

— September 2023 —

Contemplative Communion Service



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1432 Washtenaw Ave | Ann Arbor, MI 48104
firstpresbyterian.org

WELCOME

We're glad you're here!

Thank you for joining us at this short service of communion. We will be using a simple spoken liturgy with no music. Going forward ordained and lay leadership will together evolve the rhythms and voice of this communion service. September features a series of straightforward interactive liturgies drawn from the Celtic Diaspora.

Ways to Give

Your gift allows us to carry out our mission as an inclusive and diverse faith community.

CASH/CHECK

Place in the offering plate on your way out or in the mail

ONLINE

<https://bit.ly/FPCvanco>

TEXT-TO-GIVE

Text the amount to 855-904-1523

VANCO MOBILE APP



September 10, 2023

‘Happy are those whose hearts do not condemn them,
and who have not given up hope.’

Ecclesiasticus 14:2

OPENING PRAYER

You are above us, O God, you are within.
You are in all things yet contained by no thing.
Teach us to seek you in all that has life
that we may see you as the Light of life.
Teach us to search for you in our own depths
that we may find you in every living soul.

SCRIPTURE AND MEDITATION

‘For you alone, O God, my soul waits in silence, for my hope is in you.’

Psalm 62:5

‘Those who wait for God shall renew their strength’

Isaiah 40:31

CENTERING PRAYER

One: That you have made us in the image
of your own mystery

Many: Thanks be to you, O God.

One: That in the soul of every human being
there are depths beyond naming
and heights greater than knowing

Many: Thanks be to you.

One: Grant us the grace of inner sight this day
that we may see you as the Self
within all selves.

**Many: Grant us the grace of love this day
that amidst the pain
and disfigurement of life
we may find the treasure
that is unlocked by love,**

One: that amidst the pain and disfigurement
of our own lives, we may know the richness
that lies buried in the human soul.

Silent prayers for the coming week and the life of the world

PROCLAMATION

COMMUNION (see page 9)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CLOSING PRAYER

One: Before us in the planned shape of this day we look for unexpected surgings of new life. Around us in the people whom we know and love we look for unopened gifts of promise. Within us in the familiar sanctuary of my own souls we look for shinings of the everlasting light.

All: Before us, around us, within us we look for your life-giving mystery, O God, before us, around us, within us. AMEN.

September 17, 2023

Happy are those who meditate on wisdom,
who reflect in their heart
on her ways and ponder her secrets.

Ecclesiasticus 14:20-21

OPENING PRAYER

In the silence of the morning we are alive to the new day's light, alert to the early stirrings of the wind and the first sounds of the creatures. In the silence of our hearts we hear the yearnings that are in us and the fears, the hopes that rise from within and the doubts that trouble our souls. In the beginnings of this day, O God, before the night's stillness is lost to the day's busyness, open to us the treasure of our own inner being that in the midst of this week's busyness we may draw on your wisdom. Assure us again of our origins in you, assure us again that our true depths are of you.

SCRIPTURE AND MEDITATION

'Let me hear what you will speak when I turn to you in my heart.'

Psalm 85:8

'The desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.'

Wisdom 6:20

CENTERING PRAYER

One: That truth has been inscribed into our hearts
and into the heart of every human being,
there to be read and revered,

Many: Thanks be to you, O God.

One: That there are ways of seeing and sensitivities of knowing
hidden deep in the palace of the soul,
waiting to be discovered, ready to be set free,

Many: Thanks be to you, O God.

One: Open our senses to wisdom's inner promptings
that we may give voice to what we hear in our souls
and be changed for the healing of the world,
that we may listen for truth in every living soul
and be changed for the well-being of the world.

Silent prayers for the coming week and the life of the world

PROCLAMATION

COMMUNION (see page 9)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CLOSING PRAYER

One: Like an infant's open-eyed wonder
and the insights of a wise grandmother,

**Many: Like a young adult's vision for justice
and the vitality that shines in a child's face,**

One: Like tears that flow in a friend bereaved and laughter in a
child's eyes, you have given us ways of seeing, O God,

**Many: You have endowed us with sight like your own.
Let these be alive in me this day, let these be alive in me.
AMEN.**

September 24, 2023

'You lift up the soul, O God, and make the eyes sparkle.
You give health and life and blessing.'

Ecclesiasticus 34:20

OPENING PRAYER

As the day's light breaks the darkness of the night, as the first movements of the morning pierce the night's stillness, so a new waking to life dawns within us, so a fresh beginning opens. In the early light of this day, in the first actions of the morning, let us be awake to life. In our souls and in our seeing, let us be alive to the gift of this new day, let us be fully alive.

SCRIPTURE AND MEDITATION

'Awake, awake, put on your strength?'

Isaiah 52:1

'Maintain the right of the lowly, rescue the weak and the needy?'

Psalms 83:3-4

CENTERING PRAYER

One: Thanks be to you, O God, for the stirrings of new life in me this day, for rising from the dreams of the night to a fresh flowing of energy,

**Many: for the vitality that awakened our bodies
and the goodness that stirs our souls.**

One: Let us know the power for life that is in us,
the life-force that is in our senses
and the might that is in our hearts.

**Many: Let me know you as the source of such force
and be wise to its true streams and false currents.**

One: Let us serve love with our strength this day,
let us serve love with our strength.

Many: In heart and mind and body this day let me serve love.

Silent prayers for the coming week and the life of the world

PROCLAMATION

COMMUNION (see page 9)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CLOSING PRAYER

One: The strength of the rising sun,
the strength of the swelling sea,

**Many: the strength of the high mountains,
the strength of the fertile plains,**

One: the strength of the everlasting river flowing
in us and through us this day,

**Many: the strength of the river of God flowing
in us and through us this day. AMEN.**

COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

Jesus was always the guest.
In the homes of Peter and Jairus,
Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna,
he was always the guest.
At the meal tables of the wealthy
where he pled the case of the poor,
he was always the guest.
Upsetting polite company,
befriending isolated people,
welcoming the stranger,
he was always the guest.

But here, at this table, Christ is the host.
Those who wish to serve must first be served
those who want to follow must first be fed.
For this is the table where God intends
us to be nourished;
this is the time when Christ can make us new.

So come, you who hunger
and thirst for a deeper faith,
for a better life, for a fairer world.
Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables,
now invites us to be guests at his.

THE PRAYER

One: The Lord be with
Many: and also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts
Many: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
Many: It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, for you made us,
and before us, you made the world we inhabit,
and before the world, you made the eternal home
in which, through Christ, we have a place.

All that is spectacular, all that is plain have their origin in you;
all that is lovely, all who are loving point to you as their fulfilment.
And grateful as we are for the world we know
and the universe beyond our ken,
we particularly praise you, whom eternity cannot contain,
for coming to earth and entering time in Jesus.

And now, lest we believe
that our praise alone fulfils your purpose, we fall silent
and remember him who came because words weren't enough.

Setting our wisdom, our will, our words aside,
emptying our hearts, and bringing nothing in our hands,
we yearn for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving
which Christ alone can offer.

Merciful God, send now, in kindness, your Holy Spirit to settle on
this bread and wine and fill them with the fullness of Jesus.
And let that same Spirit rest on us, converting us
from the patterns of this passing world, until we conform to the shape
of him whose food we now share. Amen.

**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 debt-
ors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For
thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment,
this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you.
Take us out to live as changed people
because we have shared the Living Bread
and cannot remain the same.


Ask much of us, expect much from us,
enable much by us, encourage many through us.
both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of
heaven. AMEN.


Liturgies adapted from “Sounds of the Eternal and “The Wee Worship Book”




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