,
Till you raise to light and beauty
Virtue's fair, unfading flowers.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Please, join me in prayer.

[Pause for 2 deep breaths for centering.]

Ever-living Spirit, give us humility of mind and hospitality of heart to receive your gracious Word in ancient stories of your faithfulness. Make ancient words new, and lost hopes rise again, as you speak the promise to us this day, O Spirit of Truth, O Life-Giving Breath. **Amen.**

Reader A reading from the Book of Jeremiah, chapter 1, verses 4 through 10.

Reader Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.”

S. Minister But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.”

Reader Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Reader Hear what God is saying to the people. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON**DEAN HEATHER VACEK****PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY****STUDENT MINISTER**

Ever living and ever loving God,
We praise you for your loving presence with us.

Come, Holy Spirit,

Take and transform our societies—
that broken people find healing;
that lonely people find love;
that bitter people find peace;
that fearful people find hope.
Come, Holy Spirit,

**Remove what hinders us from loving each other – matters of status, race, class, ability, gender, sexual orientation, theology, or political affiliation.
We are all your reflection; remind us of this truth. Come, Holy Spirit,**

Fill your church—
that our worship will be ever more pleasing to you;
that prayers will change our minds
instead of trying to get you to change yours;
that our lives will make a real difference to real people in the real world.
Come, Holy Spirit,

**Fill our lives with your presence—
so that more and more every day,
all that we do and say and hope
will be an act of worship to you and an expression of love to others,
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Presider: The Holy One be with you

All: **And also with you**

Presider: Open your hearts to the One who is Love

All: **We open our hearts to you, O God**

Presider: Let us give thanks to God, who gathers us together

All: **To the One who welcomes us to the table,
We give thanks and praise**

S Minister: God, your invitation to come and feast in your presence is but a taste of the love you extend to us every day. By your very nature, you are always seeking us out – searching for ways to connect us and connect with us. You meet us in the most ordinary of places and you make them sacred. By your grace, we come to recognize the holiness that dwells in the world around us, in our neighbors, in our own internal depths.

Presider: Therefore we join our voices with your people on earth and all the company of the heavens, singing praise to you,

All: **Holy, Holy, Holy One
God of justice and love
Heaven and earth are full of your wonder
Hosanna, among us**

Presider: Blessed are you and blessed is your eternal table. You welcome all who thirst for justice and hunger to grow in love. You ask us to extend this same welcome to all our neighbors, but God, since our beginning, we have struggled.

S Minister: And so in your love for us, you took on flesh in Jesus. Through his life, you pointed to your presence on the margins. You revealed the sacredness in all life. You showed us how to live together, even among forces of destruction.

Believing it could transform the world, Jesus proclaimed the Good News. He called for the captives to be set free. He spoke of the lowly being lifted up. He talked of redistributing wealth and eradicating the causes of poverty. His commitment to practicing love knew no bounds – not even the bounds of death.

Presider: On the night of his arrest, Jesus shared a meal with his companions. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said: “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying: “This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”

In remembrance of all you have done to save us, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**All: Christ was birthed among us.
Christ was killed among us.
Christ rises again among us.**

Presider: Pour out your Spirit on these gifts, O God. Make these ordinary elements into the Sacred gift of your presence with us once again. May they awaken us anew to your everlasting invitation into a life of resurrection. Enliven us in our pursuit of a world where all needs are met, power is balanced, and the worth of every creature and creation is celebrated.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRISIDER

Come, for all is now ready. If you wish to partake there are COVID related options printed in your bulletin. 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.

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

“OPEN TABLE”

MARK MILLER

SEE PAGE 9

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

PRESIDER

God, by the bread of heaven and the cup of life, you make us one body. Bind us together by your spirit that we might live into your hopes for us, a community centered in Christ and rich in compassion, commitment, courage, and care. May it be so.

***CLOSING SONG**

“AS A FIRE IS MEANT FOR BURNING”

RUTH DUCK

SEE PAGE 10

***BENEDICTION**

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

POSTLUDE

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The Open Table



1. Come, oh come, come to the ta - ble.
2. Cir - cle round, let's join to - geth - er.
3. God is love; Love is cre - at - ing



— Gath - er 'round, come with - out fear.
— Share your joys, and bring your tears.
— some - thing new, right here, right now.



— Known by name, here at the
— Strength and hope found at the
— We're chil - dren of God, here at the



ta - ble, this ta - ble; wel - come
ta - ble, this ta - ble;
ta - ble, this ta - ble;



here, to the ta - ble of love. love.

From: *Roll Down, Justice!* (CGBK72).

Text: Mark A. Miller.

Music: *The Open Table*, by Mark A. Miller.

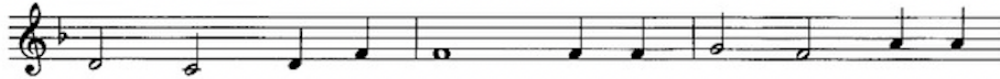
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643 As a Fire Is Meant for Burning



1. As a fire is meant for burn - ing With a
 2. We are learn - ers; we are teach - ers; We are
 3. As a green bud in the spring - time Is a



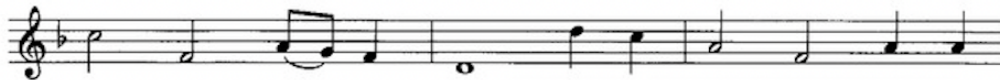
bright and warm - ing flame, So the church is meant for
 pil - grims on the way. We are seek - ers; we are
 sign of life re - newed, So may we be signs of



mis - sion, Giv - ing glo - ry to God's name.
 giv - ers; We are ves - sels made of clay.
 one - ness 'Mid earth's peo - ples, man - y hued.



Not to preach our creeds or cus - toms, But to
 By our gen - tle, lov - ing ac - tions, We would
 As a rain - bow lights the heav - ens When a



build a bridge of care, We join hands a - cross the
 show that Christ is light. In a hum - ble, lis - t'ning
 storm is past and gone, May our lives re - flect the



na - tions, Find - ing neigh - bors ev - 'ry - where.
 Spir - it, We would live to God's de - light.
 ra - diance Of God's new and glor - ious dawn.

Text: Ruth Duck, b.1947, © 1992, GIA Publications, Inc.
 Tune: BEACH SPRING, 8 7 8 7 D; *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; harm. by Marty Haugen, b.1950, © 1985, GIA Publications, Inc.

Cover Art: <https://www.watercache.com/blog/2017/03/new-beginnings>

Opening Song:

Call to Worship: Gail Song Bantum, "A Psalm of Possibility" in *A Rhythm of Prayer: A Collection of Meditations for Renewal*, ed. Sarah Bessey, First edition (New York: Convergent, 2021), 12–13.

Prayers of Confession: Colleen Hallagan Preuninger, "A Prayer for Agency and Power" in *Speaking Truth: Women Raising Their Voices in Prayer*, ed. J. Paige Boyer, et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020), 22.

Prayer of Assurance: Episcopal Church, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: And Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Good Books, 2016), 305.

Poem: public domain (accessed here: <https://poets.org/poem/seedling>)

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

Prayers of the Community: From the Baptist Union of Great Britain website. <http://www.baptist.org.uk/> Edits and additions by the LTS worship team

Communion Liturgy: from enfleshed <https://enfleshed.com/liturgy/communion-liturgies/>

Sending:

**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.