



In the midst of suffering, where is God? God is here. Where are you? When you give to OGHS, you are here.

Scriptures: Matthew 25:31–46, Psalm 145:18, 1 John 3:11–24

Call to Worship:

*to be read by two groups
(e.g. adults and children; left and right;
choir and congregation)*

All: Praise God!

Group 1: We praise you, our God, and we bless
your name forever and ever.

Group 2: Every day we will bless you, and praise
your name.

Group 1: Great are you, God, and greatly to be
praised.

Group 2: Your greatness is unsearchable.

Group 1: You are near to all who call on you.

Group 2: To all who call on you in truth,

All: Praise God!

Opening Prayer

Sustaining God, we gather to seek your presence.
We know that when we call out to you, you are
near. You hold us up when we are falling. You are
just in all your ways, and kind in all your doings.
You have never failed us.

Saving God, we gather to proclaim your power,
knowing that your words are faithful and your
deeds are gracious. We stand in awe of your
wondrous works. Still-speaking God, we gather
to listen for your voice.

Speak to us in scripture, song, and silence.
Show us the way to love, not just in word and
speech, but in truth and action.
Show us where you want to lead us.
Amen.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

God of love, you created us to love you and one
another. We confess that we have sometimes limited
that love to words, and failed to make that love real
by our actions. We have failed to recognize Christ
in the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the naked,
the incarcerated and the sick. Too often, we have
turned away from your presence, failing to share
what we have with our brothers and sisters in need.
Forgive us. Turn our hearts, and guide us to follow
in your ways anew.

Words of Assurance

Leader: Our God is gracious and merciful, slow to
anger and abounding in steadfast love.

All: God is good to all, and has compassion for all
creation.

Litany

*Leader reads the regular font;
congregation reads the bold.*

O God of promises, you remind us again and again
that you are present with your people. When
our hearts are broken,
You are here.

When we worry about our country and our future,
You are here.

Where anyone is hungry, or thirsty,
You are here.

When we feel like strangers, and wonder if anyone
will welcome us,
You are here.

Where anyone is sick, or in need of care and
company,
You are here.

When people are in prison,
You are here.

When anyone needs clothing,
You are here.

You, O God, are here with us when we suffer.
Empower us to be with others as they suffer.
Help those who feel hopeless, or who are filled
with fear. Help us to remember that You are
here, God, in the midst of all that we are going
through. Help us remember that you are a God
of love, and you love us.

Amen.



Invitation to the Offering

We worship a God who gives generously and abundantly. God gives to all creatures their food in due season, and from God's open hand the desire of every living thing is satisfied.

God has given us so many blessings. The food we eat, the friends and family we cherish, the precious gift of God's love for us, a love that led Jesus to lay down his life for us.

When that love abides in us, we cannot refuse to help our brothers and sisters in need. Through our regular offerings we...*[celebrate the work of your congregation, locally]*. Through the special offering for One Great Hour of Sharing, we join with other Christians to make our presence known to people who might feel forgotten—the hungry, the hurting, the thirsty, the sick. Our gifts, together, provide food, shelter, comfort, and safety all over the world.

Dedicatory Prayer

Gracious God, in our offering we return to you a portion of the blessings you have showered upon us. Bless these gifts, that they might bring comfort, food and shelter to those who need it. Bless those who will receive them. Let them know your love through full bellies, warm clothing, and safe places to sleep. Amen.

Charge & Benediction

We worship God in sanctuaries, in beautiful, holy spaces. But Christ has told us that if we want to find him in this world, we will seek out the lost, the least of his brothers and sisters—those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, in prison, naked and estranged. May we go forth this day with eyes open to seeing Christ in our world, and may we know God's love by loving one another. May we love, not just in word and speech, but in truth and action.

"Christ Has No Body," *—Teresa of Avila*

Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless His people.

Invitation to Communion

"We know love by this, that Christ laid down his life for us." We come to this table to celebrate and experience that life-giving love.

There is a Latin American table grace that says "Bless, O Lord, our bread. Give bread to those who are hungry. And to those who have bread, give hunger for justice. Bless, O Lord, our bread."

We come to this table to break bread together, joining with the church across the world and throughout the ages at this foretaste of the great feast to come. Some come to this table hungry, struggling to find the bread they need for each day. Some come to this table with access to plenty of food, but starving for God's nourishing love.

What we see in this feast of love, a table where all are fed, can also make us hungry for a world that is more like this table. This bread and cup can sustain us, give us the strength to lay down our lives for one another.

At this table, we remember ...

"While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:26–29 NRSV)

Blessing of the Elements

Dear God, bless this bread, and us as we receive it, that we might be the body of Christ, united in love and service. Bless, O Lord, the cup poured out to draw us in, let it renew in us your covenant of love, and our shared commitment to you. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, gracious God, for your gifts of bread and wine, the gifts of Christ's body and blood. We thank you for nourishing us, sustaining us, and empowering us to live as one body. We thank you for your most amazing love, and pray that your love would abide in us always. Amen.

