

The First Church in Belfast

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

October 7, 2018

10:00 a.m.

WE ARE GATHERED IN

An asterisk * means please stand.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PRELUDE

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

CALL TO WORSHIP

On this day we celebrate World Communion Sunday.

Throughout the world, humankind is naming its hungers.

Hunger for connection, hunger for community, hunger for food.

Together, children, women, and men, are claiming our thirst.

Thirsting for freedom, thirsting for justice, thirsting for clear water.

The entire globe is claiming its longing.

Longing for healing, longing for reconciliation, longing for peace.

Our hunger, thirst, and longing are met at the table of Christ!

Take and eat, take and drink, take and become one!

***OPENING HYMN** “One Bread, One Body” (*see back page*)

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

CHORAL ANTHEM “In Mercy Broken” by Ruth Elaine Schram

YOUNG PEOPLE’S CIRCLE

***GREETING OF PEACE**

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. (2x)

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

WORDS OF GRACE

Song of the Earth Spirit, Navajo Origin Legend

It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed.

I, I am the spirit within the earth.

The feet of the earth are my feet,

The legs of the earth are my legs.

The strength of the earth is my strength,

The thoughts of the earth are my thoughts,

The voice of the earth is my voice.

The feather of the earth is my feather,

All that belongs to the earth belongs to me.

All that surrounds the earth surrounds me.

I, I am the sacred works of the earth.

It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed.

WE HEAR THE WORD

FIRST READING Genesis 2:4b-8

GOSPEL READING John 15:4-5

MESSAGE *“World Communion”*

WE LIVE THE WORD

***HYMN** “In Christ There Is No East or West” #395

INVITATION TO GIVE

OFFERING MUSIC

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God for all that love has done.

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, one.

(Note: The First Church honors the diverse languages of faith. Please sing with words that are meaningful to you. Other versions of the Doxology are found in our hymnal, #776-781.)

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Receive these gifts of our hearts, dear God, as we strive to become one with you and all peoples of the earth. Let our resources flow like a river to where they will refresh and renew the face of the earth as you desire. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

PRAYER for WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Adapted from One Great Hour of Sharing, Congregational Ministries Division
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY

Creator God, we give you thanks for calling us as stewards. Open our eyes to the intricacies of creation. Help us feel the textures of the world. Unstop our ears that we may hear your Word. Breathe into us the

sweet aromas of life, that we may taste the fruits of your promise even now;
Even now, O God, even in Africa.

Africa. Where your church grows rapidly. Where faith is exuberant. Where a bright mosaic of culture shows the world the vibrancy of your love.

But where there is also pain, and famine, and thirst. Where violent unrest and ethnic strife fill so many lives and resist the unity our Savior brings.

(silent prayer for Africa)

Help us to stand with those who suffer, respond when we are called, give in appropriate ways so that wells will not run dry, creeping deserts may be slowed, and the chains of despair may be removed. Help us to bring the gospel, that your realm may be realized, even now;

Even now, O God, even in Asia.

Asia. So vast, so deeply rooted in tradition. Where your church is small but where religion is great. Gentle Asia, beautiful Asia, troubled Asia.

God of wisdom, teach us respect. Help us to learn from those who express their faith in different ways. Deepen our understanding of tradition, serenity, and prayer. Help us in this ancient land to witness meaningfully to the saving power of your Son.

(silent prayer for Asia)

Awaken us to systemic issues that increase despair and prolong poverty. Guide us in responsible stewardship, that your reign may extend throughout the world, even now;

Even now, O God, even in the Middle East.

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The Middle East. The cradle of the church; the birthplace of our Lord; the land we call holy. Where the pain of the cross is so vivid; where the dry earth is watered by the tears of its children.

Show us again that we cannot feed the hungry with threats. We cannot quench thirst with religious intolerance. We cannot build for the future on sands of hate.

(silent prayer for the Middle East)

Lift us above strife. Infuse us with mutual respect, that the captives might be freed, that the frightened might be comforted. Lift us, loving God, as you lifted the stone from your Son's tomb. Make us joyous witnesses of his victory over death. Show us your grace, even now;

Even now, O God, even in Europe.

Europe and its magnificent Christian heritage. Where art, music, and architecture inspire generation upon generation with the beauty and the majesty of your gospel message.

Where the dramatic change in recent days has brought poverty and violence, displacing whole communities into a desperate present and an uncertain future. Where entire peoples have fallen away from faith in you.

(silent prayer for Europe)

God of grace, help us to believe and trust in your eternal promise. Point us toward the pathway of peace. Answer Jesus' prayer that all may be one in him, even now;

Even now, O God, even in Latin America.

Latin America. Where your church struggles valiantly for the weak and the poor. Where martyrs are made. In Latin America, so rich in the bounties of creation, so misused by outsiders. In Latin America, where we have made mistakes in your name and brought a gospel soiled with our greed.

Your servants in Latin America have taught us by example. Kindle within our hearts our own integrity of faith. Inspire within us a new sense of your church.

(silent prayer for Latin America)

Make us aware that through such commitment, your peace and justice will be revealed, not in some distant time and place, but also right now, right here;

Here, O God, in North America, even here.

North America. Where so much affluence hides so much poverty and disease. North America, the sometimes hollow land, with so much to give. Make us bold in your Spirit, but humble in our work.

Help us share your grace in Word and deed. Help us assume the servant's role as Jesus did. Help us share our blessings as the Samaritan did. Help us to put ourselves in others' shoes, sandals, mountain boots, and to walk in the footsteps of bare and calloused feet.

Here, O God, and throughout all the earth, we trust in your abiding care. We pledge ourselves to a deepened commitment in your name.

(silent prayer for North America)

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CALL TO COMMUNION

An Ashanti (West African) Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) Prayer

o god, creator of our land, our earth, the trees, the animals and humans, all is for your honor. the drums beat it out, and people sing about it, and they dance with noisy joy that you are the lord.
you also have pulled the other continents out of the sea.
what a wonderful world you have made out of wet mud,
and what beautiful men and women!
we thank you for all the beauty of this earth. the grace of your creation is like a cool day between rainy seasons. we drink in your creation with our eyes. we listen to the bird's jubilee with our ears. how strong and good and sure your earth smells,
and everything that grows there.
be with us in our countries and in all africa, and in the whole world. prepare us for the service that we should render.

blessing the bread and cup

sharing the meal

prayer of thanksgiving

-silence-

WE ARE SENT AND BLESSED

***CLOSING HYMN** "For the Fruit of All Creation" #425

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

One Bread, One Body