

Celebration of the Bread of Life and the Cup of Blessing

Introduction

Many names and images are used in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to describe 'God'. We gather today to worship and celebrate That which is beyond any of those names and images; That which is always More Than we can think or put into words or experience, yet that same 'God' is present here, about us and within us. Let us be aware that we gather on Sacred Ground.

A time of silence for personal reflection and for centring within that which we call 'God'.

Let us now, without pretence or barriers, approach the Timeless Mystery, made known to Christians in Jesus of Nazareth, our Gateway into the Divine. In the presence of the Sacred, let us be still and at peace with ourselves, with one another and with that which we call 'God'. [*Silence*]

And so, in thankfulness, let us commit ourselves once again to the new ways of life shown to us by Jesus. May the Wisdom that is 'God' teach us afresh that sacrificial love is an encounter with all that is Sacred: that it is giving of ourselves in service to our families, friends and neighbours that we are transformed so that we may become more like Jesus. Amen.

There will be further times of silence after each bidding.

And now we gather around this table of remembrance celebrating the presence of the Continuous Creator of all that is within and beyond each one of us. [*Silence*].

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We are here in the presence of the Sacred Spirit of Acceptance and Understanding, calling and rejoicing in each one of us just as we are. [*Silence*].

In that same Sacred Spirit of Loving Acceptance and Unconditional Forgiveness we share God's peace and our peace together.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you...
... And also with you. [*We share the peace*]

Thanksgiving

Let us accept the invitation of the Indwelling Spirit to come to this Table of Remembrance and Celebration with thanksgiving in our hearts. United in the Spirit of Peace and Reconciliation we celebrate the presence of the same Sacred Spirit that engulfed Jesus.

Let us be thankful that we are not 'just human' but are gloriously made in the image of the Sacred! We are wonderful Creations of the always "More Than God" encouraging us to be even more Sacred in our lives.

Let us rejoice because we are part of the Creation that is filled, as Temples are filled, with the presence of the Sacred Spirit!

Let ours be shouts of Holy exclamation - "we are gloriously human - filled with the Sacred Spirit that we may live as Jesus lived!" Let us fling wide our arms; let us smile the biggest smile; let us leap as high as we can; let our shout be the loudest shout of praise we can offer because we are filled with the same Sacred Spirit that was in Jesus!

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Of course we fail to live up to the Sacred call upon and within our lives but with Jesus as our model and the encouraging of the Sacred Spirit within there are no limits to what we are capable of becoming as Spirit filled human beings! Even Jesus said that we are capable of doing all that he was doing - and even more!

Let us recall times from our past and give thanks for the friendship and support of the Divine Spirit within us and within others as we have journeyed upon our pilgrimage of faith, encouraging us to become the people that we are now.

Let us not be afraid of the future but, instead, be aware of the presence of the Indwelling Spirit inviting us to be at ease about what is come as we joyfully step into the unknown.

And so, as we share this bread and wine together we symbolise our unity in Jesus the Special One. At this sacred moment we re-enact the events on the night before Jesus died, when, sitting with his friends at the table, he took the bread, gave thanks, blessed it and broke it. Jesus then shared it with them.

By sharing this bread and wine with one another, we remember Jesus and what he was, and what he is, and what he always will be, our Gateway into the awareness of the Divine Presence.

We now do as Jesus did: we break the Bread of Life for one another as the symbol of his broken body.

***When ready, break the bread and offer to a neighbour:
“The Bread of Life”***

We now do as Jesus did: we take the cup of wine and share it with one another as the symbol of the blessing of his life given freely away.

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*When ready, collect a cup and offer to a neighbour:
“The Cup of Blessing”*

Let us say together: **Indwelling Spirit, we have shared bread and wine, the symbols of sacrifice, service and unity. Encourage us in our work together, that we may grow in love as we serve one another and members of PCN-Britain. Amen**

The Lord’s Prayer [version by Sam Alexander]
**Those things that are good and right and true:
I acknowledge them with honour and love;
These things are come,
These things are done,
This Earth is a living Heaven.
I am provided for with abundance,
I am wealthy and free,
Generous and forgiving.
My thoughts are wholesome and uplifting,
As are my deeds and the world around me:
For that way lies happiness,
And power, and glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.**

We bless one another:

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord look on you with kindness and give you peace. Amen.

**Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Service prepared by John Churcher, based on various sources, including the Methodist Worship Book; the writings of Bishop John Shelby Spong and Marcus Borg et al.