

Worshiping God Together

***A Guide for Children
and Their Parents***

Office of Theology and Worship
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

——— *Gathering* ———

This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD!” (Psalm 122:1)

CALL TO WORSHIP

God is the one who calls us to worship. We come to celebrate together all the good things God has done — especially the gift of life and grace in Jesus Christ. When we remember these things, we give thanks and praise to God.

OPENING PRAYER

We praise God, who is known to us in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We pray for God to bless us so that we may be a blessing to others. We pray for Jesus to be with us, as he promised to be, whenever we gather in his name. We pray for the Spirit to make our worship holy, joyful, and true.

OPENING HYMN OR SONG

The people of God have always sung songs to praise God — from the psalms of the ancient temple to the hymns of the Christian church. Singing is a way we can glorify God together, with hearts and voices united, making a joyful sound to the Lord.

CONFESSION AND PARDON

God promises always to love and forgive us — even when don't follow God's way, or when we do things that hurt others. Everyone makes mistakes; that is why we confess our sin together. When we confess our sin, we say that we are sorry for these things, and we ask God to forgive us and help us live new lives.

Because Jesus lived and died and rose again for us, we know that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. That is why when the leader says, “In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven,” we respond, “**Thanks be to God.**”

PEACE

Our peace comes from knowing how much God loves us in Jesus Christ. With God's help, we try to love and forgive one another as Christ loves and forgives us. So when someone says, “The peace of Christ be with you,” we respond, “**And also with you.**”

A Litany for the Presentation of Sacred Symbols

Here is the cross, a sign of God's love.

**Jesus is our Savior and Lord,
who lived and died and rose again for us.**

Here is the candle, the light of Christ.

**Jesus is the light of the world,
showing us God's holy way.**

Here is the Bible, the book of faith.

**Jesus is the Word of God made flesh
who came to live among us.**

Here is the water, a sign of God's grace.

**Jesus gives us living water
so that we may never be thirsty.**

Here is the bread, the body of Christ.

**Jesus is the bread of heaven,
the food of everlasting life.**

Here is the cup, a sign of God's promise.

**Jesus is the vine and we are the branches,
growing together in faith, hope, and love.**

-----Word-----

Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you, O LORD,
my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Before we read from the Bible, we pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to hear what God is saying to us, and to do what God is calling us to do as followers of Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

We read from the Bible to remember God's mighty acts in history, to discover what God is doing in our world, and to look forward to the future God has promised. There are different kinds of writing in the Bible — stories, songs, laws, letters, wisdom, dreams. All of it is God's Word for us today. That is why when the reader says, "The Word of the

Lord,” we respond, “**Thanks be to God.**”

SERMON

In the sermon, we hear the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We also listen for what God is calling *us* to do — so that we may love and serve God and our neighbors.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

After we hear the good news, we say what we believe. Often these words come from the church’s creeds and confessions. In these writings, we remember and tell the world who we are, what we believe, and how we should live according to God’s Word.

BAPTISM OR INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

Baptism is the way we become members of the church, the body of Christ or family of God. It is a sign of everything God has promised us — new life in Jesus, forgiveness of sin, and the coming of a new creation. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit rested on him like a bird from heaven, and God said: “You are my beloved child.” God says the same thing to us when we are baptized.

Everyone who is baptized is a kind of minister — called to live like Jesus, to love others, and to serve God. Each one of us is given special gifts from the Holy Spirit to help us do these things. When we remember our baptism, we give thanks for these gifts and this calling, and we promise again to follow Jesus in everything we do.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jesus prays for us and wants us to pray for others — for the whole church and for the world that God so loves. We pray especially for people who are sick, hungry, lonely, or poor; for the cities and neighborhoods where we live; for people and leaders in other countries; for peace and fairness for all people; for all God’s creatures; for clean air, water, and soil; and for the work of the whole church to show and tell the good news of Jesus.

OFFERING

Every good thing is a gift from God — the food we eat, the things we have, the time we spend, our whole lives. We give our lives back to God as a way of saying thank you — sharing money with those who are in need, giving food to those who are hungry, and spending our time to help others.

——— **Table** ——

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, O God,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips. (Psalm 63:5)

O LORD, the eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

Jesus shared many meals with his followers — feeding hungry crowds with a little bread and fish, gathering with his disciples to remember how God saved the people, and breaking bread with them after he rose from the dead. The Lord’s Supper is a meal that we share today with Jesus and with the whole church throughout the world.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

When we pray before the Lord’s Supper we do three things. First, we celebrate and give thanks for all the good things God has done for us. Second, we remember and give thanks for Jesus — how he lived, died, and rose again to save us and give us life. Third, we pray that the Holy Spirit will feed us through this meal, so that we can grow strong in faith and be faithful followers of Jesus.

A Great Thanksgiving for Children

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Thank you, God, for making the world—
the sun and rain, the moon and stars,
mountains and valleys, rivers and lakes,
deserts and oceans, forests and fields,
and all the plants, animals, and people.

Thank you for making us your children.

You know us and call us by name.

You help us to learn and grow.

You find us when we are lost

and you lead us safely back home.

That is why we sing this joyful song:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Thank you, God, for Jesus, your holy child.
He taught us how to love each other,
to take care of people who are sick,
to share our food with the hungry,
and to tell good news to all the world.

You sent Jesus to show us the way
so that we could live forever with you.
When we share this meal with Jesus
we remember your great love
and we say thank you, thank you, thank you.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Spirit in this place,
so that Jesus will be with us
when we share this bread and cup.
Make us one family in the church
and use us to do your good work.

Help us to follow you each day
until Jesus makes everything new
and we can gather around one table
with all of your people everywhere.
We pray these things in your holy name.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Before we share this meal, we say the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. We pray for the coming of God's new kingdom "on earth as in heaven." We ask God to feed us, to forgive us for the wrong we have done, to teach us to forgive others, to help us do what is right, and to keep us safe from bad things.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Jesus gives us his own body, broken like bread, so that we will have everything we need. He gives us his own life, poured out like a cup, so that we can live with him forever.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

When we share the bread and cup, we are sharing a meal with Jesus and with all God's people. The bread and cup are a small taste of the great goodness of God, and a sign of the meal we will one day share in heaven. That is why when the leader says, "The gifts of God for the people of God," we respond, "**Thanks be to God.**"

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

When everyone has shared the bread and cup, we thank God for feeding us in this holy meal. We pray that this meal with Jesus will help us to grow in faith and make us strong to love and serve God and neighbors.

——— *Sending* ——

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long. (Psalm 23:6)

The LORD will keep your going out
and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore. (Psalm 122:8)

EXTENDED SERVING OF COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper is supposed to be a meal of the whole church — but sometimes people are not able to come to worship because they are sick or can't leave their homes. After the service, leaders from the church may go to visit these people, telling them about the good news they heard and sharing the bread and cup with them.

CLOSING HYMN OR SONG

As we get ready to go and serve God in the world, we sing a song to praise and celebrate God's goodness, and to show how we are called to live in Jesus' name.

BLESSING AND CHARGE

God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others. We go out to follow Jesus in the world — to show and tell the good news of God to everyone.

