

INVITATION TO COMMUNION



Come to the table, you who are divided, torn and angry.

Here we find hope.

Come to the table, you who are marginalized and confused.

Here we find love.

Come to table, you who are weary and tired.

Here we find rest for our souls and food for journey.

Come to the table, you who desire peace, justice and reconciliation.

Here we are enlightened and grow in the unity of faith for all.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.**

Great and mysterious God of creation, we do give you thanks for the wonders of life,
the beauty of the world we live in and the deep and expansive universe
of which we are only a small part.

We thank you that you have not left us alone in this world.

We are blessed with the community of others; we experience your presence
in the love we share, and in mysterious ways beyond our abilities to comprehend or put into words.
We are grateful for the covenants of grace you have always offered to your people.

In ages past, you sent leaders and prophets to show us your ways and guide our paths.
When we failed, you did not reject us;

You are a God of second chances and even more.

You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

You accept our repentance and offer us forgiveness.

When the time was right, you sent Jesus among us
to demonstrate your love in new and radical ways.

As we gather around this table to share this meal,
we remember the great extent of his selfless love
and give you thanks in humility and awe.

We add our voices to the chorus of history, who praise you in various ways,
in a multitude of languages and a multitude of songs,
forever singing to the glory of your name:

You are holy, dear God,

and blessed is Jesus Christ,

who came and who comes in your name.

Born into a humble family, he challenged the kings and rulers of his day.

Submitting himself to baptism and temptation, he redefined what it means to be holy.

Teaching with wisdom and authority, he helped us understand you and our world in new and transforming ways. Healing those who were broken, he hinted at the wonders of your new creation. Eating with outcasts and sinners, he showed us how to live with others.

Loving you and loving us with his entire being, he demonstrated what it means to be created in your image and to see your reflection in others, whether they be our friends or our enemies.

Suffering humiliation at the hands of those in power, he displayed the true power of weakness. Rising from the dead, he proved that nothing is beyond the power of your redemptive love. As we come to share the richness of your table, we cannot forget the rawness of the earth.

We cannot take bread
and forget those who are hungry.

We cannot take this cup
and forget those who are thirsty.

We cannot hear your words of peace
and forget the world at war.

We cannot celebrate a family feast
and forget our divisions.

We cannot gather around this table
and forget those who are suffering.

And remembering all that Jesus did and taught, let us proclaim the mystery of our faith:
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

So, hear now, loving God, the prayers and petitions of our hearts.
Gracious and loving God, infuse this sanctuary with the presence of your Spirit.
Bring us into communion with Christ as we experience his presence
in this sacred meal.

May these ordinary elements of life, this bread and this cup,
be transformed by your presence into the body and blood of Christ,
nourishing us with spiritual food, and equipping us to be the body of Christ in the world.

Filled with your Spirit, may we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you,
loving you with our entire beings, and loving others as ourselves.

God, these are the marks of your kingdom,
which we pray for now as Jesus taught us:
Our Father (*pray in the language most comfortable to you*) ... (adopted by John W. Vest, 2010)