

Call to Worship

(coordinated to the cover image, see litanies below for more general calls to worship)

Come to the place where love like loaves is multiplied.

We come to the place of grace.

Come to the time when we let the holy in us rise.

We come to the time of grace.

Come to Christ Jesus who transforms our human ...
biscuits, baguettes, hot dog buns and hushpuppies
into hope for all God's children.

We come to the fullness of grace.

Opening Prayer

Bake of us, O God, a bread of worship. Take this Sunday morning crust of the week and, through your blessing, let the yeast of the Spirit rise. We bring our crumbs of courage, pita of prayer, lefse of listening, and the tortilla, challah, rice cake and naan of our diversity to be shared, so that our community may truly become the Body of Christ in this place and for all your world. Amen

Prayer of Confession

O God, forgive us when we answer your grace upon grace with grumble after grumble about cutbacks, shortfalls and limited resources. Forgive us when we answer your grace upon grace with grim predictions and grudging giving. Forgive us when we grip reality so tightly, we cannot loosen up to receive your surprises and possibilities, for we pray with our open hands and hearts. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Christ's love is in small details – two coins, one mustardseed, all of our missed sparrows and chances. We are forgiven and made new. Thanks be to God.

Offering Resources

A Doxology

Praise God who shines amazing grace –
on home and church and lonely place.
Grant us this day the chance to give
in offering plate and ways to live.

God blesses every circumstance,
and offering lets our spirits dance.
As love shines forth from every face –
we know we've seen amazing grace.

Call to Offering

(regular Sunday during Stewardship season – see below for pledge Sunday)

What an opportunity we have to give and receive! As we present our Sunday morning offering, let us reflect on all the sharings of the week that is past and all the possibilities for generosity in the week to come.

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, we thank you that generosity allows us to experience such abundance. We rejoice to lift before you this potential for crayons, sheet music, salary, electricity and mission, and ask your blessing upon our own transformation through Christ into a holy offering. Amen.

Dedication of Pledge Cards / Faith Promises / Commitments

Please hold your pledge card / faith promise / commitment for a moment and reflect on all the resources that you have and the ways in which they are used to multiply the grace in your experience through expenditures of home, family, other gifts of charity, the paying of monthly bills, cautious savings and sweet extravagances. We ask God's blessings on all of these choices and give thanks for the very responsibility to choose, not just what to do with Sunday money, but also Monday through Saturday money!

Let us pray:

Bless, O God, all the financial resources that will pass through our hands in the year to come. May our planning be wise, our spending be faithful, our giving be joyful and our saving offer peace of mind. Keep us from waste, worry and regret, remind us always to be sensitive to the needs of those who have less than we do, and let justice and compassion guide our earning and our investing. Amen.

Now let us gather our pledge cards / faith promises.

God we have received grace upon grace. It is grace to experience the joy of giving, and it is grace to participate in the ministry of this community of faith here and elsewhere. Help us to keep these promises of support, but to be honest and open with any need to release them.

We give thanks for the work of those who prepare our budget and ask your blessing upon its structure and its flexibility. We give thanks for those who accept the responsibility to manage our church's finances in the year to come.

We also lift before you this morning the grace we receive and give in time, prayer, skill, energy and participation. Each of us pledges these presents of presence as well as our gifts of money.

Amazing grace – as we give, we are not less, but blessed. Amen.

Benediction

May you receive grace upon grace!
May you recognize the grace you receive!
May you always open your heart and hands
so that grace
multiplied to the power of love
in Jesus Christ
flows through you to all the world!
Amen.

Litanies

1) Litany – “We Have received Grace Upon Grace”

(this litany is coordinated to Ozzie Smith, Jr.’s reflections and expands on his phrases)

It’s God, not the economy, who reminds us of our abundance.

We have received grace, and grace we give.

It’s the Bible, not the budget, that calls our church to faithfulness.

We have received grace, and grace we give.

God, who created the bull and the bear,
teaches us stewardship beyond boasting or fearfulness.

We have received grace, and grace we give.

God who is the source of all resource, inspires creative uses
of finances, time, energy and enthusiasm.

We have received grace, and grace we give.

God is not broke – never has been, never will be.
God is not broke -- God is blessed.

We have received grace, and grace we give.

2) Litany – “We Have Received Grace upon Grace”

For the grace upon grace which is this community of faith – sanctuary and sermon, music and mission, practices of hospitality, of education, of discernment.

We give you thanks.

For grace we each bring to add to others’ graces – our personal hopes and skills, the time we can share, the experiences from which we offer tenderness, our willingness to take responsibility or expose vulnerability.

We give you thanks.

For unexpected grace in trouble’s face that sustains us in hard times – diagnosis, discouragement, downturn or despair – and the way community granites that grace so that it is strong enough for any situation.

We give you thanks.

For grace in the spaces – all those possibilities of next year – the new people who will sit in these pews, the new programs though which we will reach out, the transitions completed and the transitions begun.

We give you thanks.

For the grace of prayer, the grace of scripture, the grace of forgiveness, the grace of the resurrection promise, the grace of a single cup of cold water for a child, a stranger or a friend.

We give you thanks.

All these we have and do and will receive through Jesus Christ who opens our hearts and hands so that grace may flow through us to all the world.

For so many blessings we give you thanks and praise. Amen