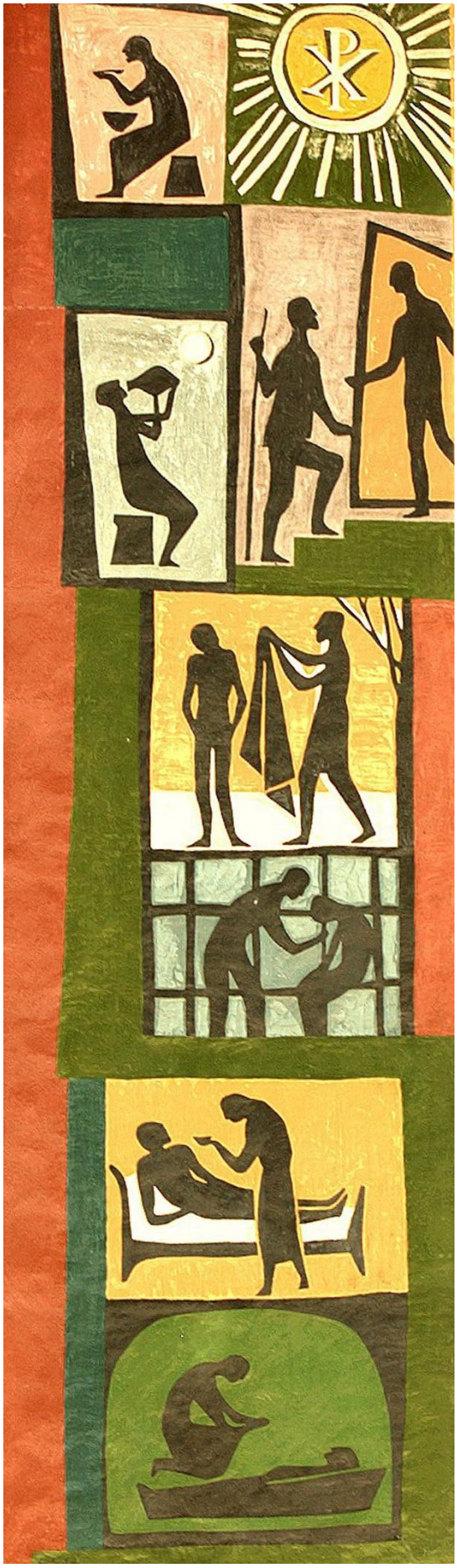


Holy Liturgy

Sunday, November 22, 2026
Solemnity of the Christ

We Gather Together

Ringing of the Bell to Center the Community

Bringing the Light and Censing the Gathering

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

My dear siblings, listen: If a rich enters your gathering wearing the finest clothes and priceless jewelry, don't trip over each other trying to welcome them. And if a penniless bum crawls in with his shabby clothes and a stench fills the room, don't look away or pretend you didn't notice—offer them a seat up front, next to you. If you tell the wealthy person, "Come sit by me; there's plenty of room," but tell the vagrant, "Oh, these seats are saved. Go over there," then you'll be judging God's children out of evil motives. God has picked the poor of this world to become unfathomably rich in faith and ultimately to inherit the Kingdom, which He has pledged to those who love Him. By favoring the rich, you have mocked the poor. And, correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't it the rich who step on you while climbing the ladder of success? And isn't it the rich who take advantage of you and drag you into court? Aren't they the ones mocking the noble name of our God, the One calling us?

(from the book of James)

(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 to remember who God is:
The One who remains as rulers rise and fall.
The One whose love sets free.
The One who creates life where empire intends death.
Among us, within us, despite us, Love endures forever.

Singing



We Share Our Stories

God, whose love is the source of all life, whose love enfolds the helpless, the needy, and those who mourn, give us strength in the example of Jesus and all our siblings to be instruments of your compassion to those who are desolate or wounded by life. **Amen.**

A reading from the Hebrew book of Isaiah:

The Eternal One says: Tell My people about their wrongdoing;
shout with a voice like a trumpet;
Hold nothing back: say this people of Jacob's line and heritage
have failed to do what is right.
And yet they look for Me every day.
They pretend to want to learn what I teach,
As if they are indeed a nation good and true,
as if they hadn't really turned their backs on My directives.
They even ask Me, as though they care,
about what I want them to be and do, as if they really want Me in their lives.

But the people responded: "Why didn't You notice how diligently we fasted before You?
We humbled ourselves with pious practices and You paid no attention."

The Eternal One says: I have to tell you, on those fasting days,
all you were really seeking was your own pleasure;
Besides you were busy defrauding people and abusing your workers.
Your kind of fasting is pointless, for it only leads to bitter quarrels,
contentious backbiting, and vicious fighting.

You are not fasting today because you want Me to hear your voice.
What kind of a fast do I choose? Is a true fast simply
some religious exercise for making a person feel miserable and woeful?
Is it about how you bow your head (like a bent reed), how you dress (in sackcloth), and where you sit (in a bed of ashes)?
Is this what you call a fast, a day the Eternal One finds good and proper?
No, what I want in a fast is this:
to liberate those tied down and held back by injustice,
to lighten the load of those heavily burdened,
to free the oppressed and shatter every type of oppression.
A fast for Me involves sharing your food with people who have none,
giving those who are homeless a space in your home,
Giving clothes to those who need them, and not neglecting your own family.
Then, oh then, your light will break out like the warm, golden rays of a rising sun;
in an instant, you will be healed.
Your rightness will precede and protect you;
the glory of the Eternal will follow and defend you.
Then when you do call out, "My God, Where are You?"
The Eternal One will answer, "I am here, I am here."
If you remove the yoke of oppression from the downtrodden among you,
stop accusing others, and do away with mean and inflammatory speech,
If you make sure that the hungry and oppressed have all that they need,
then your light will shine in the darkness,
And even your bleakest moments will be bright as a clear day.
The Eternal One will never leave you;
He will lead you in the way that you should go.
When you feel dried up and worthless,
God will nourish you and give you strength.
And you will grow like a garden lovingly tended;
you will be like a spring whose water never runs out.
You will discover there are people among your own
who can rebuild this broken-down city out of the ancient ruins;
You will firm up its ancient foundations.
And all around, others will call you
"Repairer of Broken Down Walls" and "Rebuilder of Livable Streets."

Psalter – from Psalm 136 (see Psalm sheet)

Reading from the Gospel in the tradition of Matthew:

This is how it will be. It will be like a landowner who is going on a trip. He instructed his slaves about caring for his property. He gave five talents to one slave, two to the next, and then one talent to the last slave—each according to his ability. Then the man left. Promptly the man who had been given five talents went out and bartered and sold

and turned his five talents into ten. And the one who had received two talents went to the market and turned his two into four. And the slave who had received just one talent? He dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money there.
Eventually the master came back from his travels, found his slaves, and settled up with them. The slave who had been given five talents came forward and told his master how he'd turned five into ten; then he handed the whole lot over to his master.

Master: Excellent. You've proved yourself not only clever but loyal. You've executed a rather small task masterfully, so now I am going to put you in charge of something larger. But before you go back to work, come join my great feast and celebration.

Then the slave who had been given two talents came forward and told his master how he'd turned two into four, and he handed all four talents to his master.

Master: Excellent. You've proved yourself not only clever but loyal. You've executed a rather small task masterfully, so now I am going to put you in charge of something larger. But before you go back to work, come join my great feast and celebration.

Finally the man who had been given one talent came forward.

Servant: Master, I know you are a hard man, difficult in every way. You can make a healthy sum when others would fail. You profit when other people are doing the work. You grow rich on the backs of others. So I was afraid, dug a hole, and hid the talent in the ground. Here it is. You can have it.

The master was furious.

Master: You are a pathetic excuse for a servant! You have disproved my trust in you and squandered my generosity. You know I always make a profit! You could have at least put this talent in the bank; then I could have earned a little interest on it! Take that one talent away, and give it to the servant who doubled my money from five to ten.

You see, everything was taken away from the man who had nothing, but the man who had something got even more. And as for the slave who made no profit but buried his talent in the ground? His master ordered his slaves to tie him up and throw him outside into the utter darkness where there is miserable mourning and great fear.

OR

When the Son of Man comes in all His majesty accompanied by throngs of heavenly messengers, His throne will be wondrous. All the nations will assemble before Him, and He will judge them, distinguishing them from one another as a shepherd isolates the sheep from the goats. He will put some, the sheep, at His right hand and some, the goats, at His left. Then the King will say to those to His right,

King: Come here, you beloved, you people whom My Father has blessed. Claim your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of creation. You shall be richly rewarded, for when I was hungry, you fed Me. And when I was thirsty, you gave Me something to drink. I was alone as a stranger, and you welcomed Me into your homes and into your lives. I was naked, and you gave Me clothes to wear; I was sick, and you tended to My needs; I was in prison, and you comforted Me.

Righteous: Master, when did we find You hungry and give You food? When did we find You thirsty and slake Your thirst? When did we find You a stranger and welcome You in, or find You naked and clothe You? When did we find You sick and nurse You to health? When did we visit You when You were in prison?

King: I tell you this: whenever you saw a brother *or sister hungry or cold*, whatever you did to the least of these, so you did to Me.

At that He will turn to those on His left hand.

King: Get away from Me, you despised people whom My Father has cursed. Claim your inheritance—the pits of flaming hell where the devil and his minions suffer. For I was starving, and you left Me with no food. When I was dry and thirsty, you left Me to struggle with nothing to drink. When I was alone as a stranger, you turned away from Me. When I was pitifully naked, you left Me unclothed. When I was sick, you gave Me no care. When I was in prison, you did not comfort Me.

Unrighteous: Master, when did we see You hungry and thirsty? When did we see You friendless or homeless or excluded? When did we see You without clothes? When did we see You sick or in jail? When did we see You in distress and fail to respond?

King: I tell you this: whenever you saw a brother hungry or cold, when you saw a sister weak and without friends, when you saw the least of these and ignored their suffering, so you ignored Me.

So these, the goats, will go off to everlasting punishment. But the beloved, the sheep (the righteous), will go into everlasting life.

Teaching from our brother, Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**

A Midrash

A statement of faith from our allies and friends in the Progressive Christian Alliance:

> 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.**

The Eternal One has compassion for those forced to leave their homes, those displaced, those among rising prices with paychecks that will never be enough. The Holy upholds those yearning for belonging, those whose children have died, those whose communities have let them down. Let us be expressions of divine love by upholding one another; by offering each other belonging and home.

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

Eternal One, in the name of him who gave bread to the hungry, we remember all who through humanity's greed and love of power, are condemned to live in want. Help us build a community of solidarity and equity, and bless the efforts of those who work to overcome poverty and hunger, that sufficient means may be found for all.

(Silence is held.)

Jesus brings the liberation of God's commonwealth, and shatters our complicity. We are released, with eyes and ears and mouths and eyes and hearts open, sent forth to dismantle the powers of death and embody love. **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 Womb of life and breath.
Praise Christ, the Witness over death.
Praise Holy Spirit, Wind set free.
Loving and loved, eternally. 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 a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give our thank and praise for your commonwealth of goodness, and for the whole company of saints who walk alongside us! For though we are often lured away into empire's promise of security, we are still witnesses of your holy community that is bound together with bread in defiance of untruth.

So, at this table of remembrance and thanksgiving, for the many ways in which you have demonstrated your love, and with the whole company of saints who have feasted around your ever-expanding table from the beginning of time, we sing praise:

Holy, holy, holy, God of love and strength. All creation is full of your imagination. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in your name.

Holy are you and, and blessed is our brother, Jesus. He said, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the commonwealth of God's goodness; woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your consolation."

On the night he was betrayed by one of his friends, he kept a meal, a feast of your people's freedom from Pharaoh. He took bread, the fruit of the earth and of human hands. He gave you thanks, broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this and remember me."

After supper he took the cup. Again, he gave thanks, gave it to his friends, and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is a new pledge of God's love for you: do this and remember me."

For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we are one with Jesus and with the whole company of saints that walks alongside us. So we proclaim a mystery of faith:

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

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts that through them we may be people of justice and compassion. May we be better able to embody your hope, look beyond the obstacles in our path and see new visions, dream new dreams and become your Beloved Community. **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.

Singing



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.

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