

COMPANION TO OUR LITURGY

May 24, 2026 – June 21, 2026 | *(from the Feast of Pentecost to the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost)*
“The Bible Uncensored, Part 1: Power, Fire, and Propaganda”



WE GATHER TOGETHER

Ringing of the Bell to Center the Community & the Entrance of the Light

May 24 (Pentecost): “Veni Sancte Spiritus” (Taize Community) - We enter today confronting the violent, monolithic reach of empire, which always demands one language, one narrative, and absolute conformity. This ancient chant invites us into Babel's collapse and Pentecost's wild, multi-lingual fire. The overlapping chorus calls us to shatter imperial uniformity and embody the chaotic, decentralized Spirit that refuses to be tamed by human empires.

May 31 (Trinity): “Talkin’ ‘Bout a Revolution” (Tracy Chapman) - We sit today with the gritty story of a people completely exhausted by 18 years of imperial economic extraction under a bloated tyrant. Tracy Chapman's anthem captures the exact breaking point where the poor refuse to stay quiet and the tables finally begin to turn. We listen to this to anchor ourselves in the reality of those plotting survival and demanding structural liberation.

June 7 (Second after Pentecost): “Gimme Shelter” (The Rolling Stones) - Powerful nations use polished myths to hide the dark reality of government-sponsored murder, abuse, and deep corruption. This song captures the terrifying helplessness of living in a world where rulers can ruin a life with one cold command. We play this music to look directly at the damage caused by empires.

June 14 (Third after Pentecost): “The Cave” (Mumford and Sons) - Today we look at the harsh reality of a community starved of its resources and living under the constant threat of government violence. This song captures the strength it takes to break free from terror and refuse to let oppression win. As the rhythm builds, we honor survivors like Deborah and Jael, who found the strength to fight back when everything was on the line.

June 21 (Fourth after Pentecost): “Zombies” (The Cranberries) - We close the first part of our series by facing the deeply disturbing trauma of prophets who are horrified by their nation's obsession with war. This song exposes the mindless, repetitive cycle of violence that infects our society. We hear this outcry as a wakeup call to strip away our polite religious disguises and name the horror for what it really is.

Blessed is the beloved community of God's peace.
And blessed are those who follow the ways of love.

Before we face the mirrors of history, remember that you are already safe, already loved, and already held. Bring your weariness to this space; it is welcome here.

(sung) **Come, dear friends, let's feast together,
stories share and fears release.
Christ is opening wide the circle.
may this house shine bright with peace.**

We gather for the God who breaks out of every book, who is calling us to freedom.

We refuse to hide the trauma in our sacred stories.

We honor sacred stories by telling the truth about them.

**Because the Bible mirrors both our worst cruelty
and our deepest longing for justice.**

Yet, the Spirit still speaks through the wounded, the silenced, and the erased.

**Give us the courage to look clearly, and holy anger
for every violence dressed up as divine destiny.**

Come, Holy Troublemaker.

**Kindle our imagination,
shatter our borders,
and lead us into your liberating love. Amen.**

Singing – "Longing for Light" (VT 715)



WE SHARE OUR STORIES

God of the Silenced, we do not come seeking an easy word. We do not ask for our sacred stories to protect us from discomfort, or for ancient violence to be hidden beneath easy answers. Send your Spirit to awaken our storytelling. Give us the courage to ask honest questions, the wisdom to listen for what has been buried, and the faith to follow your justice wherever it leads. As we open these difficult pages, tend to our wounds as we face the wounds of history. Keep our hearts passionate, our minds alert, and our hands ready for the work of repair. Do not let us become passive consumers of an ancient book, but rather faithful witnesses, courageous listeners, and active builders of a liberated world held together by your love. **Amen.**

First Readings

May 24 (Pentecost): "Panic at Pentecost" from Acts 2:1-15 and Genesis 11

May 31 (Trinity): "Assassination of Eglon" from Judges 3:12-30

June 7 (Second after Pentecost): "Tyranny of David" from 2 Samuel 11

June 14 (Third after Pentecost): "Execution of Sisera" from Judges 4-5

June 21 (Fourth after Pentecost): "Invective of Oholah and Oholibah" from Ezekiel 23

Psalter – Psalm 10



Why do you stand aloof, Adonai?
Why do you seem to hide yourself in times of trouble?
The violent arrogantly pursue the weak
and catch them in craftily designed schemes.

The impious boast of the desires of their hearts;
they bless Greed, yet renounce you, ADONAI.
With their noses in the air they never seek you;
they think and say, "There is no God!"

Though their ways always prosper,
your judgments are on high, out of their sight;
haughtily they keep your laws far away from themselves,
and they sneer at all their enemies.

They think in their hearts, "We will not be moved;
throughout all generations, we'll be happy and untroubled."
Their mouths are filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;
under their tongues are mischief and iniquity.

They sit in ambush in the villages;
they ambush the innocent and murder them;
they stalk their victims in secret.
They lie in wait like a lion in the bushes;

they lie in wait to catch the helpless;
they catch the poor by drawing them into their net.
their victims are crushed;

they collapse and fall under their oppressors' strength.

**But the violent only say, "God has forgotten,"
or, "God is looking the other way and will never see this."
Wake up, ADONAI! O God, lift up your hand!
Don't forget those who are helpless!**

**Why do the violent renounce you, God?
Why do they say in their hearts, "You won't call me to account"?
But you do see; you see every trouble, every cause for grief;
you ponder it and take it into your hand.**

**The helpless commit themselves to you;
you are the helper of the orphan.**

**Break the arm of the violent and the evildoer!
Seek out corruption till you find no more!**

**You will rule forever and ever, ADONAI,
and those who don't acknowledge you will perish from the land.
ADONAI, you hear the desire of the meek;
you strengthen their hearts and bend your ear to them,
to do justice to the orphan and the oppressed
so that those born of earth may strike terror no more.**

**Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and blessed;
One God, now and forever. Amen.**

Unison



Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Reading from the Gospel

May 24 (Pentecost): "Unapproved Exorcism" from Luke 4:6-21

May 31 (Trinity): "Jesus Clears the Temple" from Mark 11:15-17

June 7 (Second after Pentecost): "The Beheading of John the Baptist" from Mark 6:14-28

June 14 (Third after Pentecost): "The Woman and the Hemorrhage" from Luke 8:43-48

June 21 (Fourth after Pentecost): "Whitewashed Tombs" from Matthew 23:25-28

Story of our brother, Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**

We believe in God, whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives; whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth; whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all; and, whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of freedom. Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt, we trust that love. And in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves in the service of others: to seek justice and to live in peace; to care for the earth and to share the commonwealth of God's goodness; to live in the freedom of forgiveness and in the power of the Spirit of Love; and in the company of all the faithful – past, present, and yet to come – so to be the Church, for the glory of God.

Amen.

Empire depends on isolation, but this table becomes a place where our whole lives are welcome. As we share what has been unfolding in our worlds this week – the questions we are carrying, the moments of joy and connection, the weariness of living in a culture of scarcity – may we speak honestly and listen intently. Let our vulnerability become a gift of courage. Let it loosen the walls between us. Let it make room for safety, solidarity, and the grace of being together.

We share our stories, expose our world's failings, and pledge to work for peace.

God of the Crucified, we confess how easily we make peace with empire. We have too often softened the Bible's texts of terror: the cover-ups, the violence, the exploitation. We have hidden blood and fear beneath polite theology. We have guarded our own comfort while families are caged, communities are threatened, and religion is used to bless cruelty. Open our minds and hearts. Root us in solidarity with the oppressed. Teach us to tell the truth with courage, to repent without despair, and to join the work of liberation with tenderness and resolve.

(Silence is held.)

God is not a monarch demanding your submission, but the Spirit of Love breaking every chain. In refusing to call cruelty holy, you are made free. Receive the unconditional love that requires no performance, no perfection, and no compliance. You are God's beloved. Rise up and walk in grace. **Those in power do not hold our future. Thanks be to God.**



WE FEAST AT THE TABLE

The peace of Jesus be always with you. **And also with you!**

We share signs of peace and present the gifts.

**Praise God, the source of life and breath.
Praise Christ, the one who conquers death.
Praise Holy Spirit, wind and flame.
The One and Holy Triune Name. Amen.**

The Holy One be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up in hope.

Let us give thanks for life and breath.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a beautiful thing, always and everywhere to give our thanks to you, God of the Outcast. You do not dwell in the places of power, nor do you sign the treaties of conquerors. You are cry of Hagar in the desert, the groan of the slave in Egypt, the rebel song of Deborah in the hills. For centuries, people have stolen your name to build cathedrals over mass graves. They wrote scriptures to make their violence look like divine destiny, and they painted you as a bloodthirsty King who mirrors their own cruelty. But we reject their gods of iron and gold. You are the God of the wilderness, the exile, the victim, and the scapegoat.

Therefore, with the survivors of history whose stories were censored, with the prophets who were executed by the state, and with all who refuse to bend the knee to the systems of death, we join our voices with the ancient and everlasting song:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of radical life, heaven and earth are radiant with your justice. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes to lift up the lowly and transform the world. Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, and holy is your Child, Jesus. He came not with wealth or weapons, but in the vulnerability of flesh. He gathered a community at the margins, loved those deemed unlovable, and embodied peace that troubled many. He touched the bodies society called broken, sat in solidarity with the grieving, and offered rest to the weary. Because his love knew no borders, the authorities sought to silence him. They arrested him, humiliated him, and hung him upon a cross. Yet, even there, he absorbed their violence without returning it, proving that the executioners of history cannot kill the revolution of love.

On the night he was handed over to the authorities, Jesus took simple bread. He gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: “Take, eat; this is my body, broken in solidarity with this world for your liberation. Do this to remember me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup of wine. He gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood, poured out in solidarity. Do this, as often as you drink it, to remember that death does not have the final word.”

Therefore, in remembrance of his life and death, we offer our lives as a living community of hope, proclaiming a mystery of faith:

Christ lives. Christ dies. Christ rises again and again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine. Let them be for us the life and breath of our brother, Jesus. By this bread, break our alignment with greed, supremacy, and violence. By this cup, heal the fractures within us, comfort those who carry heavy grief, and infuse us with the enduring courage of the prophets. Tear down the walls of our hearts, sanctify our altars for the heavy-laden, bind up our wounds, and scatter us into the world as a sacrament of holy healing and beautiful, transformative grace.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor, glory, and power belong to you, O God, now and forever. **Amen.**

We pray the prayer Jesus taught

(sung) **O lamb of God, who takes away the shame of the world,
show mercy in us.
O lamb of God, who takes away the shame of the world,
grant us peace.**

Until the day when justice is no longer imagined but lived, when peace is not enforced but shared, when every table is crowded and everybody is welcomed—we will gather, we will give thanks, we will break bread, and we will practice the future. **Amen.**

We share in our communion of solidarity.



WE GO TO BE PEACE

The pastor's commendation

(sung) **Go, dear friends, bring liberation:
stories share and fears release.
Christ has opened wide the circle.
May your lives shine bright with peace.**

Go now from this table into a world that often fears the truth. Refuse to be a silent brick in the walls of empire. When you are met with demands for comfortable compliance, dare to speak the honest words that awaken hearts and break the illusions of power. Go carrying the resilience of the survivors, the prophets, and the justice-seekers who came before you. May the Holy Spirit go with you, transcending borders, calling out false peace, healing broken hearts, and being loyal to the vulnerable. Go in the fierce and unending love of Christ. Amen.

Singing – “Nothing is Lost on the Breath of God” (VT 653)

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!