

A FOOD AND HOSPITALITY LITURGY

Assembly Mennonite Church

September 3, 2023

Words in **bold italic** are said or sung together.

THE WELCOME

[VT 122 - Sing to the God of Harvest](#)

Welcome

Luke 14:16-17

Jesus said: "A landowner was giving a big dinner and sent out many invitations. At dinner time, he sent his servant with a message for the guests: 'Please come; everything is now ready.'"

(sung to *O Waly Waly*)

***Be present at our table, Lord.
Be here and ev'rywhere adored.
These mercies bless and grant that we
may feast in paradise with thee.***

Sharing from Feasting with God elective

God welcomes us, and so we greet one another.

(At individual tables)

[Name], we welcome you to this table in the name of Christ.

Response: Amen. It's good to be here.

We remember those present in our hearts
though not in this circle.

(names may be mentioned aloud)

***Whatever table welcomes them today,
may they know the blessing of Christ
who broke bread with all comers.***

CONFESSION

Let us confess the excuses we have made
for not living in the reality
of the kin-dom of God.

***Generous God, Jesus of love and leftovers,
we struggle with what to share and how much is enough. Sometimes we are the
disciples,
quietly suggesting that you send the needy crowds away. Sometimes we are the
crowds,
bringing only our desire to be closer to you.
When we have little or too much,
embolden us to share it.
When we have nothing,
welcome us to stay and eat.***

***In giving and receiving,
help us to participate in the miracle of enough.***

[VT 487 - Gracias, Señor](#)

Words of Assurance

Offering

[VT 757 - There's Enough for All](#)

THE GIFT OF BREAD

Luke 24:30-35

And when he had sat down with them at table, he took bread and said the blessing; he broke the bread, and offered it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Without a moment's delay, they set out and returned to Jerusalem. There they found that the Eleven and the rest of the company had assembled, and they were saying, "It's true: the Lord has risen."

***Then they gave their account
of the events of their journey
and told how he had been recognized by them
at the breaking of the bread.***

Sharing from Sacramental Eating elective

Be grateful when you eat bread.
***Let it not lie uncared for, unwanted.
There is so much beauty in bread—
beauty of sun and soil,
beauty of patient toil.
Winds and rain have caressed it.
Christ often blessed it.
Be grateful when you eat bread.***

Bread is passed around, saying: [Name], eat and be blessed.

We eat bread together.

THE GIFT OF WATER

Luke 3:21-22

During a general baptism of the people, when Jesus too had been baptized and was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove.

***A voice from heaven said,
"You are my Own, my Beloved.
On you my favor rests."***

[VT 49 All Who Are Thirsty](#)

Sharing from Tea Drinking Elective

Be grateful when you drink water.
Let it not go unnoticed or squandered.
There is so much life in water—
springing, gushing, flowing,
living, cleansing, healing.
God gave it.
The Spirit hovered over it.
Christ transformed it.
Be grateful when you drink water.

Water is poured, saying: **[Name], you are beloved by God.**

We drink water together.

[VT 441 - Crashing Waters at Creation](#)

THE PROMISE OF TRANSFORMATION

Luke 13:18-21

“What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it with? It is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew to be a tree and the birds came to roost in its branches.”

Again he said, “The kingdom of God,
what shall I compare it with?
It is like yeast which a woman took
and mixed into sixty pounds of flour
until it was all leavened.”

Sharing from The Kingdom of God Makes Room for All elective

In the grinding of the mustard we are reminded that we need transformation. That God is turning us into a new thing. But we can not do this alone. A single crushed mustard seed doesn't amount to anything. But when we are ground together millions of mustard seeds transformed, we become something zingy, and delicious that brings spice to the life of the world. Thank you, Lord, for this meal.

But we cannot live by bread alone.
We have shared it together
because we need each other.

The mustard is served, saying:

[Name], we need you.

Reply: And I need you.

[VT 298 - What is the World Like](#)

INTERCESSION

Generous God, as we bring our prayers,
we thank you that we can share in your kin-dom
of justice and peace.

We come in our poverty, not in our wealth,
in our fear, not with great faith,
in our weakness, not in our strength.

***We trust that you want your house to be full,
so we are bold to bring to you
those who, like us,
need your love and transformation.***

(Candles may be lit as we name people or situations aloud or silently)

Sharing and Pastoral Prayer

Through Jesus, who taught us to do so,
we pray for the coming of your reign:

[VT 673 - Our God in Heaven](#)

PRAYER FOR A NEW EARTH

Isaiah 55:1

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

Sharing from Green Team elective

God our Mother and Sustainer, you have created all that has been, is, and will be. Morning by morning you make all things new.

May we who are made in your image join in your work of making all things new, and may your groaning creation rally and thrive, revealing to all who come after us your wise, restorative, transforming love. (The congregation drinks)

God of all places and this place:

you promised a new earth
where the hungry will feast and the oppressed go free.

Come, Sovereign God, build that place among us.

God of all times and this time:

you promised a new day
when the fearful will laugh and the sick find healing.

Come, Sovereign God, speed that time among us.

God of all people, our God:

take what we have and what we hope for
to make this a world where all people find good news.

***We come, Lord,
to share in the work of your kin-dom,
until the new earth is created among us. Amen.***

[VT 788 - The Garden Needs Our Tending Now](#)

THE BLESSING

Luke 24:50-52

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and blessed them with uplifted hands. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and spent all their time in the temple praising God.

[sung to Old Hundredth (Doxology)]

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
in heav'n above and earth below;
one God three persons we adore.
To God be praise forever more.***

Chocolate is bitter and sweet; just like this life. May the bittersweet Christ dance with you through all life's circumstances.

As we eat this rich chocolate, may we remember the feast that God invites us to. May we work to make that feast a reality, a wide table overflowing with good food and enough that all are fed.

Announcements and Meal Logistics

Benediction and Prayer for meal

Thanks to: Meal Hosts: Stephen Lowe & Meribeth Shank; Song Leader: Ana Yoder Coulter; Musicians: Jim Stump; Pastoral prayer: Scott Coulter; Tech Crew: Glenn Gilbert, Merle Baker; Original Liturgists: Oxford Group-2000, Adpt. Rachel Miller Jacobs-2017, Adpt. Anna Yoder Schlabach, Becky Snider, Stephen Lowe-2023