



Of Water and Spirit:
Disciples in
Community of Christ

Sharing Services

Reunion/Family Camps 2016



Community of Christ

Sharing Services

Reunions and Family Camps 2016



Recommendations to Leaders:

- These services focus on spiritual practices to prompt reflection and sharing. As you lead the practices, remember form is not as important as where the practice may lead. Invite people to release ideas about “right ways” of engaging, and to relax into what the Spirit may do within them during the practice.
- Time management: Leading people in open sharing requires sensitivity to the Spirit and to the natural progress of the worship service. Invite responders to be brief, giving one another plenty of space to share many voices and stories.
- When you include scripture meditations, make the text available on a handout or PowerPoint so participants can refer to the text when they share.
- Worship center suggestion: Keep services and worship centers simple, allowing participants to focus on a couple of key features: 1) the practice itself, and 2) what the practice stirs within the participant as a foundation for sharing.

Place a large candle in the center of a worship setting that will be visible throughout the service. Light it each day during the time for “Centering in God’s Presence.” Other small features may be added, but the large candle in a glass vase or candleholder sitting atop a cloth is recommended as the main feature.

During spiritual practices, we often have multiple thoughts in our minds and hearts. The simplicity of the service and the worship center is another way to help us center, focus, and be more fully attentive to the Spirit and one another.

Notes:

- Biblical scripture references are NRSV.
- CCS is the *Community of Christ Sings* hymnal.

We Believe

Prelude Music

As participants enter, give them each pen and paper.

Centering Song: "Spirit of the Living God" CCS 567

Lead the congregation *a cappella* (without accompaniment), singing the hymn two or three times.

Centering in God's Presence: Light the large candle in the middle of the simple worship setting.

We light this candle as a symbol of God's illuminating presence. We pause to remember how everything we do and say in these moments is happening in the context of God's presence in and with us. As we prepare to enter a time of sharing, we remember how holy listening with one another is itself a spiritual practice, a healing act, and draws us together in oneness and peace.

Reading:

*To believe is a whole-heart thing.
It is a "this is worth my life" thing.
It is a rooted substance in the soul,
with permeable boundaries,
hospitable to questions,
and the deepening they bring.*

*To believe is to find a surprising strength,
commitment to what matters most,
even when it collides
with what you most fear.
It is the urge of integrity
when injustice looms.*

*To believe is to set my heart on,
to direct my life toward;
it is the anchor I cast
when seas of uncertainty
swell wild in the soul.*

*To believe is to un-know.
It is to not make an idol*

*as substitution for what is real.
It is more than a string of words,
more than any ritual
that claims to contain it.*

*It is the deepest down thing
that maybe you don't yet
know how to say.*

*It is to grow in attention
to the holy refusing stagnation,
to the unexplainable love-presence,
embracing unseen.
It is to follow wherever
the Living God leads.*

*To believe is a whole-heart thing.
It is a "this is worth my life" thing.
It is the most compelling thing
that invites me to live
beyond my fear.*

Response: "Spirit of the Living God" CCS 567

Sing once more as a response.

Opening Prayer

Scripture Meditation:

- As everyone entered, they were given pen and paper. You may encourage participants to bring a journal and pen each day.
- Recommendation: During journaling time, ask a musician to play meditative music.

Leading the Practice:

Preparing to share in community, we open our hearts and minds to hear these words from scripture. When introducing

the practice, recognize that we all connect with God in different ways. It's OK if some part of this practice feels uncomfortable at first. Allow God to speak to you through whatever you feel—whether peace, insight, or struggle.

Let the congregation know this practice will involve writing in response to two prompts, which will be shared later in the service. Invite the congregation to breathe deeply and become aware of the presence of God. Encourage participants to enter the text and be freely immersed in its living invitation for their lives today. Read the whole scripture passage once, followed with a few minutes of silence.

When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9b

[After a few minutes of silence, read the first line again.]

When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be.

Using your paper and pen, take a few minutes to write a response to this prompt:

When my willingness is greater than my fear...

[After a few minutes, read the second line.]

The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

Take a few minutes to write a response to this prompt:

My whole-hearted response is...

[After a few minutes, read the whole text a final time.]

When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

Ministry of Music: "As the Wind Song through the Trees" CCS 42 or "Dios está aquí" CCS 150

Invitation to Share:

Invite participants to share responses to the first prompt: "when my willingness is greater than my fear..." Invite them to read their written reflections or share about what was on their heart during the time of prayer. After a few minutes of sharing, invite participants to share responses to the second prompt: "my whole-hearted response is..." Invite them to read their written reflections or share about what was on their heart during the time of prayer.

Ministry of Music: "Searcher of Hearts" CCS 178 or "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" CCS 87

Closing Prayer

Postlude

We Learn

Prelude Music

Opening Song: “Praise the Source of Faith and Learning”
CCS 174 or “We Limit Not the Truth of God” CCS 69

Centering in God’s Presence: Light the candle you prepared for the first service.

We light this candle as a symbol of God’s illuminating presence. We pause to remember how everything we do and say in these moments is happening in the context of God’s presence in and with us. As we prepare to enter a time of sharing, we remember how holy listening with one another is itself a spiritual practice, a healing act, and draws us together in oneness and peace.

Prayer of Opening

Reading:

*A blessing for seeking
For courage enough to enter in
To the deep mystery places
Which humble us into realizing
All we do not, cannot know*

*For wisdom enough to follow
The traces of light in the darkness
To not let fear of night stall us
From moving through the moments
That are forming us unseen*

*For strength of heart
To walk boldly forward
When the path ahead is uncertain
And safety tempts us with return
To what we already think we know*

*For vulnerability along the way
That we may truly feel the path we’re on
That we may be open to what it brings
That we may not flee from perceived dangers
That we may be changed in the walking*

*A blessing for seeking
A blessing for the way the seeking itself
Is the One we seek*

Song: “O God We Call” CCS 195 or “Alleluia” CCS 117 (Sing three times.)

Practice: Faithful Searching

Read text: Luke 2:41–52

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Questions (Share in pairs.): Have you ever been lost or lost someone? What did it feel like?

Read the Reflection:

Consider that moment for Mary and Joseph when their assumption that Jesus was with them turned into a panicked realization that he was not. They turn

first to all the familiar places, friends, and relatives. They go to the people and places they knew along the journey, and he was not there either. They decide to retrace their steps all the way to Jerusalem. Their search lasts for three days.

When they find Jesus he is in an unexpected place—the temple—engaging in conversation with religious leaders. He is listening and asking questions. People were amazed at his depth of understanding. Mary and Joseph were astonished, but the astonishment is short-lived, as Mary expresses her great anxiety.

Like Mary and Joseph, we sometimes want Jesus to stay small and predictable. We assume he is on the path we choose, traveling obediently beside us. Suddenly, we look around and cannot see him. We may be angry, afraid, frustrated, or filled with great anxiety. We have to go searching, sometimes far out of our way. When we finally find him, we may also be at first blinded by these emotions to hear his words, to see his deeds.

Question (Share in pairs.): When was a time in your faith journey that things were not as you expected them? When have you had to stretch your understanding beyond what is comfortable and familiar?

Read the Reflection:

We know Jesus will not wait on us to be at work in the world. When we find him, we have the choice to resist or join in. We are called to follow Jesus into a maturity of faith and life as a disciple. We are called to live our mission, even when tempted to stay safe and small. We can travel along the same paths, inattentively meandering with everyone else, assuming he is with us. Or we can wake up, attentive enough to recognize his absence in our own agenda, and begin the search for Christ alive in the world.

There is something to learn from where we find Christ. We know as he matures into ministry that he

was found in the temple, engaging deeply and fully in his faith. He was listening, questioning, confronting. We may find him at a sinner's table, healing the blind beggar, and calling for mercy for a woman sentenced to death. We may find him denouncing our fear amid the storm, and in the mountains for renewal and prayer. We may find him feeding the masses and breaking bread in the upper room with his beloved community. We find him on the cross, but when we look in the tomb, again he is not where we expect him to be. We find him in fullness of life. It is not that Jesus ever really leaves us; but that when we stop seeking we may stop seeing. Once we think we already know all there is to know, we find ourselves strangely empty-handed, retracing our steps, looking for the One who calls us continually to grow.

Reflection: After the ministry of music, there will be time to briefly share your reflections with the larger group. How are you being invited to discover Christ in new places? How are you being called to continue learning and growing into mature Christian discipleship?

Ministry of Music: “Holy Presence, Holy Teacher” CCS 601 or “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” CCS 367

Large-group Sharing: How are you being invited to discover Christ in new places? How are you being called to continue learning and growing into mature Christian discipleship?

Song: “O God We Call” CCS 195 or “Alleluia” CCS 117 (Sing three times.)

Closing Prayer: Adaptation of “Holy Presence, Holy Teacher” CCS 601

Reader: Holy Presence, Holy Teacher, Light illuminating our lives,
In the compass of our wisdom all our work and worship thrives:
Lead us when we sense your calling till we find our chosen field,

Following your hand's direction, honoring your truth revealed.

Congregational Response: May our faithful search be blessed.

Reader: By our nurture, by our culture, every life is shaped to grow,
Fed by long tradition's learning, formed by mentors as we go;
Tune our ears to hear the gospel questioning accepted thought,
Ready to respect each other, see the gifts that each has brought.

Congregational Response: May our faithful search be blessed.

Reader: Yours the world of power and beauty, ours the task to tend its needs,
Day by day in cheerful service growing faith like mustard seeds,
Striving in unlikely places, standing where indeed we must,
Acting from compelling conscience, working for what's fair and just.

Congregational Response: May our faithful search be blessed.

Reader: God, we pray for understanding in our study,
in our goals,
Concepts that will change and challenge, vision to inspire our souls,
That this place for mind's reflection, faith examined,
word addressed
Be a witness to your teaching...

Congregational Response: May our faithful search be blessed. Amen.

Postlude

We Share

Prelude

Gathering Song: “Gather Your Children” CCS 77

Centering in God’s Presence: Light the candle you prepared for the first service.

We light this candle as a symbol of God’s illuminating presence. We pause to remember how everything we do and say in these moments is happening in the context of God’s presence in and with us. As we prepare to enter a time of sharing, we remember how holy listening with one another is itself a spiritual practice, a healing act, and draws us together in oneness and peace.

Reading: Adaptation of Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a–b

Reader 1: I want to share this message with you. Amid your uncertainty and moments of struggle, there is peace available to you.

Reader 2: Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life.

Reader 1: I want to share with you that it is possible to become whole.

Reader 2: Follow Christ in the way that leads to God’s peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.

Reader 1: I want to share with you that there is a place where you belong.

Reader 2: Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community.

Reader 1: I want to share with you how this matters for every part of our lives.

Reader 2: Restoring people to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the Earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.

Opening Prayer

Congregational Response: “Bear Each Other’s Burdens” CCS 374

Practice: *Lectio Divina*

Lectio Divina is Latin for “divine” or “sacred reading.” It is a form of prayer using scripture. Preparing to share in community, we open our hearts and minds to hear these words. When introducing the practice, recognize that we all connect with the Divine in different ways. It’s OK if some part of this practice feels uncomfortable at first. Allow God to speak to you through whatever you feel—whether peace, insight, or struggle.

Invite the congregation to breathe deeply and become aware of the presence of God. Encourage participants to enter the text and be immersed in its living invitation for their life today. Briefly describe the four parts of the prayer and invite participants to relax into where the scripture most naturally leads them in the times of silence.

As you hear the text of John 14:27, listen within for a word, phrase, or image that captures your attention:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Silence

As you hear the text again, pay attention to what touches you or stirs response within you.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your

hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Silence

Hearing the text again, is there an invitation for you in these words today? How might this text be speaking to your life?

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Silence

As the text is read a final time, simply rest into God’s presence. Receive these words deep within your heart.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Silence

Song: “My Peace” CCS 149 or “Seek Ye First” CCS 599
(Recommendation: Have a soloist sing it once, then invite the congregation to sing a second time.)

Sharing: As you encountered this text, what was God’s invitation to you? What captured your heart’s attention?

Song: “My Peace” CCS 149

Sharing: How is God inviting you to share Christ’s peace with others?

Song: “My Peace” CCS 149

Reading: “Peace of Jesus” CCS 318

*Peace of Jesus burn within us: Fan the flames of equity;
Melt the walls of separation: sisters, brothers all are we.
Let your Spirit breathe within us far beyond our daily talk
Finding voice through loving actions, echoed in our daily walk.*

Peace of Jesus free the children, let their seeds of hope bear fruit.

Warring ways shall cease to claim them when the love of peace takes root.

We shall nourish their potential birthing gifts that dormant lie.

As they share the sacred story peace will thrive and fear shall die.

*Peace of Jesus find expression not in words that pacify,
Nor a string of sleepy letters said and sung to satisfy.
Freed from selfish isolation bear Love’s witness naturally.
Filled with passion unrestricted share Christ’s peace and liberty.*

*Peace of Jesus boldly venture, unafraid of conflict’s face
Enter into life’s arena where the work of peace takes place.
May formation of our spirits deepen meanings of God’s grace
Seen in living demonstration of the gospel’s full embrace.*

Peace of Jesus spark within us zeal for Zion’s true shalom.

Let its call for love embrace us: every nation, tribe, and home.

All are welcome, all are honored, no one’s value underpriced.

This our call and this our mission: “Go and share the peace of Christ!”

Closing Prayer

Postlude

We Proclaim

Prelude

As participants enter, give them each pen and paper.

Song: “Come Now, You Hungry” CCS 227

Centering in God’s Presence: Light the candle you prepared for the first worship service.

We light this candle as a symbol of God’s illuminating presence. We pause to remember how everything we do and say in these moments is happening in the context of God’s presence in and with us. As we prepare to enter a time of sharing, we remember how holy listening with one another is itself a spiritual practice, a healing act, and draws us together in oneness and peace.

Reading:

*Into the deep you call us, God
Deep spaces waiting to be discovered
Deep truths waiting to be proclaimed*

*Into the deep you call us, God
Beyond the safety of the shoreline
Releasing our attachment to
Standing secure in shallow waters*

*Into the deep you call us, God
Beyond what we can see
Beyond what we can know*

*Into the deep you call us, God
And you do not abandon us
And you do not make empty promises*

*Into the deep you call us, God
The deep of other’s lives
The deep of our communities
The deep of our own souls*

*Into the deep you call us, God
And we pray for the courage to follow*

*For the strength of heart
To enter in*

Congregational Response: “Jesu, Tawa Pano” CCS 71

Practice: Gospel Contemplation

Tell the congregation that Gospel Contemplation is a spiritual practice of prayerfully imagining a text to discover within it God’s invitation for us. Read the scripture passage once and then lead the congregation through the prompts for reflection and writing. (Recommended: Ask a musician to play meditative music in the background as this practice is led. Make sure the music volume is low enough that it will not obstruct hearing.)

Luke 5:1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and imagine the scene.

Allow the sights and the sounds to emerge within your imagination.

Do you hear nearby birds or lapping waves along the side of the boat? Do you hear the voices of fishermen calling out to one another across the water? Does the air smell fishy or salty?

What about this scene catches your attention?

(Pause for a few moments.)

Imagine that a boat is drawing nearer to yours. Jesus is in the boat. He is speaking to the crowds from the boat. Something about his words captures your heart.

What do you hear him saying? How do you feel as you receive those words?

(Pause for a few moments.)

Suddenly, you notice Jesus looking at you, right into your eyes. You are no longer a casual observer. He says to you, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

What is this encounter with Jesus like? How do you feel as he notices you and invites you to this act?

(Pause for a few moments.)

You explain that you have been trying all night and have caught nothing. Still, you are willing to try. Something about this encounter gives you the courage needed to risk responding to this invitation.

Slowly, timidly, you cast your nets into the deeper water. There is a sudden tug, a tightening, and you begin to feel the enormous weight of fish filling the nets.

What emotion is present within you as you are lifting the net? How do you respond as you pull it forth from the deep? What might this represent in your own life?

(Pause for a few moments.)

Hear these words of Jesus as he calms your heart and graciously accepts your previous doubt and unbelief. Allow these words to seep into your depths in love.

Do not be afraid.

Do not be afraid.

Do not be afraid.

He says, "From now on this is about invitation to relationship."

After bringing the boat to shore, you feel a deep desire to leave everything and follow Christ into the fullness you have just experienced.

What does it mean, in your life today, to proclaim this radical discipleship? What would it take to follow that desire wherever it may lead?

(Pause for a few moments.)

Take a couple minutes to write your responses to this encounter with Christ. Where were you most moved? What spoke to you in a surprising way? What captured your attention or felt like an invitation?

(Play meditative music for a few minutes while people write and reflect.)

Amen.

Ministry of Music: "You Walk along Our Shoreline" CCS 598, or "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore" CCS 582, or "I Have Called You by Your Name" CCS 636

Sharing: You are invited to share reflections from this time of prayer. When in your life has encounter led to proclamation?

Song: “Christ Has Called Us to New Visions” CCS 566 or
“Takwaba Uwabanga Yesu!” CCS 121

Closing Blessing:

And then there was the moment you thought it all was
over

And the time when your best plans had fallen flat
And what you had hoped for did not come to be
And you wondered how it could have gone so wrong

And then there was the invitation to try again
To reach once more, to hope once more
To dare to enter the deepest place
And even though every excuse within
Found its way to the surface
In uncertainty complaints
A shimmering hope remained enough
For courage to enter the deep

And what you found there was beyond your
imagination
And all that you received was more than you could
hold
And you remembered there is still reason to hope
And you rejoiced that there is still more beyond what
you can see

And a proclamation began to form in your heart
And it changed the way you lived
And it asked you to leave everything
To discover even more
And it called you to follow
Deep, deep, into the deepest place
And you did

Sending Forth Statement: Go in peace and proclaim the
Living Christ! Amen.

Postlude

We Receive

Prelude

Song: “Come and Fill” CCS 235

Centering in God’s Presence: Light the candle you prepared for the first service.

We light this candle as a symbol of God’s illuminating presence. We pause to remember how everything we do and say in these moments is happening in the context of God’s presence in and with us. As we prepare to enter a time of sharing, we remember how holy listening with one another is itself a spiritual practice, a healing act, and draws us together in oneness and peace.

Opening Prayer:

Reading: Danny A. Belrose, “More Blessed to Receive than to Give” in *Wave Offerings: Personal Psalms, Prayers, and Pieces* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 2005), 21–22.

It is more blessed to receive than to give! Why? Because we cannot give what we do not have. The gospel begins in the passive voice, not the active voice. It does not say, “Go and do.” It’s first petition is, “Come and receive.” ... We want to rush right into doing the gospel before receiving the gospel. You cannot share good news you have not received. You cannot bless until you have been blessed! We need to be reminded of the salvation acts we already know yet constantly forget. We need reminding that the very breath we breathe is God’s breath.

Self-sufficiency gets in the way. We want to be in control. We want discipleship on our terms. An “I can do it myself” attitude soon finds us trying to outrun Jesus and out-grace God. This mind-set subtly puts up barriers beyond our awareness. We talk about God’s unconditional, unmerited love in one sentence and list our achievements in the next. We cannot be generous receivers as long as acceptance is governed by merit and God’s grace is appropriated as an uneasy truce...

Practice: Receiving

The author of *Wave Offerings*, from which we just read, reminds us that “the very breath we breathe is God’s breath.” Enter this time of prayer with a simple breath prayer, imitating the rhythm of giving and receiving.

As you inhale, choose one word that represents what you desire to receive. It could be peace, comfort, insight, confidence, courage, or something else.

As you exhale, choose one word that represents what you desire to give. It could be friendship, support, hospitality, healing, or something else.

Continue this rhythm of breathing, receiving, and giving.

Ministry of Music (as people are breathing deeply): “Breathe On Me, Breath of God” CCS 190 (Recommendation: Have a soloist sing it a cappella [without accompaniment] after a few minutes of deep breathing.)

Sharing: Invite responses to be one word or a short phrase.

What do you yearn to receive?

[Allow for brief one-word or phrase responses.]

What do you yearn to give?

[Allow for brief one-word or phrase responses.]

Meditation on Sacramental Receiving

Reader 1: “Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community”

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:2b

Reader 2: Where else in the world today can you kneel side by side with the young, the elderly, with people who are different, or with whom you disagree, and share together in a common meal? This bread of life, nurturing our unity in diversity, sustains me. Wherever there is division among us, this table calls us toward reconciliation. The sacraments are the pathway to renewal.

Reader 1: “Look especially to the sacraments to enrich the spiritual life of the body. Seek for greater understanding of my purposes in these sacred rites and prepare to receive a renewed confirmation of the presence of my Spirit...”

—Doctrine and Covenants 158:11C

Reader 2: Witnessing a baptism alerts all my senses to the presence of the sacred. There is still something compelling about whole-hearted commitment to the Christ-life, even in cultures that say, “It’s all about me.” This longing to be immersed in the life of God persists amid the louder voices surrounding. It draws us to the water’s edge again and again to remember the invitation that continues to change us. The sacraments are the pathway to renewal.

Reader 1: “You have already been told to look to the sacraments to enrich the spiritual life of the body. It is not the form of the sacrament that dispenses grace but it is the divine presence that gives life.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:2d

Reader 2: Oil poured out; hands upon head.
Hearts in tune with the One whose desire is our wholeness.
The physical presence of sisters and brothers in difficult times.
The words spoken with healing intent are vessels for this Spirit-presence already gathering about us.
The peace pervading we could not plan or make.
It is given and in our attention, we receive.
The sacraments are the pathway to renewal.

Leader: Spend a few moments reflecting. How have you been blessed by the sacraments? How have the sacraments allowed you to glimpse God’s vision for creation?

Meditative Music

Sharing: How have you been blessed by the sacraments? How have the sacraments allowed you to glimpse God’s vision for creation?

Song: “Eat This Bread” CCS 528 (Sing three times.)

Closing Prayer

Postlude

We Respond

Prelude

Song: “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” CCS 581 or “Kanisa Litajengwa” CCS 338

Centering in God’s Presence: Light the candle you prepared for the first worship service in this series.

We light this candle as a symbol of God’s illuminating presence. We pause to remember how everything we do and say in these moments is happening in the context of God’s presence in and with us. As we prepare to enter a time of sharing, we remember how holy listening with one another is itself a spiritual practice, a healing act, and draws us together in oneness and peace.

Opening Prayer

Ministry of Music: “What Does the Lord Require Of You?” CCS 580 (Recommendation: Have a trio sing it.) or “Dona Nobis Pacem” CCS 155

Practice: Joyce Rupp, “Called Forth,” from *Out of the Ordinary*. Copyright 2000. Used by permission of Ave Maria Press. All rights reserved.

Designate two readers and six visual representatives. For each reading, a visual representative will walk forward (and stay), representing the person from the scripture. Because there are two readers, those acting as visual representatives do not have speaking parts. Don’t feel a need to choose gender-specific representatives for these roles.

Invite the members of the congregation to prayerfully consider God’s call in their life to respond as they reflect on stories from the scriptures of others who have responded. Invite them to listen for a story that most relates to what they are feeling now.

Reader 1: God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!... Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

—Exodus 3:4–5

Visual representative of Moses: Walks forward then takes off sandals.

Reader 2: There’s a burning bush in me, Pilgrim God. It is the flame of your presence in my quite ordinary moments. Your indwelling makes all of my life an opportunity for sacred encounter. Thank you for the burning-bush moments I have known. Each one draws me closer to your heart and increases my awareness of the beauty of your eternal faithfulness.

Reader 1: Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of [God]; let it be with me according to your word.”

—Luke 1:38

Visual representative of Mary: Walks forward then kneels with arms open wide, surrendering to the yes.

Reader 2: Mystery penetrates every aspect of my life with you, Divine Secret. I cannot know or understand where the call to be yours will take me. I do not need to know, even though I want to know. All that is required is that I trust you with my life. Wrap your love around me so completely that I will readily give you my “yes.”

Reader 1: Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal... The seraph touched my mouth with it...

—Isaiah 6:6–7

Visual Representative of Isaiah: Walks forward and lights a candle to hold.

Reader 2: I, too, am being refined as you call me to live a deeper life. It is the purification of my motives and my expectations in living and working with others. It is the cleansing of my mind and heart of all that keeps me from clearly and freely being one with you. Divine Ember, burn away all in me that keeps me from saying, “Here I am. I am yours.”

Reader 1: O [God], you have enticed me, and I was

enticed; you have overpowered me and you have prevailed.

—Jeremiah 20:7

Visual Representative of Jeremiah: Walks forward and places a hand on Isaiah.

Reader 2: I sometimes protest the call to be your presence in the world. Like Jeremiah, my voice cries out in protest and my heart refuses to respond. I am unable to go in your name because I ignore your powerful love flowing through me. I think that I have to go alone, and I grow unsure, full of questions and doubts. Enduring One, sweep my heart free of my arrogant independence and keep urging me toward acceptance of your grace.

Reader 1: Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord;” and she told them that he had said these things to her.

—John 20:18

Visual representative of Mary Magdalene: Walks forward and embraces each scriptural character.

Reader 2: There is an announcement time for me, intimate Friend. It comes each time I meet you in the garden of my life. Every encounter with you is an opportunity to recognize you and to accept your divine manifestation, however ecstatic or simple it may be. You encourage me to find you amid the people and events of each day. Show yourself to me and then, send me forth!

Reader 1: She said to the people, “Come and see...”

—John 4:28–29

Visual representative of woman with water jug: Walks forward and beckons to all the scriptural characters to come with her. All characters walk off the stage together.

Reader 2: Source of Life and Love, you call me to bear witness to you. Everywhere I go, with all whom I meet, the bond of your love unites us. In those I resist, in those who resist me, in those I welcome, in those who welcome me—in all I meet, there you are! Grant me eyes of the heart so I may see deeply, that I may discover and revere each one who is part of my life. Grant me a courageous spirit so I will live in such a way that all will know you are the center of my life.

Reflection: As you listen to this ministry of music, ponder which reflection spoke to your soul the most. What is happening within you as you discern how to respond to the call?

Ministry of Music: “Find Your Wholeness” CCS 643 or “Touch Me, Lord, with Thy Spirit Eternal” CCS 574

Sharing: Which reflection seemed to speak to your heart the most? What is happening within you as you discern how to respond to the call?

Song: “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” CCS 499

Reading:

When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ’s new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God’s covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9b

Closing Prayer

Postlude