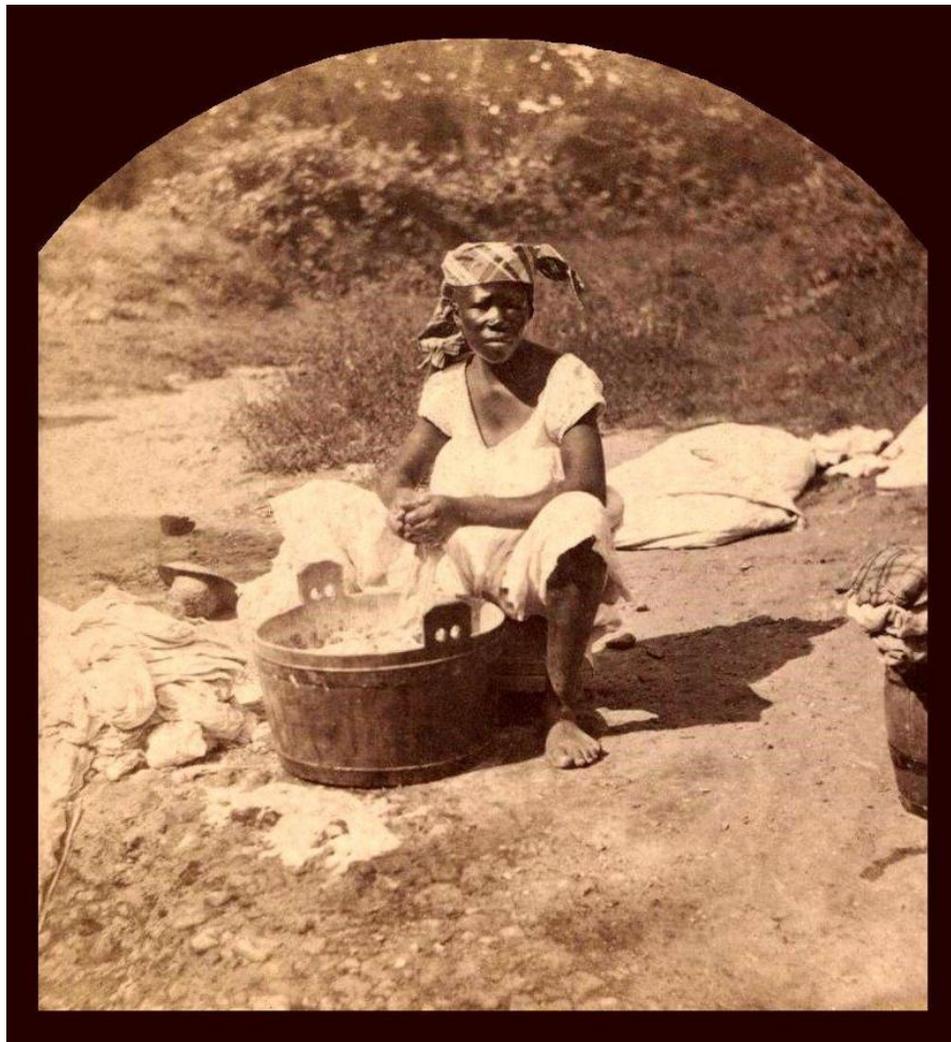


SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

March 22 and 25, 2023



*“One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a female slave who had a spirit of divination...” ~Acts 16: 16a (NRSV)*



“Our Washerwoman”

Circa 1860-1900

Okinawa Soba (Rob)

Okinawa Soba has collected a large number of photographs of slaves, children of slaves, and young black children in formerly slave-holding communities, from 1860-1900. About this one, he says, "This photograph taken in Louisiana appears to be an "unpublished" private view, with "Our Washerwoman" written on the back."

# Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

“I GIVE MYSELF AWAY”

HINN & McDOWELL

SOLO

GREETING

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

We don't see it, but its effect is clear;

**We don't hear it, but its message is never silent;**

We don't feel it, but its influence constantly moves us.

**Reaching through every system,**

Flowing through every interaction,

Silently moving the world

toward its God-designed purpose,

**More powerful than the strongest army,**

**yet infinitely gentle;**

More significant than the most influential government,

yet without coercion or manipulation.

**The kingdom of God is subversively at work, and it is here.**

**Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN**

“CHILD OF GOD”

MARK MILLER

**\*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

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

*S. Minister*

When we seek God's mercy, we draw close the mystery of faith:  
love that cannot be undone by our sin. Trusting that God is grace, let  
us offer to God the truth of our lives, first in silent prayer.

**\*SILENT PRAYER**

Holy Lord,

**God of life, hear our prayer:**

**Forgive us when we follow those paths that do not lead to life,**

**That lead instead to violence, or hate, or fear,**

**Paths that lead to dread and death.**

**Forgive us when we forget that you offer us life,**

**Life that is abundant and eternal,**

**Life that began at the creation of all things.**

**Forgive us, turn us to the right path,  
and let your love and grace flow over us and the world.  
We pray in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.**

*Presider*

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

**\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a non-contact way that's comfortable to you and your neighbor.

Marianne Williamson said, "Inner peace doesn't come from getting what we want, but from remembering who we are." Let us remember today. Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us share this peace with one another.

*Service of the Word*

**POEM [SAT. ONLY]**

**"FLEEING"**

**KARA JACKSON**

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Shine within our hearts, loving God, the pure light of your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our minds and hearts that we may understand and embrace the message of the Scripture. **Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**ACTS 16:16-19**

**NRSV**

**SERMON**

**DEAN VANESSA LOVELACE**

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

God, our world desperately needs your compassion and grace:

**We are at war and need to learn peace and understanding,**

**We are greedy and selfish and need to learn to serve and to share the**

**abundance of your world, We are impatient and careless and need to learn**

**to use this world's resources wisely and sustainably, We are callous and**

**judgemental and need to learn to care for and to befriend one another. And**

**we are among those who are sick, grieving, lonely, broken and wounded.**

Hear our prayers, Lord, and answer. Teach us to live as those who give and receive compassion, even as you have been compassionate toward us.

**Amen.**

## *Service of the Table*

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

### **\*THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

This is the open and inclusive table of God where everyone is invited to receive God's love for themselves, and to share God's love with one another.

Let us approach this table of friendship and blessing, grateful for Christ's promise to live within, and among all those who love others as themselves.

#### **We want to receive God's love. We want to share God's love.**

We are all invited to freely receive, and to generously share, God's love today. So as we prepare to take this bread and this cup, let us try to remain mindful of Christ's words,

"Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always 'me first,' doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end."

#### **We are ready to be filled with God's love. We are ready to be quenched by God's love.**

Today we remember that, in the midst of trial and tribulation, Jesus reassured his friends that, even though their pain would one day pass away, his spirit and friendship would remain with them forever.

Taking the bread and breaking it he said to them, "Take and eat. This bread is a symbol of my sacrifice and the lengths I will go to demonstrate my love for you. Each time you share it, remember me."

Lifting the cup, Jesus again looked tenderly upon his friends. Sensing their anxiety and fear, he tried to comfort them with a message of hope and a sign of love. He told them, "Take and drink."

This cup is a symbol of a renewed relationship with you; a relationship, not based in fear but forgiveness. Whenever you share it, remember me.”

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Open our minds and hearts to the mystery of Christ’s love, within these ordinary things, and within our ordinary lives. May they impart God’s love to us, so that we may share God’s love with others.

**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 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. 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.

**COMMUNION SONG**

**“CENTER OF MY JOY”**

**AAHH 491**

*Going Forth as the Body of Christ*

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**PRESIDER**

Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ, and nourished us at your table with this holy food and drink. Thank you for quieting our minds and strengthening our hearts today. Inspire us now to do your work in the world as open, inclusive, peaceful and loving people of faith. **Amen.**

**\*CLOSING SONG**

**“CHILD OF GOD” REPRISE**

**MARK MILLER**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**SENDING & POSTLUDE**

*May you feel freedom, Not trapped, not limited, But fully free.*

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Cover Art: "Our Washerwoman" collected by Okinawa Soba (Rob), from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54354>

**Centering Song:** "I Give Myself Away" by Sam Hinn | William McDowell © 2008 Delivery Room Publishing (Admin. by Fun Attic Music, LLC)  
CCLI License # 2676632

**Call to Worship:** "The Subversive Kingdom." Sacredise: <https://sacredise.com/the-subversive-kingdom/>

**Confession and Words of Assurance:** *Written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What Is Good'.*

<https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com>. Used with permission.

**Passing the Peace;** Adapted from Williamson, Marianne. *KeepInspiring.Me*. <https://www.keepinspiring.me/peace-quotes/>

**Prayer for Illumination:** [http://www.valleypresct.org/uploads/8/0/1/6/80162/prayers\\_for\\_illumination.pdf](http://www.valleypresct.org/uploads/8/0/1/6/80162/prayers_for_illumination.pdf)

**Prayers of the Community:** From "A Liturgy of Compassion." Sacredise.

<https://sacredise.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-Liturgy-Of-Compassion.pdf>

**Poem:** Jackson, Kara. "fleeting." Poets.org. 2020. <https://poets.org/poem/fleeing>

**Communion Liturgy:** Adapted from "Service of Holy Communion." Southminster United Church.

<http://southminsterunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Responsive-Communion-Liturgy-LOVE-2016.pdf>

*\*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.*