Create Shalom:
Abolish Poverty, End Suffering

Community of Christ
Reunion 2014
Worship Resources
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Create Shalom: Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
Worship Resources
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Worship Planners for Reunion 2014
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Reunion settings vary, but many people learn visually, so prepare the worship setting with a focus for each day. Assign a worship center coordinator for the week.

The worship services in this series refer to a mandala. Mandalas are sacred in some cultures. They are ancient symbols of balance, harmony, and wholeness. They serve as a focus for meditation, a spiritual teaching tool, and to create sacred space.

Mandalas share a common component of concentric circles around a central point a unifying symbol, referred to in Sanskrit as “a sacred circle” that contains archetypal connotations transcending cultural barriers and conventional indoctrination. [The mandala] represents our inherent wholeness and interdependence.

—Massood Taj, massoodworks.com

The mandala patterns provided with Reunion Worship Resources (p. 25) can be copied for each day. Reunion participants could create a growing mandala by starting with the church seal (p. 24) in a central circle and then each day adding a ring of color around it. Another idea is to have the congregation color individual mandalas and then arrange them in a circle around a central one. Find a creative way to display the mandalas throughout the week.

Creating mandalas can be easy or complicated. Use as a group activity or as an individual project.

Do not overlook the power of visuals in worship.

Sermon-illustrations.com is a website that lists places to get short video clips for worship—everything from music and pictures, to movies. This is only a reference site; enter a theme, like “praise,” and then shop for a clip that fits. Consider using one or two of these in worship services.

Sermonspice.com is another website with visuals to help with planning.

Another alternative is to incorporate photos of the camp and campers into the worship setting using PowerPoint slides (template provided).

Suggested hymns are from the following hymnals and are abbreviated as noted:

Community of Christ Sings (CCS)

Sing a New Song (NS)

For reprinting or projecting copyrighted hymn texts and tunes, contact OneLicense.net at 1-800-663-1501 or www.onelicense.net. For showing videos and movies, contact: Christian Video Licensing International (CVLI) 1-888-771-CVLI or www.cvli.com.
Gathering Songs (choose two)
“Called to Gather as God’s People” CCS 79
“As We Gather” CCS 73
“God, We Gather as Your People” CCS 274
“O God of Vision” CCS 78

Welcome and Invitation to Worship
Have a different reader stand and read each line.
Reader 1: We are here!
Reader 2: All are welcome!
Reader 3: We are expecting good things.
Reader 4: We are hungry for belonging.
Reader 5: We are ready, Lord, to hear you.
Reader 6: We are looking, Lord, to see you.
All: Come, you hungry, come find shalom.

Opening Hymn
“Come Now, You Hungry” CCS 227

Opening Prayer
Loving God of new beginnings, we gather to worship as we start our reunion experience. We sense your gracious presence in our lives and praise you for opportunity to learn to love one another. As we live together, help us see the value in our differences. Help us be bridge-building people who live as loving family. Help us welcome all to our community, respond to the needs around us, and hear the needs of those who are different from us. Open our ears to hear your voice. In the name of Christ, who calls us to love one another. Amen.

Response
Ensemble plays the chorus of “Come Now, You Hungry” CCS 227 through once.

Focus Moment
Each focus moment this week includes a mandala theme. If there is no plan for a focus moment, incorporate these into the Disciples’ Generous Response. Each day you can distribute a sheet of paper with a different mandala pattern to color. Before the service place colored pencils or crayons where people can reach them. Paste the completed mandalas around the circle starting point of what will become a larger mandala created throughout the reunion. The center starting circle can be the church seal or another meaningful symbol of shalom. This could begin on a large sheet of backdrop paper, (usually 9 x 36 ft/3 x 10 m) available online in a variety of colors for under US$50 a roll. Hang the paper across the back of the worship location. Each day the circle will expand, as more mandalas become part of the display. Collect finished mandalas after the service and tape or pin them up prior to the next worship service. See the mandala patterns at the end of this document.

Mandalas in nature are some of the simplest yet most profound forms to see. We see mandalas from atoms to the solar system! Each one is part of an even bigger mandala. The connection between humans and everything is apparent all around us when we take time to look. These connections bring us together and yet we are still unique just like every mandala is unique.

Explain the purpose. As we create beautiful circular patterns, think about God’s shalom. We are each part of the whole—each creating and adding to the pattern. When we focus on God as the center who
holds us in Christ’s love, we feel the joy, pain, and hunger of our neighbors. We are connected.

Consider the circle...God’s love has no beginning or end and is perfect. Challenge the congregation to notice circles this week.

Read the following story and give time for people to color their mandalas while an ensemble sings “Come and Find the Quiet Center” CCS 151.

Filling the Spaces
When I was a child, I would play a little game. I would think of something or someone to whom I wanted to feel connected, and I would connect the physical dots between us. I would become aware that I was sitting on the couch, which was sitting on the carpet, which was touching the tile in the hall, which was under the bed where the dog rested. We were connected.

As I grew in my knowledge of physics and the physical world in which we live, the game became more complex as I knew myself and indeed every- thing in the created order to be connected. We are connected by the vast amounts of space that exist between us, between all of the subatomic particles that are spinning microscopically around us.

The Holy Spirit dwells in every emptiness, filling it with life and love, drawing us closer to the source of all life, binding us together with every part of creation. As I breathe in the breath of life daily, the mysterious presence of the Holy Spirit connects me with all of you, and all of us with all of creation, from the tiniest particle to the farthest realms of the universe.


Prayer of Confession
You have heard our excuses: we are too young, too old, too entrenched in our careers, or too adrift to focus on anything right now as important as the good news. Our excuses are as varied as we are, but it is your purpose, that we should enter into the work of the good news together, and that you cannot spare anybody, not even one of us. Therefore, we ask that as you enter into our hearts, you pare away our caution and create in us a new spirit, that we may serve you not only willingly, but also joyfully!


Disciples’ Generous Response
Share your own Disciples’ Generous Response story or consider using one of the stories or Disciples’ Generous Response videos from the Witness the Word series at www.CofChrist.org/generositystories.

Hymn
Sing during or following the Disciples’ Generous Response.
“Draw the Circle Wide” CCS 273
OR “Take My Gifts and Let Me Love You” CCS 609

Scripture Reading
God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a

Message
Based on Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a and Isaiah 58:6–9

Hymn
“Summoned by the God Who Made Us” CCS 330
OR “Creating God, Your Fingers Trace” CCS 139
OR “The Summons” CCS 586

Prayer for Peace

Closing Hymn
“Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383

Provide a musical ensemble of guitars and voices to lead “Circle Round for Freedom.” As they sing several times, the visual circle on stage begins. One person stands alone, raises hands up to form a circle above his or her head. Another person comes forward and joins hands with the first person, creating a larger circle. The two people begin to move slowly around clockwise. Another person comes forward and joins the two. The three now circle around—moving across available space on the floor. Several more come up as a group and join, and so on until the circle grows to circle round the entire group. Allow all who wish to remain seated, without pressure to join.

Sending Forth
You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a
Transformation at the Table

Gathering Songs
Have a choir, ensemble, or the congregation sing two of the following hymns.

“As We Gather” CCS 73
“Now Sing to Our God” CCS 108
“Spirit, Open My Heart” CCS 564
“Come, Holy Spirit, Come” CCS 154
“We Are Companions on the Journey” CCS 552

Welcome
Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.


In his article, “It’s All about Relationships” Ron Harmon, Council of Twelve Apostles, shared…

How we live out the gospel through our relationships is central to our mission. Jesus counseled his disciples in John 15:12 NRSV, “This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.” In this passage Jesus reveals one of the most-powerful forms of witness for the early Christian church—how we treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a builds on this foundation. It counsels us to go deeper in our understanding of healthy relationships and strive together to embody the behaviors of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness in all our relationships.

—Herald, April 2011, 8–11

In her book, Truly the Community, Marva Dawn states: “How we belong to one another in the Christian community is a sign of God’s unfolding love, which is sufficient for all the times of loneliness or fatigue or pain or grief that we might have to bear” (p. 87).

As we worship today, may we each discover ways to serve as Christ’s hands and feet—building relationships; developing new compassionate ministries; reaching out to the poor, the hungry, and the marginalized; and offering ministry and hospitality to the broken and hurting.

Opening Hymn
“Brothers and Sisters of Mine” CCS 616
OR “Bear Each Other’s Burdens” CCS 374
OR “We Are Companions on the Journey” CCS 552
Opening Prayer for Peace

Invite the people of the congregation to create cups or chalices with their hands in front of their hearts. Let them know they are free to simply sit meditatively however they wish. Ask them to hold in their chalices God’s yearnings for the transformation of the human family. As they feel the Spirit during the prayer, ask them to lift the chalices to sense beauty and suffering. Then have them release the hurt and suffering contained in the chalices by opening their hands for God’s blessing and healing.

Use the following prayer or create your own.

Transforming God, we are open to your calling. We are willing to respond. Inspire us with ideas to continue Christ’s mission, with ways to share his peace. Inspire us to serve others who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them, through our hands this day, their daily bread, and by our understanding love give peace and joy. Refresh us when we grow weary of opposing injustice and oppression, and send us forth to bind up the wounds that afflict our world. Let us offer our hearts, minds, and bodies to be peacemakers in this world. Amen.

Response

Scripture Reading

As revealed in Christ, God, the Creator of all, ultimately is concerned about behaviors and relationships that uphold the worth and giftedness of all people and that protect the most vulnerable. Such relationships are to be rooted in the principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness, against which there is no law.

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a

Visual Reflection

Strangers Touching Strangers is a short video of photographer Richard Renaldi’s work portraying humanity as it could be. He asked complete strangers to pose together for a photograph. The poses implied a sense of family or friendship. During the photo shoot, the strangers move from warily eyeing one another to “family Thanksgiving at Aunt Martha’s.”

The sentiment that shines through the photographs seems to be a real sense of family. Comments from the subjects included, “We are probably missing so much from the people around us;” “I felt like I cared for her;” and “I felt that it brought down barriers.”


Focus Moment

Read the book, The Little Yellow Leaf, by Carin Berger (Harper Collins, 2008). As all the other leaves float off and fly past, Little Yellow Leaf thinks it is not ready until a relationship forms and someone helps.

Invite participants to design mandalas while someone reads the book aloud. (Each will need a mandala pattern sheet and crayons or colored pencils.) Ask them to concentrate on the ideas of circles of life, facing unknown situations, and celebrating friends who help us on the journey. You may wish to have children come to the front to create their mandalas while they look at pictures from the book. If possible, show the book illustrations to the rest of the congregation. This may inspire people as they create today’s mandalas.

Message

Based on Luke 24:13–35

Hymn

“For Everyone Born” CCS 285
“I, the Lord of Sea and Sky” CCS 640

Confessional Reading

Doctrine and Covenants 161:3
Ask two participants to share in this confessional reading or if printing or projection is available, use this as a responsive confessional.

3a. Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.

...Forgive us, God, for closing ourselves off from those who are “least among us.”

b. Do not be fearful of one another. Respect each life journey, even in its brokenness and uncertainty, for each person has walked alone at times. Be ready to listen and slow to criticize, lest judgments be unrighteous and unredemptive.

...Forgive us, God, for letting our own insecurities make us fearful or judgmental of others.

c. Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.
...Forgive us, God, for being quick to lose hope, for doubting the power of your promised community of love.

d. Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple.

We repent—turn us toward you!
By the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to travel the path of the disciple hand-in-hand together!

Disciples’ Generous Response
This story, “Do God's Will,” takes us to the Florida USA Mission Center. Debbie Hogan and Brenda Cummins relate the following:

Excitement filled the air as 31 people attended the first worship service in the New Port Richey Congregation in Florida on May 22, 2011. The congregation serves hot meals to all who attend each week. Services typically last about three hours, and include a meal and fellowship.

As it provides a witness of Jesus Christ, relationship-building skills and relevant ministry, the New Port Richey Congregation is a partner in community projects that address the Abolish Poverty, End Suffering Mission Initiative. Work is underway to establish this congregation as a place where people can share in meals, ministry, and engage in mission. Your generous contributions make it possible for congregations such as New Port Richey to make mission real. Thank you for responding faithfully by giving so very generously.

From Philippians 2:4–5 NRSV we read “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.”

Share in the prayer of blessing for the offering.

Hymn
“We Meet as Friends at Table” CCS 532
OR “To Be Your Presence” CCS 351

Sending Forth
Now God sends you forth. As you received God’s grace today, go and dare to reach out to others, to help reconcile and make new. As the experiences of those with us feed and nourish us, it is now time for us to do something. Transform our words into actions. We are disciples and you call us to be involved—to Abolish Poverty, End Suffering, one life at a time. Your message shared around the table feeds us. Now it is our turn to feed others.

May the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the encouraging presence of the Holy Spirit be with you, this day, and every day. Amen.
Generosity on the Street

3

WORSHIP SERVICES

Gathering Songs
“Humble Yourself” CCS 211
OR “Make Me a Servant” CCS 597
OR “Awesome God” NS 4
OR “As We Gather” CCS 73

Welcome and Invitation to Worship

Inspirational Video
Me to We—Generosity Everyday (www.youtube.com/watch?v=_N6Kjx7x5sk)

Scripture Reading
Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint. Break free of the shackles of conventional culture that mainly promote self-serving interests. Give generously according to your true capacity. Eternal joy and peace await those who grow in the grace of generosity that flows from compassionate hearts without thought of return…

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:9

Hymn
“Called by Christ to Love Each Other” CCS 577
OR “Lord, I Give You” NS 32

Opening Prayer for Peace

Focus Moment
Pass out mandala coloring sheets and have crayons or colored pencils for everyone. Then read or act out the story Zen Ties by Jon J. Muth, (Scholastic Press 2008).

In the book, a panda named Stillwater teaches children a valuable lesson about compassion and generosity. When we generously give our gifts, talents, time, or resources unexpected grace, love, and understanding follow close behind. This story serves as a gentle reminder that we are all connected—we are interdependent.

Discussion Questions
1. What did Stillwater and the children expect in return when they made lunch for Miss Whitaker?
2. How did Miss Whitaker generously respond?
3. What opportunities can you think of to share generously with others in your schools, neighborhoods, or communities?
4. Being generous to Miss Whitaker was a challenge for the children, because they were scared of her and didn’t know her very well. Sometimes it takes courage to be generous. How do you think Jesus would want you to reach out to a person or group of people who need your generosity?

Hymn
“Beloved Community of God” CCS 588
OR “Weave” CCS 327

Disciples’ Generous Response
Share your own generosity story or use one of the Disciples’ Generous Response videos from the Witness the Word series (on DVD or download from www.CofChrist.org/generositystories).

Hymn
“Peace Salaam Shalom” CCS 310
OR “Draw the Circle Wide” CCS 273
Message
Based on Matthew 15:32–39

Hymn
“Christ Has Called Us to New Visions” CCS 566
OR “Lord Jesus, of You I Will Sing” CCS 556

Benediction

Sending Forth
God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people. Chief among these is the power of community in Christ expressed locally in distinctive fashions while upholding a unity of vision, foundational beliefs, and mission throughout the world.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:11a

Gathering Songs (choose two)
“All Creation Sings God’s Music” CCS 110
“Now Sing to Our God” CCS 108
“O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” CCS 92
“Oh, Sing to the Lord” CCS 88

Welcome and Invitation to Worship

Opening Hymn
“O God We Call” CCS 195

Have an ensemble sing this and teach it to the congregation. Repeat several times, starting as melody then adding parts later.

Reading of the Psalm (assign five readers)
Reader 1: Oh praise God! How good it is to sing praise to our God, for God is gracious.

Reader 2: God is the one who rebuilds and regathers.

Reader 3: God heals the heartbroken and bandages their wounds.

Reader 4: God lifts up the downtrodden and brings justice to the world.

Reader 5: Sing to God a thankful hymn.

All: Halleluiah! We sing God’s praises.

—Psalm 147, adapted
Hymn
“Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises” CCS 656

Opening Prayer for Peace

Response

Focus Moment
If your reunion customarily gathers children up front, make sure the entire congregation is still involved and able to share in the lesson.

Neighborhood Justice
Discuss what your neighborhood looks like. Ask one or two to describe their streets. To bring justice to our neighborhoods we must actually know our neighbors. Ask the congregation to think of a time when they visited a neighbor’s home. Is there someone who is lonely? Is there someone who could use a friend? Is there someone who needs help with a home or yard project? Are there kids who need a safe place to play? We must invest our lives in the people right in our neighborhood.

Pass out the mandala pattern sheets and crayons or colored pencils and ask the congregation to consider while they create their mandalas how they could get to know better the needs of their neighborhood.

Read the following story about Central Washington University’s women’s softball team’s sense of justice. Project a photo from this scene from: blog.oregonlive.com/breakingnews/2008/04/the_best_tale_of_sportsmanship.html.

Sara hit a ball out of the park for the first home run of her entire softball career. She was celebrating! Then she twisted her knee as she ran past first base. She crawled back to first base but she was unable to touch the other bases. The umpire said it was against the rules for her teammates to help her round the bases.

Then Mallory, a player from the other team, asked the umpire if it was all right if they helped Sara instead. The umpire said there was no rule against that. So Mallory and Liz, from the other team, picked up Sara and carried her around the bases all the way to home plate. Sara’s team won the game because of the home run. Some things are more important than winning.

Hymn
“Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383
OR “Draw the Circle Wide” CCS 273

Choral Reading
“When I Can Ache” CCS 590

Assign five readers and project or print in the bulletin for the congregation to join.

Reader 1: When I can ache with hunger pangs
Reader 2: for those whose bowls are washed with tears
Reader 3: and thirst to quench the driest tongue
Reader 4: and visit those who live in fear
Reader 5: and hold the hands of captive souls who sit alone when death is near

All: I see in them Christ’s face divine and hope they see his face in mine.

Reader 1: When I can fill a stranger’s need
Reader 2: with open hand and plant hope’s seed
Reader 3: that bears love’s fruit and brings relief
Reader 4: to heavy hearts weighed down with grief
Reader 5: and share Christ’s peace that brings release from burdens born by hurt’s increase

All: I see in them Christ’s face divine and hope they see his face in mine.

Reader 1: When I can share another’s pain
Reader 2: and bring to birth their joy again
Reader 3: with loving deeds that break each chain that binds their wounded heart’s refrain
Reader 4: when I esteem each soul on Earth as blest by God with priceless worth
Reader 5: when I esteem each soul on Earth as blest by God with priceless worth

All: I see in them Christ’s face divine and hope they see his face in mine.

Disciples’ Generous Response
Share your own generosity story or use one of the Disciples’ Generous Response videos from the Witness the Word series (on DVD or download from www.CofChrist.org/generositystories).

Ministry of Music
“When the Darkness Overwhelms Us” CCS 314
OR “Companion of the Poor” (unison ensemble or reunion choir) CCS 296

Scripture Reading
Mark 7:24–30

Message
Response of Confession
Leader: For times when we have decided who we will love and have excluded others,
All: Healer of All, forgive us, we pray.
Leader: For times when we have been silent and allowed hurtful words to be unchallenged,
All: Healer of All, forgive us, we pray.
Leader: Crack open our walls of separation!
All: Restore us to community, where your balm of healing justice can soothe our wounds.

Closing Hymn
“Make Us, O God, a Church That Shares” CCS 657
OR “The Church of Christ in Every Age” CCS 295

Benediction

If you are creating a mandala at this reunion, pass out the mandala pattern sheet and crayons or colored pencils as people enter.

Gathering Praise
“All Creatures of Our God and King” CCS 98
“As We Gather” CCS 73
“Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!” CCS 52

Welcome

Call to Worship
God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people. Chief among these is the power of community in Christ expressed locally in distinctive fashions while upholding a unity of vision, foundational beliefs, and mission throughout the world.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:11a

Today we come to praise God for those gifts. May our worship challenge and excite us to find new ways of expressing the power of community to bring wholeness and healing.

Opening Hymn of Praise
“Community of Christ” CCS 354
OR “Community of Joy” CCS 631
OR “Praise the Lord Together Singing” CCS 642

Opening Prayer of Praise

Scripture Reading
Matthew 25:35–40
Focus Moment Drama
Prepare actors ahead of time with scripts and practice time.

Characters
Person A—dressed nicely, holding a basket of food
Person B—casually dressed, has checkbook and pen in pocket or bag
Person C—is in need, dressed in old, torn, dirty clothes or sitting with a backpack, suitcase, or sleeping bag (can be shown as ill or in financial trouble)

Scene
Person C is ill, struggling to pay bills, sitting on a suitcase, or in distress
Person A comes to the person in need. They are friends and maybe go to church together. With obvious pity and arrogance, Person A gives the person in need a basket of food. Then Person A leaves shaking his or her head in pity. Person A’s expression indicates he or she thinks Person C made bad choices that led to this situation.

Person B enters. Persons B and C mime a conversation where Person C explains his or her troubles. Person B nods indicating he or she has the solution.

Person B quickly brings out a checkbook and writes a check. Person B smugly hands over the check. Person B has a knowing look that says he or she just solved all Person C’s troubles. Person B leaves with a self-satisfied look.

Person C speaks: How can it be? How can it be that I find myself in this situation, ashamed, embarrassed, needing the help of others?

I see how it feels to be treated with pity. To receive help in the form of arrogant benevolence by those who take pride in their abundance. I was one of those givers. How sad I feel to have behaved in such a way to others. Forgive my judgments when I also decide others are less than me—when I judge who is or isn’t deserving of my compassion.

It’s as if I have nothing to offer any longer now that my circumstances are ones of looking to others for help (returns to his or her seat).

Prayer for Peace
God of Grace,
We offer our prayer at this moment, mindful that we have been blessed beyond all measure. We possess many physical resources, and the sense of community we enjoy in this place enriches us more than we can know. Yet, we are aware there are many in our world who suffer, and some of them are nearby. In lands of plenty, some find themselves in need of material things. In the midst of great love, some find themselves alone and isolated. In the presence of your life-giving Word, some find themselves searching desperately for meaning.

May the love you have for your entire creation break through the suffering that exists in our world. May the abundance of your creation be available to all. May your rich love grow within every heart. May all find joy and purpose in the opportunities that life presents. May the peace promised by your Son Jesus Christ find a place within every heart and every life, and may you bless us all with abundant and peaceful lives.

We pray that your peace is in every place and in every heart, in the name of your Son Jesus Christ.

—Bruce Lindgren

Time of Confession
Person C (from the Focus Moment drama) returns and prays:

God, help me find ways to extend compassion and respect even in these troubling times. Help me always remember each of us may look content on the outside, but none of us is completely whole all the time. Help me be sensitive to the opportunities to extend God’s love and compassion just as I so desire those expressions for myself right now. Help me remember that only when I am humbly aware of my flaws and weaknesses which separate me from you, am I worthy of being called “the least of these”—those to whom you came. Amen.

Ministry of Music
“When the Poor Ones” CCS 290
OR “The City Is Alive, O God” CCS 365
OR “I Am Standing Waiting” CCS 298

Message
Based on Matthew 25:35–40

Hymn of Confession
“God Forgave My Sin in Jesus’ Name” (refrain only, sing twice) CCS 627
Disciples’ Generous Response

For Disciples’ Generous Response thoughts see the Herald stories listed below. Choose two to share with the congregation as examples of community working to bring Wholeness in the Village. Sing the hymn “Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383.


OR Share your own generosity story or use one of the Disciples’ Generous Response videos from the Witness the Word series (on DVD or download from www.CofChrist.org/generositystories).

Closing Hymn

“Christ’s Partners All Are We” CCS 630
OR “Bear Each Other’s Burdens” CCS 374
OR “Let Your Heart Be Broken” CCS 353
OR “We Are Pilgrims on a Journey” CCS 550

Closing Prayer

Gathering Songs

“Called to Gather as God’s People” CCS 79
OR “Now Sing to Our God” CCS 108
OR “Come, Holy Spirit, Come” CCS 154
OR “Spirit, Open My Heart” CCS 564

Welcome and Invitation to Worship

Opening Prayer

Opening Hymn

“I Am Standing Waiting” CCS 298
OR “Lord, Make Us Instruments” CCS 364

Scripture Reading

God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the
pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who
desperately seek a future of hope for their children.
Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare re-
sides your welfare.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a

Inspirational Video
Show one of these videos as an inspirational focus mo-
tment or as part of the Disciples’ Generous Response.

Love Lunches (vimeo.com/48919864#)
This video is a documentary about the ministry of
the Welcome Home Congregation in southern Cal-
ifornia.

Change for a Dollar
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DXL9vIUbWg)
This video shows how helping and caring for others
is not always a difficult task. We see that something
as small as one dollar can make a real difference in
someone’s life.

Disciples’ Generous Response
Share your own generosity story or use one of the
Disciples’ Generous Response videos from the Wit-
ness the Word series (on DVD or download from

Read John 21:15–19. Share this scripture passage
of Jesus’ invitation to “Feed my sheep.” We do this
through compassionate and generous giving to those
in need. We can do this through giving to the Abol-
ish Poverty, End Suffering Mission Initiative.

Hymn
Sing during or following the Disciples’ Generous Response.

“Give Thanks” CCS 134
OR “Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383
OR “Draw the Circle Wide” CCS 273

Focus Moment
Invite everyone to create a mandala while focusing on
ways to respond to Jesus’ invitation to “Feed my sheep.”
Encourage them to add images or creative expressions of
how they feel called to do this. Ask them to respond to this
calling by living out Christ’s mission to Abolish Poverty,
End Suffering.

Message
Based on John 21:15–19

Challenge Video
Watch the video Be the Change (www.youtube.com/
watch?v=nrv3hteHglI). This music video by Kat Ed-
monson promotes ways we can take care of each other
and encourages people to make a positive difference in
the world.

Hymn
“Lord, Make Us Instruments” CCS 364
OR “What Does the Lord Require of You?” CCS 580
OR “Let Justice Roll like a River” CCS 288

Prayer for Peace

Sending Forth
You are called to create pathways in the world for
peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally in-
carnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision
of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity,
justice, and peacefulness.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a
Baptismal Service: Sanctuary Community

Gathering Music
Use a guitar or flute, and a drum. Gather in a semicircle (if on a shoreline) or a circle (if around a pool). If hymnals are not available, choose campfire songs to sing.

Welcome

Call to Worship
Ask everyone to hold hands.
We have made a sanctuary with walls of community.
People walls—not for keeping out, but for welcoming in
Loving walls—with open doors and open hearts (everyone lets go of hands)
Spiritual walls—a place to call home
Sanctuary walls—a place of peace and protection
We have come today to add another beat (or two or three to represent the number of baptisms) to our community heart, with the baptism of [insert name(s)]. (The drum beats several measures of a heartbeat.)

Hymn
OR “All Are Welcome” CCS 276
OR “Humble Yourself” CCS 211

Prayer

Scripture Challenge
The Eternal Christ invites those who have yet to experience the blessings of baptism to “Follow me in the way of righteousness and peace.” Be baptized of water and the Spirit and discover your spiritual home as a fully functioning member of the body.
—Doctrine and Covenants 164:3c

Affirming Moment
Have the candidates stand in the center of the circle. Ask several members of the congregation to give statements of support for the candidates, individually or as a group.

Hymn
“Wind upon the Waters” (stanzas 1–3 with drum accompaniment) CCS 49
OR “Where He Leads Me, I Will Follow” (campfire song)

Message and Mission for the Baptismal Candidates

Sacrament of Baptism
As each baptismal candidate enters the water, the congregation sings stanza 1 of one of the following:

“God, Renew Us by Your Spirit” CCS 237
OR “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian” (campfire song)

As each person comes out of the water, the congregation sings stanza 2 of the selected song.

Community Response
(with drum beating as a heartbeat)
Leader: We welcome [insert name(s)] into our community.

Congregation: We welcome you with love and joy.

Leader: We stand as a sanctuary built on faith in Christ.

Congregation: A sanctuary of disciples who serve.

Leader: Join us, the body of Christ—

Congregation: Our hearts beating as one.

Hymn
“God, Renew Us by Your Spirit” (stanzas 3 and 4) CCS 237
OR “Sanctuary” CCS 280

Missioning
Ask everyone to face outward from the circle. Say, “We face outward from our circle which is wider now and made stronger by [insert name(s)]. Renewed by God and strengthened by the sacred community, we go out to serve and heal” (use a marching drum beat).
Service of Reflection and Commitment

Planner or Worship Leader Notes

All readings, including scriptures, may be read by a multigenerational selection of people from the floor. Project on a screen or provide a bulletin with the readings for the congregation to see as they read.

All Taizé songs are sung unaccompanied. Please prepare a vocalist to prompt the congregation.

Prayer of Examen

The prayer used in this worship service is a variation on the spiritual practice attributed to Ignatius of Loyola in the 15th century. The leader guides the congregation through a prayerful reflection of gratitude for their experiences at reunion. The worship leader or presider explains the origins of this prayer and that using this spiritual practice in the group will give everyone an opportunity to reflect on their reunion experiences. There is a repeated selection of song, reading, and meditation. A template for journal writing is included on page 19 but congregants should be free to decide which method of meditation (writing in a journal or thoughtfulness) they prefer. Distribute journal templates and pencils as people enter the sanctuary. Children may be encouraged by companions to draw pictures about their experiences and say thank you for what they enjoyed most. Further information about the origins and purpose of this spiritual practice can be found at www.CofChrist.org/spiritualformation/examen.asp.

Each section of the prayer is led by the Taizé song “O Senhor é a minha força (In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful)” CCS 129.

Allow two to three minutes for the meditation part of the prayer.

Commitment Tables

Lead congregants to form their prayers of examen and gratitude into responses of commitment. The final section of the journal sheet asks them to formulate a commitment. Then they will center their thoughts around the commitment or write it on their journal sheets. Lead the congregation into moving to commitment tables. Prepare several, easy-access, small tables around the room with brushes and paints, or finger paints (and hand cleaner or tissue). Congregants will use these to paint mandalas on the backs of their hands, and then return to their seats.

Welcome

Scripture Reading
Psalm 139:1–7

Songs of Praise
“Great and Marvelous Are Thy Works” CCS 118
Taizé: “Bless the Lord” (sing three times) CCS 575

Prayer of Praise and Gratitude

Scripture Reading

Hymn
“They, Lord, to Wonder” CCS 176

Prayer of Examen
Introduction by worship leader

Song
Taizé: “In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful” (sing three times) CCS 129

Reading

Though our mouths were full of song as the sea,
and our tongues of exultation as the multitude of its waves,
and our lips of praise as the wide-extended firmament;
though our eyes shone with light like the sun and the moon,
and our hands were spread forth like the eagles of heaven,
and our feet were swift as hinds,
we should still be unable to thank thee and bless thy name,
O Lord our God and God of our fathers,
for one thousandth or one ten thousandth part of the bounties which thou hast bestowed upon our fathers and upon us.

Meditation

Song
Taizé: “In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful” (sing three times) CCS 129

Reading
May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

—Thérèse of Lisieux

Meditation

Song
Taizé: “In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful” (sing three times) CCS 129

Reading
Come then, Holy Spirit, breathe on us
—fill us with life anew!
Grace us with new depths of honesty, integrity, and sensitivity.
Grant us new eyes to see hidden gifts of friend, family, and stranger.
Open unfettered highways of trust, appreciation, and transforming friendship
Let leadership and management be eclipsed by ministry.

Let not public performance impoverish personal piety.
And finally, gracious God, stir within us the true spirit of servanthood
—remind us of why we do what we do
—the call, the passion, the joy, the hope, the tears, the great laughter.
Give us breathing lessons!
Breathe on us that we may stir your breath of life in others!
In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.


Meditation

Commitment to Discipleship: Meditation and Journal Exercise
Based on your prayerful reflections and gratitude, please make a commitment for the future of your discipleship. Move to one of the tables around the room and as a symbol of that commitment paint a mandala on the back of your hand.

Hymn
“Go, My Children, with My Blessing” CCS 650

Reading
Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

Solo or Duet
Taizé: “O Lord, Hear My Prayer” CCS 192

Sending Forth
Go in peace, ever thankful for God’s presence along the journey.
Gratitude Reflections Based on the Prayer of Examen

Event, experience, interaction:  I give thanks for:  I commit to:
Be Still and know that I am God!

Psalm 46:10
Sharing Services

Sharing services at reunion vary greatly from one area to another. Modify these ideas to match the traditions of your reunion. There are intergenerational lesson plans that provide ideas to incorporate into sharing services as well.

Prayer stations are a good way to engage all the senses in meditation and prayer. Keep people of all ages in mind when considering the prayer station set-up. You may need a low table height, floor pillows, and chairs. Consider printing the meditation guides in a large typeface so they are easy to read. Keep it simple, and consider how things look, smell, sound, and feel.

1. Come, You Hungry

Questions for Reflection
When have you experienced hunger? Are you full? How is God calling you to be fed and to feed?

Reading
Read the lyrics of “God of Still Waiting” CCS 58

Songs
Choose two or three to learn each day, singing them more than once a day, and in different formats is encouraged as we write them on our hearts.

“Come and Find the Quiet Center” CCS 151
“Gather Your Children” CCS 77
“God of Still Waiting” CCS 58
“Through All the World a Hungry Christ” CCS 213
“Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383
“We Are Companions on the Journey” CCS 552
“Lord, Prepare Me” CCS 280

Prayer Station Ideas
Have a Bible open to Psalm 46, a flameless candle, a bowl of whole cloves, and a laminated sheet with today’s reading and questions for reflection. Prepare bookmarks on page 20—enough for every person at reunion—with the scripture passage “Be still, and know that I am God!” Psalm 46:10, and a mandala design (template provided). Provide crayons and colored pencils for people to customize the bookmarks with thoughts or ideas from listening for God.

2. Transformation at the Table

Questions for Reflection
Who is God calling you to invite to your table? Where do you see transformation happening? What has to happen to a seed before it transforms into a plant?

Reading
Read “God of the Future” CCS 360

Songs
“In the Bulb There Is a Flower” CCS 561
“Amazing Grace” CCS 19
“I Will Talk to My Heart” CCS 168
“God of the Future” CCS 360
“With Gifts That Differ by Your Grace” CCS 328
“For Everyone Born” CCS 285

Prayer Station Ideas
Keep the flameless candle on the table with a live plant next to it. Have a laminated sheet with today’s reading and questions for reflection available. Have several bowls of seeds for people to touch and to take one. Use sunflower seeds, edamame seeds in pods, roasted pumpkin seeds, nuts of various kinds, corn, or grains.
3. Generosity on the Street

**Questions for Reflection**
How is it possible to give and still have? How can we move from the idea that “there isn't enough” to “enough and to spare”? Can we see one another as ourselves?

**Reading**
*Read the lyrics to “Come, Know My Joy, the Maker Says” CCS 518*

**Songs**
“Till All the Jails Are Empty” CCS 303
“Sometimes We Wait, Expecting God” CCS 304
“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” CCS 605
“Can We Calculate Our Giving” CCS 617
“Christ’s Partners All Are We” CCS 630
“Make Us, O God, a Church That Shares” CCS 657

**Prayer Station Ideas**
*Keep the flameless candle on the table along with today’s reading and questions for reflection on a laminated card for reviewing. Have a large handheld mirror on the table. Next to the mirror have a large piece of paper with the words: Ubuntu—I am because we are, we belong to each other. This is a Swahili word that means we are one. When you look in the mirror together, see yourselves as one. If you are alone at the table, look in the mirror and notice your surroundings. You are at reunion, in a community of believers. When we see that we are one, we know that all people are one, and generosity is our response.*

4. Justice in the Neighborhood

**Questions for Reflection**
How can I help bring about justice in my neighborhood? We always hear the words justice and peace together, how are they related?

**Reading**
*Read the lyrics to “Through All the World a Hungry Christ” CCS 213*

**Songs**
“Clothe Us in Your Spirit” CCS 584
“O for a World” CCS 379
“For Such a Time” CCS 376
“To Be Your Presence” CCS 351
“The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound” CCS 347
“Let Justice Roll like a River” CCS 288
“Let Justice Flow Down” CCS 286

**Prayer Station Ideas**
*Have the flameless candle on a small table with a laminated copy of today’s reading and questions for reflection for people to review. Provide a justice-making activity—such as projects listed at www.daysforgirls.org—or create hygiene kits (toothpaste, small soaps, toothbrushes, etc.) to give to a local shelter in your area.*
5. Wholeness in the Village

Questions for Reflection
How can you invest in your “village” to work toward wholeness? Where do your gifts fit into the whole picture?

Reading
Read the lyrics to “Creator of the Intertwined” CCS 344.

Songs
“Beauty for Brokenness” CCS 302
“When the Darkness Overwhelms Us” CCS 314
“Circle Round for Freedom” CCS 383
“Oh Christ, the Healer, We Have Come” CCS 544
“Beloved Community of God” CCS 588
“Find Your Wholeness” CCS 643

Prayer Station Ideas
Have the flameless candle, plus copies of today’s reading, and questions for reflection for people to review. Have a puzzle for people to work on together—each person or family group can work on it. If it gets finished before the end of the day, have someone begin the puzzle again.

6. Feed My Sheep

Questions for Reflection
Why would Jesus ask us to feed sheep? What does it feel like to feed someone? Can you feed your enemy?

Reading
Read the lyrics to “We Are Pilgrims on a Journey” CCS 550.

Songs
“Let There Be Peace on Earth” CCS 307
“We Are Pilgrims on a Journey” CCS 550
“Come Away from Rush and Hurry” CCS 83
“Let Your Heart Be Broken” CCS 353
“Whatsoever You Do” CCS 355
“Brothers and Sisters of Mine” CCS 616

Prayer Station Ideas
On a small table have the flameless candle, plus a laminated copy of today’s reading, and questions for reflection for people to review. Provide enough applesauce for participants to feed one another several spoonfuls from paper cups. Leave instructions to pour a small amount into a cup and then have each person take a turn feeding another. Prepare: paper cups, spoons, applesauce, napkins, a large bin for trash, and one for recyclables.