

Immigrant Rights Sunday, May 1, 2011

Call to Worship

One: Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed!

One: Come from the south and the north, the west and the east.
Come learn of God's love and salvation for all people.

**Many: We are open to all God would teach us.
We are here to celebrate Christ's presence.**

One: Come to be transformed.
Come, so that through you God might transform others.

**Many: We are here to experience resurrection in our lives.
We are here so that the world in which we live might be resurrected.**

Opening Prayer

Resurrection God, meet us in the place of our deepest fears and grant us peace. Breathe your Holy Spirit upon us so that we might be strengthened to live, to love and to serve in Christ's name. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

One: Let us confess our sin.

Many: Creator of All, we are part of a nation founded upon an understanding that we are all equal and endowed by you with certain unalienable rights, among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We are blessed beyond measure by your goodness to us.

Thank you God.

In these tough economic times, we are fearful of losing our lifestyle, our freedoms and all the "stuff" that makes us happy. Rather than trusting you, we scapegoat immigrants – denying them the same unalienable rights we claim for ourselves.

Forgive us God.

Help us to welcome your children, our sisters and brothers, regardless of national origin. Help us to build your Beloved Community on earth as it is in heaven.

Silence for personal reflection and confession.

Words of Absolution

One: Christ enters the place of our deepest fear and says, "Peace be with you."
We are forgiven.

Many: Thanks be to God!

Communion Prayer

One: God be with you.

Many: And with your spirit.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them up to God.

One: Give thanks to God, Transformer of Nations.

Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

One: God of Creation,

known throughout the Earth by many names,
we give you thanks for the beauty of this planet which we call home.

God of Life,

we give you thanks for the breath which fills our lungs and animates our
bodies.

God of All,

for the rich diversity of humanity we thank you.

Throughout the ages you gave us freedom and we built walls.

You sent us out in love and we covered in fear.

We thank you that when the time was right,

Christ came through our walls to take our fear and give us peace.

And so with all creation, in all time and every nation,

we join in the unending hymn of praise.

Many: Holy, Holy, Holy . . .

Words of Remembrance/Institution

One: We gather at this table and remember how on the night when Jesus was handed over, he gathered with his disciples in the upper room and together they shared in an ordinary meal that had extraordinary implications.

For at this table,

Jesus broke bread and shared wine with the one who betrayed him.

At this table,

Jesus broke bread and shared wine with the one who denied him.

At this table,

Jesus broke bread and shared wine with those who fled from him in his
time of need.

At this table,

Jesus broke bread and shared wine with people from all walks of life.

And so whenever we gather at this table to share the bread and the wine in this community of faith, we proclaim Jesus' life, which affirms there is a place at this table for all people.

Many: The love of God transcends every power that tries to contain it.¹

(You may want to have the previous line repeated by other voices in other languages including American Sign Language, to further illustrate God's ability to transcend barriers.)

Prayer of Consecration

One: Most Holy Spirit, descend upon these gifts of grain and grape and upon us so that we might share the presence of the living Christ and be empowered to transcend walls of fear and nationality to extend your welcome and peace.

Blessing

One: The blessings of Christ, Body and Spirit, keep and preserve you to everlasting life.

Many: Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Many: Thank you, God, for entering our space, in spite of the barriers we construct, and feeding us with the presence of Christ. May our lives follow Christ's example. By the power of your Spirit, send us out to welcome the stranger so that all might enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Amen.

Sending Forth/Benediction

Go forth to share life.

Go forth to share liberty,

Go forth to pursue happiness with brothers and sisters from all nations.

Go forth to build God's beloved community.

And know that the God of Creation, the Christ of Resurrection and the Spirit of Welcome will be with you, this day and ever more. Amen.

This liturgy was prepared by The Rev. Bob Gross, D. Min., OCC, pastor at Lake Avenue United Church of Christ, Elyria, OH.

¹ Adapted from *Toward a Hopeful Future: Why the Emergent Church is Good News for Mainline Congregations* by Phil Snider and Emily Bowen, © 2010, The Pilgrim Press. Permission is granted for use.