

In Communion

A Eucharist Liturgy For Contemporary Communities

Celebrant: The veil has been lifted. The Light of Life has revealed Himself.
Community: *With this bread, and with this cup, we remember.*

Celebrant: The curtain has been torn. The Hope of Nations has made Himself present to humankind.
Community: *With this bread, and with this cup, we remember.*

Celebrant: The power of death has been defeated. The Son of Righteousness now rises upon us.
Community: *With this bread, and with this cup, we remember.*

Celebrant: From Luke 22, hear the Word of the Lord: "When it was time, Jesus sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, 'You've no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It's the last one I'll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God.'

Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, 'Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I'll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives.' Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory.' He did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant written in my blood – blood poured out for you.'"

In His willingness to give His body to conquer our death, and to give His blood to silence sin's accusing voice in our lives, Jesus showed us that God is present to restore. In this, take great confidence.

Community: *In the Passover meal, Jesus gave us His promise - that we will eat and drink with Him in celebration on that final Day when the promised New Creation has come in all its fullness. For now, we live in this mystery - that the Kingdom of God is among us, and the Kingdom of God is yet to come.*

In this moment of remembrance, we reach out to the God who reveals Himself, and respond again to His welcome into this covenant of everlasting love and communion. In Christ's gift of selfless love and sacrifice, we take great confidence.

Celebrant: Let's bow our heads, quiet our souls, and hear the words of this prayer.

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Lord of this Communion Table, we are not our own. We have been bought with a price. Should we fail to recognize how costly a grace this is that we so lavishly experience, we ask, Spirit of God, that even now You would reveal this transforming gift once again to each one of us.

Receive our deepest cares, concerns, fears and worries, into Your capable arms. As we take this bread, and drink this cup, we welcome Your resurrection life to lift us from graves of the mind, tombs of the will, and corrupting prisons of the body. May the cords of our own making that bind us to death, that keep us chained to both luxury and laziness, fall from our spirits – just as death fell from your strong shoulders when you rose again.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Community: *Christ hear our prayer.*

Celebrant (with full voice): By the wounds and the blood of the Lamb, we are healed.

Community (with full voice): *By the cross of Christ, we triumph over death.*

Celebrant: Through the resurrection of Jesus, we are each born again to transformed life.

Community: *In the rising of Christ, death has lost it's final say in our lives.*

Celebrant: Let's prepare our hearts to receive the bread and the cup by praying these words in one accord.

ALL: You, O Lord, are the God who enters into our world, and participates in our suffering. You are the God who elevates the low, humbles the proud, and gives grace to those who honor Your Name.

As we approach this Table of Thanks, this Eucharist meal, we worship You as the God who was made man and faced our great enemies, fear and death, with victorious triumph.

You are the God who listens not primarily to our words, but to our prayers; not primarily to our melodies, but rather to the true strains of worship that rise from within each of us.

As we remember what you have accomplished through the bread and cup at this Table of Grace, draw near to us, Lord, as we draw near to you.

We worship you, Lord Christ, revelling in your resurrection, hoping in the life that is to come, and acting with You as bearers of Your New Creation in this world that You so love. Amen.

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Guide To Using This Reading

The Eucharist, or Communion, has been the primary of act worship in the Christian church for thousands of years. It is only since the Reformation that it's importance has diminished in many contemporary churches, and our current recovery of this vital symbolic action

ties us to the Kingdom narrative,
reminds every Christian of the grace in which we live, and
tethers us to the timeless Church triumphant through Christ's death and resurrection.

This communion reading and liturgy is designed particularly for contemporary churches, and uses *The Message* paraphrase of Luke 22: 14-20. It incorporates portions of other biblical passages in its words and phrasing, is seasoned with some Celtic approaches to the language of communion, and resonates with Orthodox and early church theological views on the centrality of resurrection in the act of communion.

The contemporary phrasing is intentional, and can be modified for ease of use by your community.

Thoughts On Communion
Excerpted from the eBook *Bearers Of Memory: Historic Reflections On Worship*
By Dan Wilt, M.Min.

Mother Theresa once said, "When you learn to meet God in the bread and the cup, you can learn to see God in the poor." In other words, she was suggesting that it is our capacity to imagine in worship that can lead to our capacity to imagine in social action. Embodied in her simple life in our generation, Mother Theresa drew the link between the symbolic acts of worship that occur within the Church proper, and the acts of social transformation that stem from their flourishing in the human soul.

The Language Of Eucharist
Celebrating the Eucharist (or communion) is the daily, weekly and seasonal reenacting of the themes of the Passover meal – namely that the God at the center of the universe became flesh and blood, and offered Himself to defeat death, disarm sin, resurrect the lifeless and restore the cosmos to its original purpose.

For the Church worshipping throughout history, it is no overstatement to say that the celebration of the Eucharist has been the primary and central act of Christian worship for almost 2000 years. All other worship actions have pointed to it, and the act of communion has sacramentally welded the Church together throughout intense seasons of forgetfulness of our purpose and mission in the world.

In addition to these ideas, Eucharist is perhaps the most participatory act of worship we see throughout Church history. The engagement of human beings around a table, eating bread, drinking juice, smelling, hearing, touching, tasting and reflecting the Story of Christ's life, death and resurrection is a powerful theme throughout worship history.

We have perhaps some of the most vibrant language related to worship in the New Testament surrounding what we call

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the Lord's Supper. For Christians throughout time, the New Testament themes of the Lord's Supper still resonate among us.

The Eucharist, or Communion:

Commemorates that God has acted as Savior to penetrate of all of human history, from creation, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, through our present, and to the final consummation (Acts 2:46-47)

Reminds us that we are part of the communion of saints in the family of God (1 Cor. 10:16)

Persuades us that a sacrifice has occurred to right the world (John 1:29)

Speaks of the presence of Christ among us (John 6:51-58)

Welcomes us to experience the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13)

Looks forward to the eschaton (1 Cor. 11:26)

Communion looks backward to the historic acts of Christ 'moving among us,' of Christ dying on the cross, and of Christ rising from the dead. Communion also looks forward to the physical resurrection of the body, the New Creation that is to come, and the consummation of all worship in the marriage supper of the Lamb in the Eden of God.

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