

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

March 20 and 23, 2024



She said to her husband, "Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God."

2 Kings 4:9



"Enough silencing her. If you'd only listen to her, you'd learn she contains multitudes."

—Lauren Wright Pittman, Artist

Gathering as the Body of Christ.

CENTERING SONG

“LIVE IN CHARITY”

URW #394

GREETING

PRESIDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP

STUDENT MINISTER

Blessed be the Non-Conforming One.

God, who took on flesh

Of the poor

Of an immigrant

As an infant

Was birthed by a woman with no help of a man.

This Holy One won't be hindered by social norms.

She defies our expectations.

She challenges our preconceptions.

She awakens us to new possibilities.

Praise be to God, the queerest of us all. Let us worship God.

*OPENING HYMN “COME, LET US JOIN WITH FAITHFUL SOULS”(vs.1-3)

NCH 383

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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

Mother God, we seek to be your children seeking justice and peace for all of your creation. To see that all may flourish. Yet, we fall short. We forget about the sacredness of all people, all creatures, and all of creation. We stay silent when your people are exploited, neglected, and left nameless. We seek your forgiveness for all these things and the things we hold unspoken.

Rejoice. The same God who took on flesh in Galilee, brought healing and hope to those that were sick, suffering, and oppressed, is here with us offering us healing and hope. God's work in her people is not over.

May we join together seeking her peace, hope and justice.

*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

READING

“PARADISE”

TONI MORRISON

Love is not earned or deserved; and only through practice will you learn to express it.

Love is divine only and difficult always.
If you think it is easy you are a fool.
If you think it is natural you are blind.
It is a learned application
without reason or motive
except that it is God.
You do not deserve love
regardless of the suffering
you have endured.
You do not deserve love
because somebody did you wrong.
You do not deserve love
just because you want it.
You can only earn — by practice
and careful contemplations —
the right to express it
and you have to learn how to accept it.
Which is to say
you have to earn God.
You have to practice God.
You have to think God-carefully.
And if you are a good and diligent student
you may secure the right to show love.
Love is not a gift.
It is a diploma.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Mothering God, may your nurturing spirit guide us through your word and your ways, bringing us your wisdom for the world.

SCRIPTURE READING**2 KINGS 4: 8-17****NRSVUE**

A reading from the Book of 2nd Kings, chapter 4, verses 8 through 17.

One day Elisha was passing through Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to have a meal. So whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for a meal. She said to her husband, “Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God. Let us make a small roof chamber with walls and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he can stay there whenever he comes to us.” One day when he came there, he went up to the chamber and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, “Call the Shunammite woman.”

When he had called her, she stood before him. He said to him, “Say to her: Since you have taken all this trouble for us, what may be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?” She answered, “I live among my own people.” He said, “What then may be done for her?” Gehazi answered, “Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.” He said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood at the door. He said, “At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son.” She replied, “No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant.” The woman conceived and bore a son at that season, in due time, as Elisha had declared to her.

Holy wisdom, holy Word. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON**REV. DR. DEBORAH APPLER (MAR. 20)****REV. DR. CARRIE CALL (MAR. 23)****PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY****STUDENT MINISTER**

God our Creator, you made us in your image

And you call us from wherever we are in time and place to be your disciples.

Through your Holy Spirit, we are empowered to bring the Gospel to all your people by your grace, you listen to our prayers.

God of Generations, we celebrate the lives of the women who fought the good fight and stood up for the Gospel and the truth of Scripture, yesterday and today. Strengthen our voice of proclamation. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Greatest Friend, surround us with your love and affirmation through the kindness of others, be they friend or stranger, young or old. Give us eyes to see the love you lavish on all your people. Make us bold to speak your truth and act on behalf of your kingdom with courage and strength of purpose. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of Understanding, give us courage to stand up for the abused, the needy, the sick, the poor and the stranger. We pray for those who suffer in mind, body or spirit, that you might bring healing and comfort. Inspire us to be your hands to provide for those in need as we are able. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

O God, our Help through the Ages, we thank you for the gifts of wisdom and insight brought to us through the lives of your saints. Inspire us by their witness as we continue their legacy of faith. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Holy God of the Universe, throughout history you have given us the courage to form and re-form your church against all odds and into pathways as yet unknown. By your Spirit and in unexpected ways, you have brought us to this place in the circle of your love. Guide our ways that we may grow in faith and hope.

Make us your bold and faithful servants, this day and forevermore.

Amen.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

“I HEARD MY MOTHER SAY”

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

God of our grandmothers and mothers—

Of Eve and Sarah and Hagar, Miriam and Hanna, Shiphrah and Puah,
Judith and the Syrophenician woman, Mary and Martha, Mary of
Magdala, Mother Mary, and the many women left nameless.

We come to your open and expanding table to remember your sacrifice.

You call us to cry out and lament

but also to sing and dance with joy

to serve You and to be served.

**Jesus, we come to this table
broken and beautiful
just as we are—
young and older.
We come to drink from the cup of blessing
to eat from the bread of life.**

We remember on the night when Jesus and the disciples had their last meal together, Jesus broke the bread, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples, saying “This is my body, which is broken for you. Take and eat it, and as often as you do, remember me.”

When we eat this bread, we join Christ in a life transformed by the invitation to be guided by his love.

In the same way he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to the disciples, saying: “Drink this, all of you. This cup is the new covenant, poured out for you and for many. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

In the symbol of the cup, we join in God’s dream of love and transformation.

Spirit of the living God bless this bread so that it may nourish us to be your hands and feet. Bless this cup that it may fill us with your compassion, as we live between memory and hope for your kin-dom to come on earth as it is in heaven. **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

“AS WE GATHER AT YOUR TABLE”

NCH 332

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

PRESIDER

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. **Now send us forth to be your people in the world seeking your justice, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore. Amen.**

***CLOSING SONG**

“GUIDE MY FEET”

UMH 131

***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: Pittman, Lauren Wright. "Enough," from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56555>. Original source: Lauren Wright Pittman, <http://www.lewpstudio.com><http://www.lewpstudio.com/>.

Call to Worship: <https://enfleshed.com/liturgy/calls-to-worship/>

Reading: Morrison, Toni. Excerpt from *Paradise*. New York, NY: Knopf, 1998.

<https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog/2020/2/10/toni-morrison-on-love>

Prayers of the Community and Prayer after communion: Adapted from

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2019Liturgy.pdf>

Communion Liturgy: Adapted from

https://www.globalministries.org/communion_liturgy_for_international_association_of_women_ministers_matanzas_seminary_cuba/ and <https://processandfaith.org/a-communion-service-of-lgbtq-solidarity/>

**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, Stephanie Olerich, Cam Richesson '23, 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.