

**THE SERVICE OF WORSHIP**  
**PRESBYTERY OF GREAT RIVERS**  
**FEBRUARY 23, 2010**

**OPENING WORSHIP**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Leader: In the beginning, when it was very dark God said, "Let there be light"*

**All: "And there was light"**

*(A lighted candle is placed on the worship table.)*

*Leader: Celebrate the life within you, and Christ's presence in our midst.*

**All: Our eyes shall be opened! Today has new meaning and our future is bright with hope.**

*(An open Bible is placed on the worship table.)*

*Leader: God above us, God beside us, God beneath us;*

**All: The beginning, the end, we worship the everlasting One. Let us worship God.**

*(A cross is placed on the worship table.)*

**OPENING HYMN**

Open The Eyes of my Heart *(please sing three times)*

- 1 Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,  
To reach out and touch him and say that we love Him
- 2 Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,  
Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

*Leader: Shining, surprising, grace-full God, you constantly shine a flashlight in our souls, calling us back to your love when we run away:*

**All: Forgive us;**

*For preferring the safe, familiar and certain to the risky, unknown and mysterious:*

**Forgive us;**

*For failing to believe in the vulnerability of power and the power of vulnerability:*

**Forgive us;**

*For taking no delight in variety and insisting on sameness and conformity:*

**Forgive us;**

*For fearing those different from ourselves, and projecting onto them what we cannot accept within our own selves:*

**Forgive us;**

*For assuming we are superior to the rest of creation, for abusing, despoiling and failing to celebrate our relationship with the earth and the web of life:*

**Forgive us;**

*For not noticing your presence in darkness as in light, in body as in spirit, in feeling as in intellect, in pain as in healing, in Good Friday as in Easter Day:*

**Forgive us;**

*Leader: set us free, we pray, to be whole human beings and live our lives graciously and without fear.  
(Bring the prayers of your heart to God in silent prayer)*

**DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

*Leader: (Pouring the water into the basin the leader says) Hear this good news: God's words are sure. Do not remember the things of old for, behold, I am doing something new. I will make rivers in the desert.*

**People: (dipping hands into the water) The Lord has done great things for us, we are filled with joy.**

*Leader: In Jesus Christ.*

**People: We are forgiven.**

**PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*The Lord be with you*

**And also with you**

*[Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community. Maren C. Tiabassi & Kathy Wonson Eddy. Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press. 1995]*

**HEARING AND RECEIVING THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE READING** Isaiah 43:16-21

*Leader: God's Word is a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. As we read from God's Word now please light the candles on your table .*

*Let us pray: God who created light from the darkness we ask you to shine your light of truth and understanding on us as we seek to know your will and see you more clearly. Amen.*

**SERMON**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Communion will be served at each table simultaneously. Please be sure that there is a Minister of Word and Sacrament at each table and make adjustments as necessary.

*Celebrant: With the darkness of their Lord's death blinding them, two of his disciples could not see him as they walked that Emmaus Road together. They could not hear him as he interpreted the Scriptures. They only knew him when he blessed and broke bread with them. In our own blindness, Christ invites us here to break bread with him. He invites us to open our eyes and see him again.*

*Let us pray: Spirit of God, touch our lives deeply, making us truly yours. Bless these gifts of bread and wine and make sacred this humble feast. O living Christ, bright morning star of this darkened world, come and be our guest. Awaken us, name us, and mark us as your own. Glory be to you! Amen.*

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*Celebrant: Our Lord, at a meal with his disciples, took bread and, after he gave thanks for it, he broke it and gave it to them saying, "Take eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." As we pass the bread, take a piece and then take a moment to share a time when your eyes were opened to Christ in your midst while you were breaking bread.*

*In the same way, Jesus took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me." As we pass the juice, take a cup and then take a moment to share a way Christ has recently shown his abundance in your ministry or life.*

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

*Faithful God, we are thankful that you have revealed to us the vision of life in covenant with you and with one another. We are thankful that Christ is present with us in the breaking of the bread. Through your Spirit, strengthen us to be faithful in all we have promised today. Amen.*

### **OFFERING**

As you conclude the sacrament of communion, please pass the offering basket found at your table. The offering will go to the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering. When your offering has been collected, please have one person bring it to the front during the singing of the hymn.

### **HYMN**

Behold the Lamb

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away<br>Slain for us and we remember<br>The promise made that all who come in faith<br>Find forgiveness at the cross<br>So we share in this bread of life<br>And we drink of His sacrifice<br>As a sign of our bonds of peace<br>Around the table of the King    | 3 The blood that cleanses every stain of sin<br>Shed for you drink and remember<br>He drained death's cup that all may enter in<br>To receive the life of God<br>So we share in this bread of life<br>And we drink of His sacrifice<br>As a sign of our bonds of grace<br>Around the table of the King |
| 2 The body of our Savior Jesus Christ<br>Torn for you eat and remember<br>The wounds that heal the death that brings us life<br>Paid the price to make us one<br>So we share in this bread of life<br>And we drink of His sacrifice<br>As a sign of our bonds of love<br>Around the table of the King | 4 And so with thankfulness and faith we rise<br>To respond and to remember<br>Our call to follow in the steps of Christ<br>As His body here on earth<br>As we share in His suffering<br>We proclaim Christ will come again<br>And we'll join in the feast of heaven<br>Around the table of the King    |

## CLOSING WORSHIP

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*[Leader:] As God's people, called to love one another, let us pray for the needs of the church, the whole human family and all the world, saying: **Give us new life.***

*That churches of all traditions may discover their unity in God's something new that is Jesus Christ and exercise their gifts in service to all,*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*[Leader:] That we may lead the way to free the earth from war, famine and disease while also giving voice to the need to provide clean air, soil and water to all, Lord, let us serve, We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*That those who govern and maintain peace in every land may exercise their powers in obedience to your commands while those who oppress become new in your love,*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*[Leader:] That you strengthen this nation to pursue just priorities so that all races and religions may be reconciled; the young, educated; the old, cared for; the hungry, filled; the homeless, housed; the sick, comforted and healed and an equitable health care plan be found for all, Lord, let us serve,*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*That you will bless and protect this nation's troops who are serving around the world as they strive to bring peace to war torn countries or to bring relief to those countries such as Haiti who are suffering from natural disasters,*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*That you will bless and preserve all who live and work in this Presbytery.*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*[Leader:] That you comfort and empower those who face any difficulty or trial such as the people in Haiti, many of who have lost all in the earthquake. Please include the sick, the poor, the oppressed, those who grieve and those in prison, Lord, let us serve,*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*That you accept our thanksgiving for all of your gifts and for all the faithful servants of Christ now at rest, who, with us, await a new heaven and a new earth, your everlasting kingdom,*

*We pray to you, O God:*

**Give us new life.**

*Merciful God,*

*As a potter fashions a vessel from humble clay, you form us into a new creation.*

*Shape us day by day, through the cross of Christ your son, until we pray as continually as we breathe and all our acts are prayer, through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray saying: "Our Father...."*

**FINAL HYMN**

"O God, Beyond All Praising"

- 1 O God beyond all praising,  
we worship you today  
and sing the love amazing  
that songs cannot repay;  
for we can only wonder  
at every gift you send,  
at blessings without number  
and mercies without end:  
we lift our hearts before you  
and wait upon your word,  
we honor and adore you,  
our great and mighty Lord.
- 2 Then hear, O gracious Savior,  
accept the love we bring,  
that we who know your favor  
may serve you as our king;  
and whether our tomorrows  
be filled with good or ill,  
we'll triumph through our sorrows  
and rise to bless you still:  
to marvel at your beauty  
and glory in your ways,  
and make a joyful duty  
our sacrifice of praise.

**CHARGE AND BLESSING**

*(Modified from the Book of Common Worship p 107-108)*