

NHCUCC 2018 ANNUAL MEETING LITURGY for LOCAL CHURCHES

"This Is the Day of the Poured Out Spirit. Dreamers and Visionaries Arise."

GATHERING IN

Prelude	"Come Christians Join to Sing"	arr. Don Wyrzten
Introit	"Gathered Here" (choir)	Phil Porter

Call to Worship

One: The souls of our elders are churning with dreams,

All: *We stop and listen!*

One: The eyes of our young are seeing visions like never before.

All: *We stop and listen!*

One: Fear and trembling invade our souls as we cling to the monuments of the past.

All: *We stop and listen!*

One: Yet, the Spirit still pours, moves, and works among us.

All: *We stop and listen!*

One: May we dream with our elders and see the visions of our young.

All: *Spirit of the living God fall fresh on us.*

Prayer of Invocation

One: Please pray with me.

All: *We come to worship with a spirit of gratitude. Grateful for your still-moving, still-speaking, and still-working Spirit. Even in times when we chose to ignore your nudge, you remained faithful to us. Gather us in to embrace the growing edge of our faith with open hearts and open minds. Let us dream your dream and see the visions you have for us and our world with courage and hope. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen*

Hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" New Century Hymnal (NCH) #439
(Pilgrim Hymnal #363)

Call to Confession

Children of God – young and old and in-between - we gather from near and far to discern God's word and to do God's work. We arrive breathless with worry, bearing sorrow and joy. Let us lift up in prayer that which separates us from one another, confessing how we have turned from God.

Prayer of Confession

(note – may use different voices for Leader: 1-4 from four corners of sanctuary, A from the center)

All: ***Oh God, who is ever creating, ever speaking, ever breathing, we seek You - Your mercy, Your love, Your forgiveness.***

Leader (1): Instead of resting in Your presence, we fear dying and we fear living; we cling to the past.

All: ***Forgive us, we pray.***

Leader (2): We build walls, close doors, and shutter the windows of our homes, our communities, and our hearts, so as to shut out others and close out Your Spirit.

All: ***Forgive us, we pray.***

Leader (3): We are intoxicated with power and possessions, fearful to share and to withdraw from our addictions to control and comfort.

All: ***Forgive us, we pray.***

Leader (4): We withhold mercy from those we deem unworthy. We hide and hoard what has been given to share, perpetuating injustice.

All: ***Forgive us, we pray.***

Leader (A): We keep lights burning, afraid to dream Your dreams. We choose the words of pundits and jesters over the words of Your prophets.

All: ***Forgive us, we pray.
We open ourselves to You, trusting in Your mercy and steadfast lovingkindness. Breathe into us Your Spirit to live Your will. Amen.***

Assurance of Pardon and Grace

Beloved of God, hear the good news! God who is love knows us, hears us, and forgives us. God who is love breathes new life into us and shows us God's ways of mercy and life. Praise be to God!

Sung Response "World Peace Prayer" *Refrain only* NCH #581

Anthem "Sisi Ni Moja (We Are One)" Jacob Narverud

Scripture Joel 2: 28 (Acts 2:16-21, Hebrews 3:1a are related passages)
Jeremiah 29: 4-6

Sermon (or reflections of Delegates & Pastor) "I Will Pour Out My Spirit On All Flesh"

Hymn "Standing at the Future's Threshold" NCH #538
(option to sing to tune of "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee")

Pastoral Prayer

OFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE

The Call to Give

The Holy Spirit comes to us bearing the breath of the Creator. As we breathe in, we remember Christ's ministry of blessing, and feel a quickening within. We see and yearn to connect our whole selves with the wholeness of all others. Grace lifts and envelops us. We breathe out, alive in this grace. We begin to dream, trusting you to bless the fruit. Suddenly we know, deep within, that compassion is possible in the midst of suffering; hope in the midst of despair, and release in the face of bondage. We stretch our wings wide and with an ardent whoop that splits the air, we cry, "Here am I, Holy Spirit. Use our laid down lives as gifts, for now we are assured that through the Mission, and Ministry of our Church, we can become the new life the Body needs."

The Gathering of the Offerings

Offertory Anthem

"Grace"

Mark Hayes

Response

"For the Fruit of All Creation"

NCH #425

Prayer of Dedication

(note – may use different voices for Leader – A from center, 1-4 from four corners of sanctuary)

Leader (A): Please pray with me.

Leader (1): Gracious Spirit of Life, you come always bearing the signs of new life.

Leader (2): Water-logged and sick of grey – Noah and his kin rejoiced as you appeared, bearing life, twiggy and green.

All: ***In the dazzling company of seraphim and cherubim, you scorched Isaiah's lips in order that truth be uttered.***

Leader (3): You blessed water that baptized eunuch and Savior alike.

Leader (4): You anointed kings and called from the crossroads, "Simple ones, turn in here."

Leader (A): You joined the Creator as a master worker when the foundations of the earth were set. You clap your hands, even now as galaxies are being birthed.

All: *We humbly ask that you bless these gifts we offer. Receive them as symbols of our desire for the common good; as contributions toward renewing the body; as our pledge to live as wise persons, abiding in the gentle peace that is first, last and always the best fruit of the Life you desire for us all. In Christ's name, Amen.*

HYMN

"As We Gather At Your Table"

NCH #332

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Friends, the invitation to this table comes not from any leader of our Conference or of our Church, it comes from Jesus Christ, who presides as its head and welcomes all who wish to receive from its abundance.

So come, whether you've got much faith or little; whether you've been here often, or not for a long time; you who have tried to follow, and you who have failed.

Come, not because we invite you, but rather because Jesus the Christ does. It is his will that those who long for him should meet him here. Let us gather round.

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving/Communion Prayer

One: Beloved of God, lift up your hearts.

All: *We lift our hearts to the One who raises us up and calls us forward.*

One: Let us give thanks to God our Savior.

All: *It is right to be thankful and praise you, God Most High!*

One: In the beginning, your Spirit moved across formless void

All: *and you created a world of beauty out of nothing.*

One: You spoke a word and life burst forth in myriad forms.

All: *And you breathed your breath into our human forms,
an indelible connection: our very breath is your own.*

One: You called your creation very good,
and tried to establish a close relationship with us.

All: *But despite your efforts—through prophets, priests, and royalty—
we still turned away, choosing our own path;*

One: a path leading to estrangement, shackles, and fear
instead of your path of life, liberation, and love.

One: In the fullness of time, your Spirit visited your servant Mary,
and from her body was born your own Son:

All: *Your Spirit given flesh in the body of Jesus Christ.*

One: He showed us who you are, how you love, how to live
without fear, fully inhabited by your poured-out Spirit.

One: He brought compassion and healing to the suffering;

All: *prophesied hope in the midst of despair;*

One: offered keys of release to those in bondage;

**All: *the Word of Life incarnate moved amidst the chaos in his world
breathing shalom—peace, wholeness, reconciliation—
restoring beauty, life, faith, relationship.***

One: For his selflessness, he suffered;

All: *for being faithful above all else and all others, he was crucified:*

One: his Spirit poured out as his body was broken and his blood spilled.

**All: *He offered his last breath back to the One whose breath is our own,
and to all the world was dead.***

One: But death cannot prevail against the power of God's poured-out Spirit.

**All: *On the third day, Love burst forth from that tomb and bathed the world
with resurrection life, forever reconciling the broken relationship
between God and humankind.***

One: And so we gather round this sacred table to remember how in bread broken and
shared, we share in the broken body of God's own Son; how, in wine decanted
and distributed, we share in the spilled blood of our Savior.

Words of Institution

We remember that our brother and teacher Jesus, on the night he was betrayed,
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: "This is my body which
is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: "This cup is the new
covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Prayer of Consecration:

May the Spirit who poured itself out across the formless void,
and who still moves amidst the chaos of this world,
descend upon these gifts of bread and wine
that they may be for us the fruits of his Passion,
his body and his blood, given for the life of the world.

May your power be made perfect in our weakness;
may your purpose be accomplished through us,
until the pain and hurt of all creation
finds healing through the wounded Christ,
in whose name we pray
and whose own words we now unite to say:

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven. . . .

Call to the Supper

The gifts of God. For the people of God. Come, and receive for all things are ready.

Sharing of the Elements

Anthem

"Canon of Praise"

Hal H. Hopson

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: Thank you, generous God, that at this table we have received the gifts of your presence, your healing, your power: your Poured-out Spirit. Bless us in our acceptance of these gifts, that what we have taken in we will faithfully pour out in order to accomplish your ongoing work of salvation, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn

"O for a World"

NCH #575

Benediction

Postlude

Medley: "Ode of Joy / Ein feste Burg"

Arr. Victor Labenske

Written by the Annual Meeting Worship Planning Committee: Rev. Gail Doktor, Rev. Eric Jackson, Rev. Deborah Knowlton, Rev. Tanya Stormo Rasmussen, Laura Sevigny, Rev. Richard Slater, Kimberly Vars Whitehead, and Rev. Dr. Lynn Wickberg. Copyright 2018, New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ, 140 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke, NH 03275. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.