

# 2024 Lent Liturgy: Liberating Christianity



## GATHERING

## ENTRANCE

## REFLECTION

The body of Christ by its nature exists to be a healer of the very kinds of wounds inflicted by white supremacy. The Christian church in America bears an extraordinary responsibility to address white supremacy's thefts of truth, wealth, and power. The church's complicated history, which tells of both its faithfulness and its failure in the face of white supremacy, demands an honest reckoning. The church must take seriously the work of repair because, in the most profound way, love is simply who we are.

Adapted from/inspired by *Reparations*, by Gregory Thompson and Duke L. Kwon

## **LIGHTING THE ALTAR CANDLE**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Merciful God, we gather in your presence  
just as we are, your struggling people.

People: Open your heart to us!

Leader: Open to us – light for our darkness.

Open to us – courage for our fear.

People: Open to us – hope for our despair.

Open to us – peace for our turmoil.

Leader: Open to us – joy for our sorrows.

Open to us – strength for our weakness.

People: Open to us – wisdom for our confusion.

Open to us – love for our hates.

All: Merciful God, open your heart to us!

### **OPENING PRAYER**

### **HYMN**

### **WORD FOR THE CHILDREN**

### **SILENCE**

### **PRAYERS**

### **CONFESSION**

Leader: Holy One, you have called us to be  
followers of Jesus,  
to lift up and love the dispossessed and the oppressed,

to love our neighbors as ourselves.

People:                    Yet we fail to reckon with how deeply  
white supremacy has rooted itself  
in the Church and in our culture.

We shrink from your call,  
limiting ourselves to acts of charity,  
while sustaining racist power structures.

Leader:                    Holy One, you have emboldened  
and empowered Christians through the centuries  
to strive for racial and ethnic justice  
throughout the world.

People:                    When we fail to acknowledge  
the Church's responsibility  
for promoting and tolerating  
racial and ethnic injustice,  
we cannot find your hope  
that emboldens and empowers.

Leader:                    Holy One, you have given the Church  
the spiritual resources of restitution and restoration,  
to begin our work of repair.

All:                        These resources sometimes feel too  
small and humble  
for the immensity of the task before us.



to work to end all war, and violence, and discord;  
and to respond joyfully when you call,  
freely giving our selves as you have shown the way.  
We open our hearts to you and your creation  
in the name of Jesus, who is the Christ. Amen.

## **HYMN**

## **THE WORD**

## SCRIPTURE

## SERMON

## SILENT REFLECTION

## **OFFERING**

## **COMMUNION**

## PREPARATION

Leader 1:            This is the table of the heavenly feast,  
the joyful celebration of the people of God.

Leader 2:            We gather now as one body, joined around the  
table.

Here we celebrate God's presence among us,  
united in Christ's spirit, broken and whole all at once.

All:                    Nourished and hungry, loved and loving,  
sinner and forgiven, we make one circle  
of knowing, believing, rejoicing, being,  
as God lights and rests among us.

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader 1: God of Justice,

We give thanks for the presence  
of your transforming love on this table.

People: We give thanks for the opportunity and  
responsibility

to be agents of your healing justice.

Leader 2: For the bread of life-giving nourishment –  
may it give us strength to do justice in your world.  
For the cup of new life –  
may it give us courage to be advocates  
for the dignity and well-being of all persons

People: With justice, we see everyone as human  
and everyone bears the image of the divine.

Leader 1: God of Liberation, help us to cast off the chains  
that have kept us bound to patriarchy, racism, and power.

People: Free our hearts and minds to work  
for reconciliation and reparations.

Leader 2: Spirit of Christ, you are the full expression  
of liberation, justice, and compassion.

All: Awaken that same spirit in us  
that we may be instruments of your change.

## BLESSING THE ELEMENTS

Leader 1: Christ invites everyone to eat the bread of  
life,

to drink the cup of the new covenant.

Leader 2:                Jesus said, I am the bread of life.

You who come to me shall never hunger;

you who believe in me shall never thirst.

Leader 1: On the night he gave himself up, Jesus took bread,  
and after giving thanks to God, broke it and said,

This is my body,

broken for the healing of the world.

Whenever you eat it, do so remembering me.

Leader 2:                After supper, Jesus took the cup and said,

This is the cup of the new covenant,

poured out for you and for all.

Whenever you drink it, do so remembering me.

All:                                O Holy One, send down your  
Spirit

that these gifts of grain and grape,

and work of human hands

may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Unite us with Christ forever

and bring us with the whole creation

to your eternal realm.

SHARE THE ELEMENTS

Leader 1:                The body of Christ, broken for all of us.

Feed on Christ in your hearts with thanksgiving.

Leader 2:               The cup of the new covenant, poured out for  
the healing of the world.

Drink deeply of it.

#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

All:                       God of abundance and mercy,

we give joyful thanks

for your eternal love and healing presence

in our celebration of bread and cup.

Bless this Body of Christ

that we may attend faithfully to our call to be your servants,

with each other and throughout the world. Amen.

#### SHARED REFLECTIONS

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### HYMN

#### BENEDICTION

Leader:               With hearts open to God's healing love,

which fills us with power and commitment

to liberate Christianity

from our history of racial injustice,

we go forth to reconcile, repair, and unite.

Let us share the grace we have been given,  
greeting one another with signs of peace.

People:                   Amen.

*This liturgy was written by members of the Racial and Ethnic Justice Ministry Team: Peter Bankson, Paul Holmes, Sallie Holmes, David Lloyd, Erica Lloyd, Jeanne Marcus, Sandra Miller, John Morris, Trish Nemore, and Lucy Slater. The Call to Worship was adapted from a prayer of Howard Thurman(1899-1981,) Black theologian, educator, and civil rights leader.*