

# **Making Communion**

**Grace Pocket Liturgies**

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To all who have been part of the Grace journey



## Introduction

Grace is a community in the Church of England that began in 1993 as part of what was then known as 'alternative worship'. It's a congregation of St Mary's church in Ealing, West London. Alternative worship was on the front of the curve of a movement in the UK and subsequently elsewhere in the Western world that has morphed in various ways and captured various emphases and streams - emerging church, fresh expressions, new monasticism, small missional communities - all of which are about mission in a changing Western culture. It's a movement that shows no signs of relenting. In fact its' impact seems to be changing the face of the church in quite remarkable ways.

Behind all of these movements is a simple idea discovered in mission elsewhere in the world - following Christ is best done in ways that are natural to the host culture rather than in ways that impose an unnatural foreign culture in imperial fashion from the outside. For Grace the founding idea was to explore what it would mean to develop worship that was made out of the stuff of life in postmodern London in the 90s informed especially by the arts, dance music and visual culture.

Of course, implicit in this approach was a critique of

worship and church at that time. It was a dissenting movement by which we mean it proposed alternative ways other than business as usual. For the founders of Grace there was simply too big a cultural gap between everyday life and church. The two main diets of worship on offer at the time were contemporary worship with its 1970s guitar soft rock culture, or the liturgical diet of the Church of England with classical music and high art. Both in their own ways were increasingly alien. The simplest definition of alternative worship that we came up with at the time was "Christians reinventing faith expression for themselves within their own cultural settings". In other words it was a contextual approach to theology, worship and church.

Unlike the modernising moves of contemporary worship, alternative worship had a very different relationship with tradition. It involved a turning back and a retrieval of treasures that were lost or buried in the archives, remixing and reframing them to make them live in new ways. That process was accompanied by re-theologising - trying to make sense of who God is and what it means to follow Christ in this new cultural space. One of the treasures that was uncovered, retrieved, dusted off, unbundled, explored, played with, remixed and opened up in new ways was the sharing of bread and wine as instituted by Jesus in a meal with friends - variously called Communion,

the Eucharist, the Mass, the Lord's supper.

This pocket liturgy book captures some of the ways in which we have celebrated communion in Grace over the years, some of the themes we have explored, and liturgies that we have created. There are lots of others that were not kept or archived. It is also quite tricky publishing liturgies because the actual practice of creating liturgy that many churches (and by no means just in alternative worship) employ is to take an existing liturgy and to rework it - sampling, remixing, cut and pasting, adding new parts, contextualising it and so on. It's an improvisational approach. It means that many liturgies are not wholly original and that then raises the question of copyright in relation to publishing. In some cases we can't even remember or source where a prayer came from! In this collection the majority of liturgies are wholly written by members of Grace. In other cases where we are aware of it, we have tried to get permission to use prayers and liturgies that have become incorporated into something Grace has done. Thank you to those who have granted permission. We have listed those permissions on pages 2 and 3. If you recognise something that we haven't credited please accept our apology and contact us to let us know for future reference.

To us it makes no sense to copyright worship - we make all our liturgies available online for free or the ones we still

have - and we would be disappointed if they were not adapted to someone else's situation and community. We would actually love the church to imagine and make available her liturgies as open source - to be downloaded, reworked and uploaded for others to use in a never ending creative process as part of a living dynamic network (the body of Christ) worldwide.

Over the years Grace as a community has had lengthy discussions and reflected theologically about communion. It seemed pertinent to share some of that in this introduction. For communities and churches like ours emerging in mission, what ought to be simple and delightful - sharing bread and wine to remember Jesus - has often become political and contested within the particular denomination with its own traditions, sensitivities, rubrics and canons. There seems to be more angst about communion than anything else (perhaps aside from ordination). It's a precious gift so perhaps this is not surprising. But we have found several other communities have been encouraged by our approach and we hope this book serves to give ideas and hope to others navigating innovation, context, mission and church traditions. It's not that we have in any sense got the answer but we have found a way that has been hugely life giving for us in our worship.

## **Worship as Play**

One of the ways we have conceived of liturgy is as play. Through play, children try out different ways of being a person, and in doing so, discover behaviours, attitudes and values that they adopt as part of their developing identity. Likewise, through our worship we find who we are in relationship to God and to each other. So liturgy is play in which we discover and shape our identity in community with God. It's a process that is dynamic and life-long, both because we continue to change and grow, and because there is always more to discover about God. But it's also dynamic and life-long because our world and culture are never static. In our liturgy we seek to explicitly keep in view both God and the world, to discover what he is doing in our world, and to allow him to change and challenge us about our relation to it. So in our liturgy we try out ways of connecting our faith with the plight of the Palestinian people, our attitude to body shape, or the way in which we practice hospitality with people we don't call friends.

This is serious work; it's both theological and prophetic. But it is also playful. It's playful because we allow ourselves to enjoy uncertainty. We believe not that we have the answers or know God's mind, but that through the process of planning a service, writing liturgy and using it in our community, we will discover a little more. It's playful because it's fun to explore ideas, ask questions,

think hard and pray with a group of people who are committed to creativity and discipleship.

And it's playful because it's a risk. We know that for our worship to have moments that inspire and connect with the centre of our being, we must take the risk that sometimes we will miss the mark. We've sat in services and sighed about a word used once too often, an idea not articulated clearly enough, or a concept that now seems irrelevant to where we are. We want our liturgy to explore *this* community's life with God in *this* town at *this* moment. So we must be the ones to create liturgy. And the process of creativity is of necessity playful; you try making something, and if it doesn't work, you just start again. You might learn something from the failure, but at the same time you must sit lightly enough with it to try again and not be paralysed by failure.

In this spirit, our approach to writing liturgy for communion is playful and expansive. For a long time we have written customized Eucharistic prayers that bring the ideas and practices of the rest of the service into the place where we meet God in bread and wine. It is there where we can see most clearly whether what we have been exploring is an interesting distraction or part of our life with God. And it is where God feeds and sustains us for a life that is not business-as-usual, but instead changed by the encounter.

## **Beginning to Experiment**

There have been two seasons in the life of Grace in which we have particularly explored communion, its significance, and how we as a community might remember Jesus through sharing bread and wine. The first of these was fairly early on. At that time Grace was not sharing bread and wine together in worship services. Hopefully in the life of every new community of disciples this question arises quite naturally through the presence of the risen Christ whom we hear saying “remember me”. Our main memory of the motivation for those initial discussions is that several of us felt that communion had been lost to us, wrapped up as it was in rules and particular forms. We wanted to explore that and see what it might mean to retrieve it but unbundling it from some of the ways it felt trapped or inaccessible.

We agreed to a year's experiment to explore what communion was about through a range of themes we sensed were associated with it. Initially this involved a year of monthly services in St Mary's but it was followed by a longer period of monthly meals in someone's home where bread and wine were shared in a more informal and relaxed setting, usually in the context of a meal.



The first evening in the church of the initial experimental year was set up around meal tables in a café. We discussed our own experiences of communion and how we might begin to reclaim it in ways that could be authentic, and improvised whilst remaining faithful to the Christian tradition and Anglican setting. Some of the liturgies in this book come from that season - hospitality, and bread of justice for example.

Grace learns by doing. We do theology through the process of creating worship. That creates the context in which to discuss and draw on books and ideas in the tradition. We find we act our way into a new way of thinking rather than the other way round. The church's preciousness can make this very difficult or threatening but a space like Grace that is not the Sunday morning

service is ideal because it is experimental and away from the glare of the spotlight of those who are more traditional.

We agreed early on that because we were Anglican we wanted to, and should, respect the presidency being done by someone ordained. The vicar of St Mary's was happy to come and do a minimal amount - often just the eucharistic prayer and the breaking of bread and pouring of wine. This worked because of a flexible, open vicar, and because of a relationship of trust. Overall it worked pretty well. The church at the time were not keen on us using reserved sacrament which was another option we considered. We have also reflected that if communion is an expression of a community's relationship with God, using reserved sacrament could be taking a symbol of another community's relationship with God and trying to make it be about Grace.

But beyond that, in true alternative worship style, we didn't worry about the rules. Looking back we're not sure now we even knew exactly what the rules were! We played. Many bishops at the time used to be quite happy with this sort of scenario. They could see the value in what was being done but also the difficulty the canons of the church created for communities like ours, so they used to say that they didn't want to know too many details. This gave implicit permission to carry on - a quintessentially English

way of dealing with things.

When it came to the season of meals in people's homes we simply called those 'a ritual meal' in any advertising and were not worried about someone ordained presiding. If anyone complained, it wasn't an Anglican Eucharist. But to us of course it was communion.



Exploring communion together led us to articulate theology. A good example of this was the exploration of hospitality. Jesus' radical welcome of outsiders and sinners to table fellowship, and his inclusion of Judas in the upper room convinced us early on of the importance of invitation and welcome to all at the table. In some ways this was in contrast with the ring-fenced table of our tradition. It's interesting to discover that same sensibility

and theological posture is widespread across the emerging church movement. Michael Perham and Mary Gray-Reeves did some research into emergent communities which is published in their book ' The Hospitality of God'. They discovered that there is an almost universal breaking of canon on this point. The basis for our dissent was a reclaiming of the tradition over and against itself.

### **Liturgical thought police**

Developing a relationship of trust with a vicar or other sponsor in a diocese is a simple thing but it can be so helpful to have somebody supportive in the church structures. However it's easy to take for granted and you suddenly realise the value of it when that person moves on. In this respect we were both lucky in having a supportive incumbent and naive about the longevity of that. As soon as the vicar moved on the then curate took it upon herself to read us the riot act. She summoned two of the key people in Grace at the time and gave a speech in which she pronounced how she had responsibility for the cure of souls in the parish and was only going to permit liturgies in that parish which were authorised by canon law. The sad reality was that she had never even been to Grace. But the last line of the speech said something along the lines of - "that's how it will be unless I hear otherwise from the bishop".

We were completely caught by surprise and it's a reminder of the vulnerability of new ventures. However we also had a bit of nous and thought we'd take up the gauntlet she had thrown down and got in contact with the Bishop of Willesden at the time. This proved to be another really good move as we found another supportive person in the structures but this time higher up the hierarchy. He wrote a letter to us authorising the use of experimental liturgies with the proviso that they should be shown to the incumbent and that we should have ordained presidency. By the time all of this had happened a new supportive vicar arrived and the curate moved on. So it all ended up being quite a short lived episode. But the hugely positive outcome was that we now found ourselves with approval from our bishop for the improvised approach we had found so life giving. Part of the rationale from the bishop, was that authorised services were available in the parish already for those that wanted it on any given weekend.

We have since had lots of conversations with people around liturgy in the Church of England and how creativity and mission can be encouraged without people feeling like they are misbehaving. It's as though they are worried that the liturgical thought police might show up at the door like OFSTED inspectors at some unsuspecting moment and catch them out. At Greenbelt festival in a panel discussion

on alternative worship, a couple of members of the liturgical commission lamented that they were often viewed in this way, whereas they were at pains to point out that they welcomed the kind of innovative practice communities were engaged in and would like to encourage it more. We wrote to one member of the liturgical commission at the time as a follow up and he sent the following reply:

“Canon law normally changes in response to initiative, it doesn't create initiative, so although a practice of a group may not be actually legal, it may be quietly permitted if it makes such obvious common-sense in a particular context that to do otherwise would be positively anti-missional. However, this requires the discretion of the incumbent of the Church (or oversight system under the BMO legislation) and possibly a tacit consultation with higher-up. A big issue can be simply one of sensitivities: there are some breaches in Canon Law which may merely raise eyebrows (eg. the legislation on liturgical vesture), whereas others would be seen as an act of schism in some quarters (eg. lay presidency). Of course, both are equally illegal but would have significantly different emotional result!”

It would be wonderful if someone with the right connections and more liturgical wisdom and knowledge

than us could enable a process to get more room for manoeuvre, in a way that reflects the practice of what is actually happening in mission (a role for Fresh Expressions and the liturgical commission perhaps?).

From that point Grace continued using various liturgies and writing others. Shortly after we had an unexpected surprise and gift – someone who was ordained joined the community and was able to preside. This proved a really positive experience as she got what we were about whilst not being employed to lead Grace. When she moved on the new chaplain at the local university joined the community and is able to preside for us. We take this gift for granted now and it will be a shock when we have to revert back to something else.

### **Canons and improvisation**

More recently we have had a second round of conversation and reflection around communion in Grace. This was at least 10 years on from the first. This process took place over a number of evenings and we framed the conversation using a cycle of theological reflection which moves through four phases - experience, exploration, reflection and action. This was a very helpful communal process.

We began by sharing our experiences of communion and

plotting them on a timeline with two colours of paper for positive and negative experiences. One of the first things we noticed on the timeline was the colour change over time. For the whole community, experiences of communion were much more negative in the past especially experiencing exclusion as children. But the experience of communion as adults especially in Grace was hugely positive and powerful. Some heartfelt storytelling helped us identify several issues or questions that we wanted to explore further. Two were more like undergirding approaches we have to everything - theological experimentation and a view of liturgy being the community's work rather than something given from outside.

We were reminded of the importance of communion, how precious it was to many of us and how it was a highlight of our worship together. We discovered perhaps unsurprisingly a wider range of personal taste differences and theological convictions about communion than we might have imagined. We identified that hospitality and inclusion or exclusion generated strong feelings. We summarised another set of experiences under the title 'magic hands' (we realise that the Church of England doesn't believe in 'magic hands' so it's a bit of a misnomer but it was the phrase we used as a group at the time). This was recognising that the rubric around who could preside

and what the rules were was an uncomfortable area for many. In the process we also realised that we didn't all know what the rules were. And lastly that community and gathering around bread and wine seemed to go together.

The exploring and reflecting on these issues took some time and it's a process that is ongoing. But we definitely unearthed a few things on the way. It was the first time many of us had ever downloaded the canons of the church on worship and actually read them. Whilst there is room for discretion about forms of service, in relation to communion there is less room for manoeuvre than we had thought. Whilst the earlier letter from the bishop freed up our practice, the canons don't support that possibility. However the practice of having creative occasional communion liturgies alongside a pattern of authorized ones, though contrary to canon law, is widespread in many churches and by no means just newer ones. In our case, Grace is a congregation of St Mary's where the authorised services are available in the church on a Sunday so Grace simply supplements those.

One discovery we made was that communion is recognised and permitted in consecrated buildings. So that has led us up to be more relaxed about what we do in peoples homes around the meal table where we share bread and wine in the context of a meal and anyone in the

community leads that. As with the ritual meals in an early season of Grace these are not an Anglican communion service though they are communion for us.

We looked into the Anglican tradition and how eucharistic practice had evolved to try and better understand it. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, author of the Book of Common Prayer established a distinctively Anglican approach to the eucharist. Though he settled on a prayer that included a moment at which the priest consecrates the bread and wine, it's clear that he placed greater emphasis on the moment at which the bread and wine are received on the lips of a person who truly believes in Christ. In short, if the bread and wine undergo any kind of change into the body and blood of Christ, it happens not when the priest consecrates them but when the Christian receives them. In practice, both types of thinking are still present in the church. The priest says 'Let this bread and this wine *be* for us the body and blood of Christ (not *become*.) Yet Church Wardens are supposed to prevent anyone smuggling consecrated bread and wine out of the church, and clergy are required to dispose of left-over elements reverently.

Cranmer's theology has an important consequence for priesthood; Anglican priests are not people who mystically change the bread and wine; they are people chosen by

the community of the Anglican Church to preside at communion among other things. This could, in theory, allow more flexibility about who could preside at communion, though in practice the canons of the Church of England forbid anyone except a priest to preside in church. But this opens up more flexibility for sharing bread and wine outside a church, which we have exploited by regularly sharing bread and wine in peoples' homes at the end of a meal.

The discussion also helped us better understand the challenge of being ordained in a community like ours that wants space for creativity. When an ordained minister presides at communion using a non-authorized Eucharistic prayer, she or he is acting contrary to canons and ordination vows. The minister has to balance being faithful to tradition and the oath they have taken, whilst supporting creative liturgy. It seems perverse to us that the canons require that a priest is the only one who can preside at communion inside a church, while being the only one who cannot lead the sharing of bread and wine in someone's home.

One of the resources we uncovered in our exploration was the SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Spirituality, which included articles on the eucharist and eucharistic prayer. It was an encouragement to read that the latest scholarship

seems agreed that for the first four hundred years of the church's practice improvisation was the norm.

Interestingly, the words of institution were often not present in those earliest prayers. This reassured us that attention to the deep wells of tradition out of which to improvise in the present was actually a very ancient liturgical practice. We're a bit divided in our community on what weight we give to this. The counter argument put forward was that local development of practice in a fragmented and persecuted church is not the same thing as improvisation at all. It can equally be argued that when the church came out of persecution it fairly quickly standardized the basic meaning of the meal by fixing on the words of institution.

One of the other compelling resources we discussed was inculturation. This is a term used to describe the use of liturgy in the vernacular or local accent of different cultures. The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation produced a statement on inculturation in 1989 in York. The pressure for consideration of this issue has come from provinces in the Anglican Communion that have felt that the liturgies imposed on them were too Western and that they needed to be able to create liturgies in and out of their own contexts. It's a radical statement. Here are a couple of quotes for example -

“Each province should be free... to seek that expression of worship which is appropriate to the Christian people in their cultural context”

“True inculturation implies a willingness in worship to listen to culture, to incorporate what is good and to challenge what is alien to the truth of God. It has to make contact with the deep feelings of people. It can only be achieved through an openness to innovation and experimentation, an encouragement of local creativity, and a readiness to reflect critically at every stage of the process - a process which in principle is never ending. The liturgy rightly constructed, forms the people of God, enabling and equipping them for their mission of evangelism and social justice in their culture and society.”

The recognition that we need fresh expressions of church in response to the mission challenge of the church in the UK has drawn heavily on an approach informed by contextual mission. What is hugely encouraging is that this has been incorporated into the mission of the whole church and into new legislation with growing awareness of the need for a mixed economy church. Fresh expressions of church inevitably leads to fresh expressions of worship and liturgies such as those in this book that are developed in relation to cultures and contexts. What is curious is that legislation hasn't caught up in the area of worship in the

same way that it has in the area of forms of church, though the practice is quietly accepted. Inculturation in worship is not just an issue for elsewhere in the Anglican Communion but an issue that is the logical outworking of contextual mission in Britain. We recognise the approach we have taken in Grace to be exactly the kind of innovation, experimentation and local creativity called for by the Anglican Church back in 1989. The local just happens to now be in various contexts in the UK not just other provinces in the Anglican Communion. Our sense is that this is a growing area of both practice and theologising and we hope to continue to contribute in both ways.

### **A Deeper Commitment**

The process of reflecting together has led to a gentle deeper commitment to the Eucharist being a central practice in our worship.

We have relaxed about sharing bread and wine in meals in homes - they are off the Anglican map, so we are free to experiment and don't need someone ordained to preside.

We are continuing with ordained presidency and have a better understanding of some of the tensions in that role and the risks felt by the president in terms of their loyalties.

We have a deeper appreciation of breadth of understandings in the community.

This process has given us a renewed confidence and commitment to improvise as being a legitimate way to open up the tradition and inculturate worship in our community.

The liturgies in the book are not arranged in any particular order. You are of course welcome to use them in your own communities. The only request we make is that you do so in ways that relate to your context and who you are, and that they are used with imagination. We hope that they will serve to spark your imagination to create your own. If you do, please upload them and let us know. We will continue to add ideas, prayers, liturgies and photos to our ever expanding online archive so keep an eye on [www.freshworship.org/archive](http://www.freshworship.org/archive) for more where these came from. We have included a couple of communion prayers from other communities. We have used these several times along with quite a few others. But we wanted to include a couple as this is also indicative of our practice and many other communities we suspect – a mutual sharing of creativity.

*Grace*

## **Liturgies**

## **Terra Periculosa [Dangerous Ground]**

'When the Holy Spirit comes upon you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world. ....So they left the mountain called Olives and returned to Jerusalem'

### *Confession*

*[Invite people to think about when they have doubted and limited what they have thought of God – look at the box in the centre and think of the times when we have packed God away to tidy him up.]*

We are sorry that we have said thank you and put you in a box and stored you on the shelf ready for the big event

**Forgive us for keeping you gift wrapped for special occasions**

We are sorry that we have turned our backs on the places and people that you are changing

**Forgive us for believing we can keep the lid on the box, failing to trust that you can transform our world**

We are sorry that we have closed our eyes and ears to your presence in our world

**Forgive us for not noticing that the box is empty and that you are alive and living in our world**



We are sorry that there are parts of the map we don't want to visit – the terra periculosa – dangerous land.

**Forgive us for failing to walk new paths or cross over to the other side of the street.**

*[Lid of the box opened but not removed]*

**Thank you that you forgive our limitations and the limits we put on others,**

**May we lift the lid on your love, open our eyes and ears to your voice and walk new paths,**

**Amen**

*The Word*

*The readings were introduced by reflecting on the challenge the early church had in hearing the Spirit calling them to move beyond where they had sensed God was at work at that point – a developing schema from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth. We then explored five different stories in Acts.*

- Acts 6 – dispute between the Hellenists and Hebrews in Jerusalem
- Acts 8 – Philip preaching in Samaria/ Philip teaching the Ethiopian
- Acts 9 Conversion of Saul
- Acts 10 Peter and Cornelius
- Acts 17 Paul in Athens

## *Prayer*

Maps are the starting point of holidays, trips away and days out walking is. Maps tell a story of a changing landscape, the way you can read the hills and valleys and settlements. The travel guide writer Mike Parker asks – ‘Can you be too much of a map addict? I’d say so. Getting lost occasionally is essential for the soul, but we mappies are not very good at it. To us being lost is synonymous with failure, not adventure. Being unable to give a precise grid reference for our location at any point in time makes us prone to panic, with all the unpleasant side effects – not least to those around us – that that suggests. It’s only in recent years that I’ve begun to go anywhere without a map. Occasionally I forget to take one and then experience that hot spasm of horror when I remember, the kind that normal people only feel on realising that they’ve lost their wallet. Sometimes I force myself not to take a map with me on a walk or a journey, an experience that can be anything from liberating to terrifying.’

But maps always have gaps and undescribed spaces – if you look at a globe of the world it doesn’t give you the detail of your immediate surroundings and if you are clutching your OS walking map it only takes you to its own edges.

For the disciples travelling in the Roman Empire things were different – there were classical maps but they were on a grand scale and not interested in directing you. If you went on a journey like Paul or Peter or Philip you might have an itinerarium – a list of the places you needed to go through to reach your destination with the distances between them – but it says little or nothing of the terrain and gives nothing away about the places outside your direct route – the villages and towns just off your map. In classical and Roman maps these were often labelled ‘terra periculosa’ dangerous land – land that was unmapped and unknown to the creator – places where you needed to be wary and seek out a local guide.

Many of us have ‘terra periculosa’ places, people or situations which make us feel wary, uneasy or even downright frightened.

Where or what are your ‘terra periculosa’? The dangerous land you want to avoid?

Take some time to think and pray about this.

Take a piece of a map and write or draw your terra periculosa, your dangerous land and pin it to some of the hazard tape.

### *Communion*

John baptized with water but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

I will pour out my Spirit on all people - your sons and daughters will prophesy.

The Jewish believers were amazed that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on Gentiles too.

God is Here

### **His Spirit is with us**

Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit of Jesus  
Who was there at Pentecost  
Poured out on the disciples

### *Voice 1*

Poured out in Jerusalem  
in the upper room with power  
with the Jews from every nation hearing in their  
own languages,  
Peter preaching the resurrection of Jesus from the dead,  
healing the lame man,  
confronting the powers of empire and domination.

### *Voice 2*

Poured out in Judea  
birthing a new community in mission  
gathering in homes,  
rippling outwards into the surrounding areas,  
living a new life of praise, joy and generosity,  
sharing possessions and following the way of the upside  
down Kingdom of God.

### *Voice 3*

Poured out in Samaria  
in a wave of persecution provoked by Stephen  
on Philip the Greek Jew who took the risk of  
going to Samaria  
who sensed God might be at work in the despised heretics  
On the excluded Eunuch reading Isaiah the prophet

### *Voice 4*

Poured out to the ends of the earth  
On Peter as he dared break the rules to eat with Cornelius  
and saw you fill the Gentiles  
With Paul dazzled by your resurrection appearance called  
to the outsiders  
With Simeon, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Priscilla and  
Aquila and the women and men leading the new  
communities of the Spirit multiplying out along the trade  
routes of the Empire –

the emerging global community of the Way!

So we join the song of heaven, saying

**Holy holy holy**

**Lord God Almighty**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna in the highest**

At the heart of this new community of the Spirit was a

gathering round a meal

sharing bread and wine,

sharing stories,

sharing possessions,

remembering the life death and resurrection of Jesus.

We break this bread to remember the body of Christ of  
which we are part.

We drink this cup to share in the new relationship with  
God made possible by Jesus' death on the cross.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine  
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Pour out your Comforter on us

to lead us out of comfort into terra periculosa

to people and places beyond our horizons

to cross borders and boundaries

to lead us to the least and the outsider.

This Spirit is poured out on all flesh  
and testifies with our spirit that

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

**Christ will come again**

So come to the table  
with the disciples in Acts,  
with disciples in Christian communities down the ages,  
with disciples in homes, houses and churches in cultures,  
contexts and countries round the world.

Break bread and eat together,  
Enjoy fellowship,  
Devote yourself to the apostles teaching,  
Share all that you have with one another and with those  
who are needy,  
Praise God, And do so with joy and generosity!

*Blessing*

*[Add the names of places of people present]*

Let the Holy Spirit come upon us to be your witnesses in  
Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, in Ealing and  
Acton, in Greenford and Holland, in Croydon, in  
Basingstoke .....even to the ends of the world.

**Amen**

## **Another World Is Possible**

### *Gathering*

An alarm goes off.

Unplug your ears

Unbind your eyes

That you may hear

That you may see

Wake up!

God is here

God is doing something new

God is inviting you into a journey to discover a new world, a new upside down kingdom.

There is a restlessness in our society, in our culture and in many of us at the moment. The old ways of doing things seem to be broken, or at breaking point. The theme of tonight's service "another world is possible" comes from the Occupy movement. It was a slogan etched on barrier tape around the encampment. In Grace this really caught our attention like an alarm, like a wakeup call. What would it mean to move from an old world in which we are satiated and numb and co-opted by the gods of consumption, where we have got used to the poor begging and bankers earning several million pounds in bonuses, to a new world which might be imagined and run on very

different lines. The prophets of Israel and Jesus the prophet seem interested in just such a journey, just such an adventure, just such a new world and kingdom.

Let's pray

God of justice, peace and righteousness come into our midst this evening

Breathe your breath,  
your Spirit of prophecy,  
your energy,  
your enlivening,  
your imagination on us.

Wake us up

Open our eyes

Unplug our ears

That we might hear

That we might see

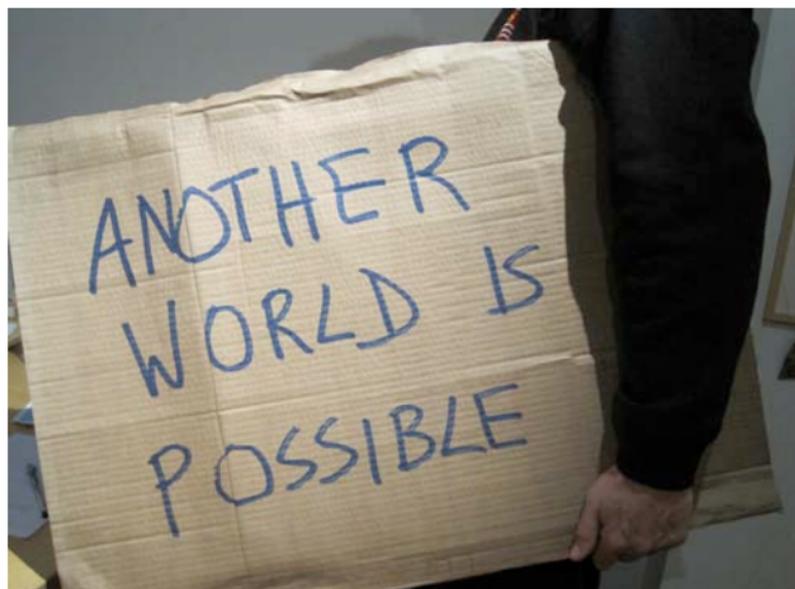
That we might grieve

That we might dream

That we might follow the ways of your extraordinary kingdom

Amen

*[Invite everyone to set an alarm on their watch or phone to go off at the end of the service – ideally this should be timed so that it will happen in the sending out section]*



## *The Word - Prophets*

*[Prophets on plinths simultaneously prophesy - people move around, listening to one after another. When we did this some acted roles as prophets from the bible such as Isaiah, others were contemporary.]*

### *The prophet's journey*

The king doesn't know what time it is

The king doesn't want to know because kings, rulers and elites want to stop time.

They want us to believe that the way things are now is the only way they can be, that the current order of politics and economics is the only imaginable order.

They promise it will be better managed in future but no fundamental change is possible.

Then along comes the prophet

The job of the prophet is not to announce fixes for the current system, it's not to make realistic proposals because what's realistic is defined by the current system. Realistic leaves the existing powers in power. We can leave those kind of proposals to the prophets of the regime, the ones who say that there's peace when there is no peace.

The job of the true prophet is to announce the death of the current order.

The job of the true prophet is to announce that God cannot be bought by the regime and has the freedom to bring

about endings.

The true prophet calls us to grief -  
grief for the system that must end  
grief for the parts of our lives that must end because they  
belong to the system

Grief is the most radical criticism because it announces  
the thing that the rulers cannot bear to hear -  
that their rule must end!

### *Confession*

Two confession rituals in the space – grief and letting go

Grief: eating parsley and salt water

Letting go: holding a stone and then letting it go

### *The Table*

*Bread and wine are laid out and pens and paper are on  
tables. Invite people round tables to talk and write dreams  
of ways in which another world is possible*

On the night before Jesus died, he gathered with his  
friends to have supper.

Over the meal they shared stories of lament and longing.  
They told stories of Lament for a world of injustice and  
powerlessness that before they met Jesus they hadn't  
even noticed.

Lament for the empires of the age that were bent on their  
own continued existence, but no longer had any reason to

exist.

Lament over the people who were silenced.

Lament over the people who were blind to the possibility that the world could be anything other than what it was.

They told stories of Longing that the new world they'd glimpsed might become the dominant reality

Longing that the voiceless would be given a voice.

Longing that the powerful would be freed from their addiction.

Longing for the imagination to escape the numbing quality of the empires that tell you that this world is all there is.

The meal moved towards its conclusion, and Jesus called for bread and wine. He took the bread, broke it, gave thanks and said: this is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me. He took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Father God, we pray that you will send your Spirit on us, that this bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

May the bread be food for the journey as we seek to see the new reality of God's kingdom in the world.

May the wine be a sign that we are no longer shackled to

the old order.

We are no longer in debt to the empire whose power over us Christ has broken.

May these tables be places where our hopes are forged.

May this community gathered here be a reminder that we are not alone - throughout our city there are people who are working to throw off the old and seek the new life of Christ as they bring peace and justice to the places where they walk.

### *Prayer*

Liturgy incorporating things written with response "another world is possible":

We are gathering our hopes together.

During these next prayers, if you have a written or an unwritten Hope that you wish to proclaim, then there will be a space for you to speak them out.

Lord, Moses led your people out of slavery.

Elijah confronted corrupt kings.

Mary said Yes to the Holy Spirit,

Jesus triumphed over death.

They had the audacity to Hope.

And the People of God say:

**Another World is Possible**

Add your prayers here and after each everyone responds

### **Another world is possible**

For all the quiet hopes, that have not been spoken out or are expressed only in our hearts:

Lord, before a word is on our tongue, you know it completely.

The People of God say:

### **Another World is Possible**

#### *Sending Out*

Alarms that were set earlier go off.

When they do, all the prophets from earlier shout “God calls you to WAKE UP!”

Set your mobile alarms, watches, sundials to go off at an odd time every day for the next month. This will be a reminder to us to WAKE UP – to be vigilant of the false glamour of the world and alert to the whispers of the Holy Spirit.

#### *Everyone sets alarms*

#### *Blessing*

## **Yearn**

*[This service was inspired by Pádraig O Tuama's album Hymns to Swear By and based around the story of the lost son, elder brother and embracing father in Luke 15]*

*Yearn for Home – listen to the track by Padraig*

*Communion/thanksgiving prayer*

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your heads

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your voices

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

God of watching thank you

You gave us life, love and freedom

**Your watchfulness is steady**

**Your love is unfair**

Thank you that when we reject your friendship

leave home

spend our inheritance

find ourselves in exile



are weak and broken, with lives full of regret

**Your watchfulness is steady**

**Your love is unfair**

Thank you that when we reject your generosity  
resent your welcome of sinners,  
find that home is not the place we thought it was  
ask you when you have ever thrown a party for us.

**Your watchfulness is steady**

**Your love is unfair**

Thank you that you reconfigure the world as an order  
of embrace

where mercy triumphs over judgement  
so we join with the angels singing

**Holy holy holy**

**Lord God Almighty**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna in the highest**

The answer is in a story  
And the story is unfolding...

On the night he was betrayed Christ took bread, broke it  
and gave it to his friends saying take eat this is my body  
which is broken for you.

After supper he took the cup saying drink this all of you.  
This is my blood which is shed for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this to remember me. Send down your Spirit on these  
gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us Christ's  
body and blood.

The answer is in a story and the story is being told...

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

**Christ will come again**

Through his rising again the world is reconfigured  
tucked between the atoms of the places where we walk  
the kingdom of God is at hand  
the kingdom of God is here  
the kingdom of God is home.

So come to the table of Christ.

To the younger sons here,  
who feel confined by home  
you who are in exile  
you who have messed it up  
you who yearn for home  
come to this table, where home is welcoming  
and home is freedom.  
come to the one whose watchfulness is steady

and whose arms are open wide

To the elder sons here  
who have stayed at home  
you who find it all very unfair  
you who resent God's justice,  
you who have done your duty, and feel undervalued,  
you who wish you'd run away, and somehow never  
managed it  
come to this table, where home is generosity and home  
keeps no record of wrongs  
come to the one who is always near,  
who would always kill the fatted calf for you.

*Bread and wine shared*

*Blessing*

May the extravagant love of God the Father  
fill your hearts and minds and his embrace hold you  
when you feel unworthy to be called his son or daughter.  
May the friendship of Jesus Christ your brother  
rid you of any notion that you are only a slave  
and you find your home in and with him in his Kingdom.  
May the Spirit of God release you  
from a world of duty  
so that a new joy and freedom wells up in your life.  
Go and reconfigure the world as an order of embrace

in your friendships

in your work place

in your families

in your street

and in your churches

And the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always

Amen



## **Wounded In All The Right Places**

*[The title is inspired by 1Giantleap's song of the same name]*

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your heads

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your voices

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

We praise you for your unswerving love for us

though we are fragile

though we are wounded

though we are broken

you have never stopped loving us

and you have never forsaken us

Greater love has no one than this that they lay down their  
life for their friends

You take what is broken and transform it through your  
death and love

what once was hurt

what once was friction  
what left a mark  
no longer stings  
because grace makes beauty out of ugly things

so we join with the angels singing:

Holy holy holy

**Holy holy holy**

Lord God Almighty

**Lord God Almighty**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

Hosanna in the highest

**Hosanna in the highest**

In your last meal with your friends before your betrayal  
you took the bread and gave thanks  
you broke it and shared it saying 'take and eat. this is my  
body broken for you'

Christ's body is broken

**We are Christ's body, we are broken**

May Christ's broken body nourish you in all the right  
places

You took the cup of wine, gave thanks and shared it  
saying 'Drink this, my blood shed for you'

Christ's body is wounded

**We are Christ's body, we are wounded**

May the blood that flowed from Christ's wounds heal you  
in all the right places

Send your holy spirit on us

Heal our brokenness

by showing us our place in your community of faith

Great is the mystery of faith

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

**Christ will come again**

This is the table of christ

Today it is literally made of our brokenness

A sign that christ welcomes us all as we are

There is no need to pretend and no need to hide

So gather at this table

not because you are whole

but because you recognise your need for healing

not because you are good enough

But because you recognise these gifts of god



## **All The Pieces Matter**

*[This was a reworked version of the Wounded liturgy with a focus on how we all have a place in the community of God despite our brokenness]*

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your heads

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your voices

**We lift them up to God**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

We praise you for your unswerving love for us  
though we are difficult  
though we are broken  
though we have sharp edges that cut and bruise  
you have never stopped loving us  
and you have never forsaken us

Greater love has no one than this that they lay down their  
life for their friends

You take what is broken and transform it through your  
death and love  
what once was hurt

what once was friction  
what left a mark no longer stings  
because grace makes beauty out of ugly things

so we join with the angels singing  
Holy holy holy **Holy holy holy**  
Lord God Almighty **Lord God Almighty**  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory **Heaven and earth  
are full of your glory**  
Hosanna in the highest **Hosanna in the highest**

At the last meal Jesus had before his betrayal  
he gathered with twelve doubting, quarrelsome, unreliable  
and weak-willed people whom he loved.  
He took the bread and gave thanks  
He broke it and shared it saying 'Take and eat. This is my  
body, broken for you'

Christ's body is broken  
**We are Christ's body, we are broken**  
May Christ's broken body nourish you in all the right  
places

He took the cup of wine, gave thanks and shared it  
saying 'Drink this, my blood, shed for you'  
Christ's body is broken  
**We are Christ's body, we are broken**

May the blood that flowed from Christ's wounds heal you  
in all the right places

This is the table of Christ

Today it is literally made of our brokenness  
a sign that there is a place for us in his community.

No matter how tough it is to be here,

no matter that at times it hurts

for Christ is building something here,

and all the pieces matter.

So gather at this table

not because you are whole

but because you recognise your need for healing

not because you are good enough

but because you recognise these are gifts of god

## **Meals with God**

### *Communion Prayer*

The Lord is here

**His spirit is with us**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give thanks and praise**

We praise Jesus that he spent time on earth among us.  
he shared our hospitality,  
and accepted our gifts of food and drink.

Food was never just food to him, but a sign of God's love  
and provision.

When the wine ran out at a wedding, Jesus turned water  
into Beaujolais, and the party went on into the night.

When thousands followed him onto a hillside, he spoke to  
their spiritual needs, then addressed their empty stomachs  
with fish and bread.

When he met a tax collector up a tree, he asked the tax  
collector to feed him, and the collector discovered new  
generosity to others.

At Jesus' hands a feast became a parable of God's  
kingdom, and breakfast on the beach an opportunity for



reconciliation. He took the stuff that sustained our bodies and used it to point us to the things of God.

Jesus shared meals with proud fools and humble sinners; there was room for everyone at his table. And there is room for us as we share a meal with him now.

At the last meal Jesus had before his betrayal he gathered with his closest friends, as he'd done so many times before.

He took the bread and gave thanks

He broke it and shared it as he always did.

But this time, as the bread went round, he said, 'take this and eat it. this is my body, broken for you. whenever you share it, remember me.'

He took the cup of wine, gave thanks and shared it. As the wine went round, Jesus said, 'drink this, all of you; this wine is my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you share it, remember me.'

So share this food now. We offer you this bread and wine as a symbol that we offer our lives to you. You offer them back to us, symbols of forgiveness, signed with the Holy Spirit.

So gather at this table.

Receive this food, that binds us into community with God.

Drink this wine, that proclaims we are forgiven.

## **Body**

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, we give you thanks and praise

that through your Son Jesus Christ

you have created all things.

All that we can see, touch, smell, hear or taste

was made by you, and you saw that it was good.

You give us breath and speech,

that we might sing your praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord.,**

**God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

But we have distorted the work of your hands.

By hating each other we have mocked your creation.

By hating our own bodies we have hated you.

And so your son took on flesh to revel in your world



and to heal it.

Born of a young girl, he walked among us.

He delighted in the warm sun on his face and in the  
sweetness of honey.

He told stories of foxes and their holes,  
extravagant feasting,

and the tender embrace of a father for his estranged son.

Through tales of the physical he taught us about  
the spiritual.

Through his death on the cross he abolished false  
distinctions between the two, and offers us fullness of life.

On the night that he was betrayed,

at supper with his friends

he took bread, and gave you thanks;

he broke it and gave it to them, saying:

My body for you.

Take, eat; remember.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,

he gave you thanks and said:

My blood for you, a sign of forgiveness.

Drink; remember.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people

Gather all who share this loaf and cup

to the feast where there is no size zero and no obese,  
and our true beauty is revealed.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Spirit,  
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
we worship you, Father almighty,  
in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever.**

**Amen**

## **Hospitality**

*[Thanks to Ana Draper for the confession and Mike Riddell for the invitation]*

*Ritual of welcome*

*When people arrive for the worship make them welcome.*

*Have some people at the door to shake their hand, take their coat and perhaps offer them a cup of tea or other appropriate drink*

*Welcome + Opening sentences*

Welcome to the communion service. The service follows a simple liturgy around the theme of hospitality

God the Creator is a gracious, abundant and generous host

You are invited to be guests at God's table

Make yourself at home

Relax

God is here

You are welcome

Listen to the words of Jesus:

'Who needs a doctor? The healthy or the sick?

I'm here to invite outsiders not coddle insiders'

'The wretched of the earth learn that God is on their side'

'Are you tired? worn out? burned out on religion?  
come to me....'

And the words of Paul:

'You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here'

*Opening prayer*

Gracious God

You have shared with us the gift of Creation

**Open our hearts to receive you here**

Jesus Friend of Sinners

You have shared with us the gift of your Incarnation

**Open our hearts to receive you here**

Spirit of God

You have shared with us the gift of life

**Open our hearts to receive you here**

**Praise**

**Confession**

For the times when we have rejected your generous  
hospitality

**Forgive us Lord**

For the times when we were too busy or too lazy to come

to your party

**Forgive us Lord**

For the times when we constructed lame excuses

**Forgive us Lord**

For our failure to extend the gift of hospitality to others

**Forgive us Lord**

For the times when we have restricted hospitality to those who are powerful, influential or wealthy

**Forgive us Lord**

For the times when we have excluded the sad, poor and marginalised

**Forgive us Lord**

Lord God we remember those who have been excluded by us as individuals and by the church we represent.

In rejecting them we have rejected you.

For the times we have misrepresented you Lord with our individual and collective inhospitality

**Please forgive us Lord**

*Readings*

*The Eucharist*

Prayer of thanksgiving

Creator God thank you that you are a gracious, abundant and generous host. But thank you that you became the guest of humanity. The heavenly host, the creator,

became the guest of the animals in the stable, the villagers of Nazareth, the religious leaders in the temple, the prostitutes, drunkards, tax collectors. You let us play host, became one of us, dined at our table. You ate the same bread, drank the same wine - everybody having a good time. You shared stories, shared our story. When you left the table, you left bread and wine to remember you by.....

**Holy holy holy Lord**

**God of power and might**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna in the highest**

Your death on the cross has enabled us to be guests at God's table. Grant that by the power of the Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be for us his body and blood who on the night he was betrayed took bread, gave you thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying 'take eat, this is my body which is given for you'. After supper he took the cup, gave you thanks, and said to them: 'this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me'

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

## **Christ will come again**

### *Invitation*

The table of Jesus is your place of gathering  
Here you are welcomed, wanted, loved  
Here there is a place set for you

So come all you who thirst,  
All you who hunger for the bread of life  
All you whose souls cry out for healing

Come all you who are weary  
All you who are bowed down with worry  
All you who ache with the tiredness of living

Come all you poor  
All you who are without food or refuge  
All you who go hungry in a fat land

Come all you who are lost  
All you who search for meaning but cannot find it  
All you who have no place of belonging

Jesus invites you  
Draw near with faith  
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave  
for you and his blood which he shed for you

Eat and drink in remembrance that Christ died for you and  
feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving

*Share bread and wine*

*Prayer*

*Ritual of parting*

*Have a visitor's book and invite people to write their  
comments or a prayer to God the Host before they leave.*

*Blessing*

The blessing of God, Host of creation,

The blessing of Christ, Guest of humanity

The blessing of the Holy Spirit, Source of communion

Be with you all.

As you have received the gift of hospitality, go now

Share your life, your table and your home with others in

God's name,

**Amen**



## Meal With Friends

It is possible to think of the church as a community of friends. It is an idea about church that has not much been explored. Other ideas have had lots of mileage - the people of god, the body of Christ, the communion of saints, the bride of Christ, a pilgrim people. But for some reason not many have explored this notion. It actually ties in rather nicely with the lovely idea that Ian Adams refers to in his book *Cave Refectory Road* where he quotes Brother Roger of Taizé who says that "our task is to live a parable of community".

If we think of church in this way, communion or the eucharist might well be conceived of as a meal with friends which is at the heart of the life of a community of friends. This is such a simple idea! Steve Summers\* has written wonderfully about this and inspired this evening.

In the build up to Jesus last meal with the disciples he says these things:

'I have called you friends',

'You are my friends'

'Greater love has no one than this - that he lay down his life for his friends' which of course is precisely what he was set to do though his friends didn't realise it.

To be a friend of god - what an astonishing thing!

Jesus got killed for having the wrong sort of friends - his friendship was open to and with sinners, the poor, the marginalised, the outsiders - so it's not meant to be a safe comfortable friendship with people like ourselves which could be a danger of this notion. But it's a radical friendship and hospitality.

God is in godself a community of friends - three persons in relationship, which theologians have sometimes conceived of as a dance that we are invited into. You probably know Rublev's icon - God is a community, there's food on the table and a space open as you look at the icon. The space suggests we are invited to join this friendship and this meal.

There are no magic words tonight, just these thoughts -  
Church is a community of friends  
Communion is a meal with friends  
So let this whole meal be an occasion to remember Jesus who is present with us through God's Spirit and through one another.

Before we eat let's pass round bread and remember his words

'I have called you friends' 'You are my friends'

*[pass round bread]*

And as we pass wine if you are ever in doubt that you are

worthy of being God's friend (which we all regularly doubt)  
remember Jesus' words 'Greater love has no one than this  
that he lay down his life for his friends'

*[pass round cup of wine]*

\* Steve Summers - Friendship: Exploring Its Implications  
for the Church in Postmodernity



## **The Table - Grace**

*[The Table was a feast with a table running all the way down the church. Different courses came with different reflections and activities. These words introduced the evening]*

Welcome to the table!

The table,

eating and drinking,

sharing stories,

laughter and tears,

honest conversation,

being real,

finding a place of acceptance

amongst friends and family

has been at the heart of community and the Christian faith  
for as long as we know.

Jesus kick started the whole thing when he broke bread  
and drank wine with his friends.

Thank you for coming to share in this meal, this table  
today.

September is the start of a new season for Grace.

It's a time when we pause as a community -

pause to consider and commit ourselves afresh to God

pause to consider and commit ourselves afresh to one

another

pause to consider and commit ourselves afresh to the  
ethos which is at the heart of our life together.

What better way to do that than in the context of a  
community meal?

So close your eyes  
take a deep breath and pause...

God we invite you to be present at the table with us

Our companion

Companion means friend but the root of the word 'com  
panis' means one who breaks bread with another.

You are our companion and bread breaker.

And we gather as friends, companions to break bread with  
one another.

Thank you for your friendship,

thank you for one another

thank you for Grace

thank you for this food and drink

Be in our midst

In the name of Christ. Amen

Eat, drink, you who hunger and thirst,

For a deeper faith, for a better life, for a fairer world,

For healing and wholeness

The table is ready!

## **Eucharist**

*[This service was written for Greenbelt Festival main stage in 1999 and an album of it recorded]*

*Welcome and opening sentences*

Welcome to our worship, we're celebrating the Eucharist.

God the creator is a gracious, abundant and generous host.

You are invited to be guests at his table

Grace and peace to you from him who was and is and is to come

and from the seven spirits before his throne

and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness

the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

On the Lord's day I was in the Spirit and there before me was a door standing open in heaven and a voice like a trumpet said 'Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this'

*opening prayer*

**Eternal God,**

**fling open the doors of our hearts**

**to the weather of your Spirit.**

**Lead us out beneath the dancing sky and wind**

**across the stumbling ground of our reality  
to where the sound of worship never ceases  
and the view stretches further than the human eye  
can see.**

**Through Christ the faithful witness,  
Amen**

Relax  
God is here

*[Hush - quiet music to prepare our hearts for worship]*

*praise/hymns  
Angel  
Holy holy holy*

*confession*

Please sit or kneel.

After each section the following Kyrie is sung:

***Kyrie eleison***

***Christe eleison***

***Lord have mercy***

***Christ have mercy***

*gloria*

Glory to God in the highest

**Glory to God in the highest**

God's peace on the earth

**God's peace on the earth**

Lord God, Heavenly King, Almighty God and Father

We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for  
your glory

**Lord God, Heavenly King, Almighty God and Father**

**We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you  
for your glory**

Lord Jesus Christ only Son of God

**Lord Jesus Christ only Son of God**

Lord God lamb of God

**Lord God lamb of God**

You take away the sin of the world - have mercy on us all

You sit at God's right hand on high - receive our prayer  
today

**You take away the sin of the world - have mercy  
on us all**

**You sit at God's right hand on high - receive our  
prayer today**

For you alone are the holy one

**For you alone are the holy one**

You are the only Lord

**You are the only Lord**

You alone are God most high - you are Jesus Christ

You are with the Holy Spirit in the Father's glory

**You alone are God most high - you are Jesus Christ**  
**You are with the Holy Spirit in the Father's glory**

Glory to God in the highest

**Glory to God in the highest**

Amen Alleluia

**Amen Alleluia**

*readings*

*address*

*creed*

*gospel: storytelling of the last supper*  
*from 'The Book of God' by Walter Wangerin*

*Eucharistic prayer*

The Lord is here

**God's Spirit is with us**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to God**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give God thanks and praise**

O Lord our God, sustainer of the universe, at your  
command all things came to be: the vast expanse of

interstellar space; galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses and this fragile earth, our island home. By your will they were created and have their being.

Redeemer God, word become flesh, we remember you in bread and wine; your body, your blood, broken so we with all creation may be made perfect. Through your sacrifice death is nulled. Through your resurrection we have a future. Thankyou!

Therefore with angels and animals, microbes and mountains, and all that lives for you we proclaim how wonderful you are, we pour out our thanks to you in song that never sleeps:

Holy holy holy lord

**Holy holy holy lord**

God of power and might

**God of power and might**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory**

Hosanna in the highest

**Hosanna in the highest**

And now we ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit this bread and wine may be to us Christ's body and his blood; who, on the night that he was handed over to suffering

and death, took bread, thanked you and broke it He gave it to his friends saying 'Eat this, it is my body given for you. Do this in memory of me.' Later after supper he took the cup, thanked you, and gave it to them saying 'Drink this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this whenever you drink it in memory of me.'

Christ has died, Christ is risen

**Christ has died, Christ is risen**

Christ will come again

**Christ will come again**

In this place where heaven and earth meet  
under the rainbow of God's promise,  
in this sharing of bread and wine  
future hope becomes reality now  
So bring your scorched earth  
bring your harvest  
bring your open sky  
bring your restless guilty waters  
bring your swift unbending road  
bring your urgent inner city  
to the table where your host says 'I make all things new'

Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world

**Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world**

Have mercy, mercy on us

**Have mercy, mercy on us**

*bread and wine are shared*

*song*

*I will receive you now*

*after-communion prayer*

**All-saving God, Thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ whose death and resurrection have purchased the future healing of all things We who have tasted the coming Kingdom offer ourselves as its bearers and signs in the power of your Spirit and as lovers and guardians of all that you have made until you come Amen. Come Lord Jesus.**

*intercession*

*song*

*Breastplate*

*Blessing*



## **Not In My Name!**

*[This communion explored communion as an act of protest against injustice, oppression and war, written for the Greenbelt Communion 2003]*

Greenbelt gathers in a spirit of protest and is hungry for justice

### *Opening Prayer*

We meet in the name of the God of mercy and compassion

The God of justice and love

We meet in the name of the One who called himself the bread and water of life

The One who is always hungry for justice for all the earth's people

### *Procession of bread and wine*

*[brought to the table by a protest march]*

We bring this gift of bread to the table of Christ  
Bread Christ's body, broken for our brokenness.

**As we share in one bread we draw closer to Christ and to each other.**

We bring this gift of wine to the table of Christ  
Wine, Christ's blood, poured out for the healing of the nations.

As we share in Christ's death we are reminded of  
who we are

**One in Him, bringing hope to the poor, and justice to  
the oppressed.**

No more stolen bread! No more spilt blood!

**Not in my name**

Will we fight terror with terror

**Not in my name**

Will we exploit the resources of those who are poorer

**Not in my name**

Will the bodies of the innocent be broken for the evils  
of a few

**Not in my name**

Will we deny life to those for whom life is a struggle

**Not in my name**

Will the name of god be used as an excuse for our own  
self interest

**Not in my name**

Will we be blinkered by our flawed sense of justice

**Not in my name**

Will the bread of life be robbed from the mouths of the  
worlds hungriest

**Not in my name**

Will we find salvation in the defeat of our enemies

**Not in my name**

Will our government wipe out innocent families

### **Not in my name**

Will we reap reward from terrorism and invasion

### **Not in my name**

Will the west get rich through the debts of the poor

**We thank Christ for his body broken and blood shed.**

**We acknowledge his sacrifice for the salvation and redemption of the world.**

**We acknowledge innocent blood shed and bodies broken to be enemies of gods kingdom and a sin against creation.**

**We acknowledge love, truth, grace, justice, righteousness, mercy and humility to be signatures of God's rule.**

**May God bless us as we seek to send a clear message to those in authority...**

**Not in my name!**

### *Confession and Absolution*

Listen to the words of the prophet Hosea:

The trader calls out to the Lord his God,  
but in his hands are dishonest scales,  
and in all he does he loves to oppress.

He calls out, 'Aha! I have become very rich  
and no one can prove that I gained it by sin.'

And this is what the Lord replies:

'I see all that you have done.'

Return to me, the Lord your God,  
hold fast to love and justice,  
and wait continually for your God.'

*[Based on Hosea 12:6-8]*

We are people who are eager to do well,  
but slow to do good.

Let us return to the Lord our God;

**In your mercy, Lord, forgive us.**

We are people who are eager to save time,  
but slow to give time.

Let us return to the Lord our God;

**In your mercy, Lord, forgive us.**

We are people who are eager to improve our lives,  
but slow to improve our world.

Let us return to the Lord our God;

**In your mercy, Lord, forgive us.**

And still the world trades with dishonest scales.

Let us return to the Lord our God;

**In your mercy, Lord, forgive us.**

Hold fast to love and justice.

God forgives you,  
Forgive yourselves,  
Forgive others.

*The Word*

*[A selection of passages on justice and religion from the  
Street Bible]*

*Praise*

Song - Here Is Love

*Giving*

**We give money**

**We give promises**

**We give prayers**

*Invitation*

*Song - table of Christ*

*Communion Prayer*

We come to remember the life and death of Jesus Christ

And we will not forget the life of all your children

We receive the promise of liberation in Jesus Christ

And we will promote freedom and justice for

all God's people

We recall his life of protest, praise and love

And offer you our lives for uniting, not dividing, your world

May we not betray you

**May we not betray them**

Nor forget you

**Nor forget them**

Nor ignore you

**Nor ignore them**

At this holy feast where earth meets heaven  
This holy place where there is room for all  
We come with empty hands and open hearts  
To share with people unseen from across your world  
With people unseen from past and future  
We meet at your crossroad of time and space  
Revive us with life  
Infuse us with love  
At this holy feast  
Where earth meets heaven  
The table of Jesus  
Where there is room for all

He whom the universe could not contain  
Is present to us in this bread  
(the bread is broken)

He who redeemed us and called us by name  
Now meets us in this cup  
(the wine is poured)

So take this bread and this wine  
In them God comes to us

So that we may come to God

*Sharing of bread and wine*

*Songs during communion*

I Will Receive You Now, This Is My Body

*Prayer after communion*

**Almighty God,**

**we thank you for feeding us**

**with the body and blood of your Son**

**Jesus Christ.**

**Through him we offer you our souls and bodies,**

**our time and energy,**

**our protest and praise**

**our willingness to lose our own lives**

**if that will bring your kingdom of mercy on earth**

**Send us out infected with your Holy Spirit of love**

**Inspired to change history for your praise and glory**

**Amen**

*Song*

Thine be the glory

*Blessing*

## **Bread of Justice**

*[This is one of those prayers with influences from a number of sources including Janet Morley, Doug Gay and Saint Francis]*

*Intro and opening prayer*

You are the God of the poor  
the simple and human God  
the God who sweats in the street  
the God with the weather beaten face

That's why I talk to you  
in a way that my people talk  
because you are the labourer God  
the liberator Christ

*Prayer*

**Look at us, Lord,  
Our hands are empty,  
Our hearts are hungry  
What do we want?  
We are hungry for you, God our maker  
We are hungry for a world where people are loved and  
affirmed  
We are hungry for you Holy Spirit  
We are hungry for justice  
We are hungry for community**

**We are hungry for celebration**

**We are hungry for you Jesus Christ**

**We are hungry for change**

*Readings on liberation*

*Prayers for the world*

*Creed*

*Communion Prayer*

*[Along with bread and wine, chains are brought to the table.]*

We bring bread, symbol of labour - exploited, degraded. symbol of life. We will break the bread because Christ the source of life was broken for the exploited and downtrodden.

We bring wine, symbol of blood, spilt in war and conflict, symbol of new life.

We will drink the wine because Christ the peace of the world was killed by violence

We bring chains symbol of oppression captivity and bondage, symbol of hope when they are broken. We will take a chain because Christ the liberator was himself held captive.

**Bread and wine and chains are before us  
The memory of our meals, our working our talking  
The story which shapes us, the grieving and the pain  
The oppressor who lies deep in our own soul, the  
seeking and the loving**

**Holy holy holy Lord  
God of power and might  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory  
Hosanna in the highest**

We give thanks for all that holds us together in our humanity; that binds us to all who live and have lived, who have cried and are crying, who hunger and are thirsty, who pine for justice, and who hold out for the time that is coming. And in this we are bound to Jesus, who in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them saying; 'Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

**Christ will come again**

*Invitation*

Come to the living God

Come to stand alongside the poor

Come to struggle with those who seek freedom

Come to resist all that offends God's justice

Come to the living disturbing God

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave  
for you and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you and  
feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

*Share bread and wine*

*Song*

*Blessing attributed to St Francis*

May God bless us with discomfort

At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships

So that we may live from deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger

At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of

God's creations

So that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with tears

To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger,  
and war,

So that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and

To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with just enough foolishness

To believe that we can make a difference in the world,

So that we can do what others claim cannot be done:

To bring justice and kindness to all our children and all our  
neighbors who are poor.

**Amen.**

## **Bread**

*[During this service bread was made and baked which was then shared using a ritual from the Orthodox church]*

God, food of the poor, Christ our bread

Give us a taste of the tender bread from your  
creation's table

Bread newly taken from your heart's oven

Food that comforts and nourishes us

A fraternal loaf that makes us human joined hand in  
hand, working and sharing

A warm loaf that makes us a family; sacrament of your  
body, your wounded people

### *Antidoron*

"The Orthodox Church has two pulls going on inside it – one towards exclusivity and the other towards inclusivity. Eucharist is regarded very highly – only Orthodox believers who have fasted and prepared properly may receive it. But not all the loaf is consecrated: the largest portion is set aside as Blessed Bread, or Antidoron, to be shared among all the Orthodox. Churches that have a lot of non-Orthodox attendance have even-less-consecrated-Blessed-Bread which any Christian can share. Years ago I took part in this Blessed-Bread sharing at a service with a Russian Orthodox community in Bath. It was a beautiful



experience. First the priest would break off a large lump of bread, break it in half, bless it with the words "May the blessing and the mercy of the Lord be with you" and share it with the person next to him. Then that person would eat a small fragment of it, break the rest in two, and themselves bless it: "May the blessing and the mercy of the Lord be with you" and share it with the people next to them. Before long the whole room was a melee of people blessing bread and sharing it."

## Communion by numbers

*[Communion began in the context of a meal. This liturgy takes it back into that setting. It is designed to work around small tables of about 8 people set up in a café style. On each table are a series of numbered envelopes that you have prepared in advance. Every time a bell rings the table open the next numbered envelope and follow the instructions. The sequence of envelopes follows a basic liturgical structure of a communion service. Welcome people with an initial drink and explain how the service will run. Then have someone keep an eye on the flow of the service to ring the bell when people seem ready to move on. This service could be adapted in lots of ways. Be creative with it – it's the power of a good idea. These were the envelopes we used first time.]*

1. Introduce yourselves, slips of paper with questions to ask each other
2. Iconic candle making kit with a night light, strip of acetate with the last supper image on and two paper clips. give thanks for things that have happened this week.
3. Text a confession on your mobile phone to the number prefacing it with the word confess (an absolution with the words you are forgiven is triggered by the keyword



confess).

4. Read story of Thomas - share stories of doubt and surprise

5. Peace - toast glasses proposing a toast of affirmation to someone round the table

6. Share what you are thankful for about Jesus. Share what you want to remember about Jesus. Use images of Christ enclosed to spark discussion

7. Share bread and wine round the table after listening to the prayer below. A bottle of wine and bread were already in place on each table

Word becomes flesh flesh becomes bread bread becomes body body becomes word

God is bread bread is broken pain becomes wine wine becomes joy

Wine bursts the wineskins God bursts the tomb bread bursts into song

**Holy, holy, holy.**

8. Invite the group to share concerns for prayer - take

one of the night lights and light it for each prayer

9. Go and collect a plate of hot towels (the kind you get after a curry - we got some from a warehouse locally) - say a blessing and use the towel

## Companion and Vindicator

*[See above for communion by numbers explanation. For this service 10 different people produced the 10 different envelopes that followed through the story of the journey to Emmaus in Luke 24. This was the sequence. A couple of the sections were very specific to the service so have been left simply with the headings and readings]*

1. Chill/preparation - stand and read prayer together, walk around and find a table to sit at while listening to the music track being played
2. Emmaus Road story - read story from bible round table and create an icon candle – this was made with a transparency print of an art work of the Emmaus road story, a paper clip to make it into a circle, a box of matches and a tea-light candle.
3. The hiddenness of God (Luke 24:13-16)
4. Downcast (Luke 24:17-18) On the table were parsley and salt water. 'What has made your soul downcast this week? Spend some time silently reflecting on ways in which you have wounded your life, the lives of others and the life of the world. When you are ready, take some parsley, dip it into the salt water and eat it. The salt water

represents tears of repentance; the parsley represents new life that will grow.' Then we said a confession prayer from Iona together.

5. Storytelling part 1 - sharing our own stories (Luke 24:19-27)

6. Storytelling part 2 - hearing God's story (Luke 24:19-27)

7. Welcoming the stranger (Luke 24:28-29) - 'the flight to Emmaus': fill in landing cards - it's how we welcome strangers to a country nowadays, and filling in the questions for the person sitting next to you makes you no longer strangers.

8. Breaking bread (Luke 24:30-31) – we explored the idea of companion and vindicator and used this prayer

### **Our Companion & Vindicator**

*Middle English : from Old French *compaignon*, literally 'one who breaks bread with another,' based on Latin *com-* 'together with' + *panis* 'bread.'*

On the night of his betrayal

Jesus our companion

Took bread

Broke it

Gave it to his followers

Eat

My body is broken for you

We break this bread with those who:

hunger for justice,

dream of a land free from occupation,

long to live life free from fear,

search for food and water each day,

long for companionship.

*ORIGIN mid 16th cent.(in the sense [deliver, rescue] ):  
from Latin vindicat- 'claimed, avenged,' from the verb  
vindicare, from vindex, vindic- 'claimant, avenger.'*

On the night of his betrayal

Jesus our vindicator

Took wine

Gave it to his followers

Remember

My blood is poured out for you

Drink

This is a new promise

All who come to me will have life

We drink this wine with those who:

see too much blood flow,

watch loved ones die,

are judged by their race or skin colour,

carry in their blood the stigma of HIV/AIDS,

long for someone to dry their tears.

Come, eat, drink, you who hunger and thirst,

For a deeper faith,

for a better life,

for a fairer world,

for healing and wholeness – Come.

9. Burning hearts (Luke 24:32-35)

10 Prayer and blessing

## **Celtic communion**

*[Following a service exploring ideas of communion at the end of the 90s, Grace began a monthly communion service, with deliberately limited setup and repeated liturgy. This continued until we decided that the church was too cold and uncomfortable in spite of our best efforts and we moved it into people's homes. This is one of the communion liturgies used for this series. We have no recollection now of its origins – we simply have a printed sheet from that time - though the invitation is from the Iona community which we love and have used many times. Thank you to them for permission to include it – see p2]*

### *Lamentation/confession*

As we draw near to the place of at-one-ment

**Give us tears to see the wonder of Your presence;  
Give us tears to see the wasting of Your people,  
Give us tears to see the wounding of Your Son.**

**We are the race that helped make the wood on which  
You were crucified, and still we misuse Your creation;  
We are the race that helped make the nails that  
pierced Your body, yet still we use work for gain at  
others' expense;  
We are the race that did nothing to stop Your  
betrayers, yet still we are ruled by comfort or  
cowardice.**

*[Nails are hammered into pieces of wood]*

*The peace*

The opportunity for absolution and sharing of the peace.  
People cross each others foreheads with water and the phrase:

**Through the cross we are forgiven**

*Intercession*

*The Offering*

*[Bread and wine brought to the table]*

We bless You, High King of all creation.

Through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become our spiritual food and drink.

As we bring this bread to You, we offer also:

our energies and creating;

our relationships and achieving;

the sap of life rising;

the seeds of life flowering;

the resources of life acquiring;

the fun of life enjoying;

the raw materials of life building;

the intelligence of life organising;

the feelings of life communicating.

You who put ear in corn, take these ordinary things and transform them into the glory of Your presence.

We pour out this wine and offer to You the woes of life  
outpouring;

the waning powers of life,

the diseases and disappointments;

the hurts and the handicaps;

failures caused by our stupidity or by circumstances  
beyond our control.

As grapes are crushed to make the wine, so we offer all  
who are crushed by hunger or loneliness, violence or  
abuse.

You who put beam into sun and moon, take all this and  
transform it into the deep, rich wine of everlasting life.

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to god**

Lift up your heads

**We lift them up to god**

Lift up your voices

**We lift them up to god**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to god**

### *The Eucharist*

High King of the universe, who sustains the worlds,  
who brought forth the earth;

You breathe wisdom into all your creatures, till we reflect  
Your three-fold friendship.

In our pain and sorrow we cry out to You

Tender Lamb, slain before the world began, perfect  
sacrifice for our sins. Grant that by the power of the Holy  
Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be for us His body  
and blood who, on the night He was betrayed, took bread,  
gave You thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples  
saying : Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you.  
After supper He took the cup, gave You thanks, and said  
to them : this is My blood of the new covenant which is  
shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do  
this in remembrance of Me.

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

**Christ will come again**

### *The invitation*

This is the table not of the church, but of the Lord.

It is to be made ready for those who love Him and who  
want to love Him more.

So come,  
you who have much faith  
and you who have little,  
you who have been here often  
and you who have not been for a long time,  
you who have tried to follow  
and you who have failed.

Come,  
not because it is I who invite you:  
it is our Lord.  
It is his will that those who want him  
should meet him here.

Look,  
here is your Lord coming to you  
in bread and wine.

*Share bread and wine*

*A blessing*

May the power and the mystery go before us to show us  
the way,  
shine above us to lighten our world,  
lie beneath us to bear us up,  
walk with us and give us companionship  
and glow and flow within us to bring us joy **Amen**

## **Weekend Communion**

*[This simple communion service was used in someone's lounge, prior to moving outside for a barbecue. The confession was written for the occasion, as a response to the Grace ethos.]*

### *Greeting*

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

**And also with you.**

### *Confession*

When our thoughtless criticism stifles the creativity of others, Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy**

When we keep a tight hold on power and deny others the chance to participate. Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

When we prefer the safety of our holy huddle to the wideness of God's world. Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

When we decline to take risks for fear that we might fail. Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy**

**But when we praise the gifts of others,  
share the power that we are given,  
engage with communities beyond the boundaries of**

**our comfort,**  
**and risk everything we have for the sake of others,**  
then, God rejoices in us.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent...

Risen Christ, you have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven: help us to see and serve you, that we may join you at the Father's side, where you reign with the Spirit in glory, now and for ever.

**Amen**

*Word*

Acts 1:6-11 Luke 24:44-49

*Peace*

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

*Communion*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right to give unceasing thanks and boundless praise to you, Holy God, ruler of the universe and giver of life. You brought the world into being and declared it good; you made humankind in your image, and entrusted to us the stewardship of all creation. Despite our failings you showed us mercy. Through your law and the voices of prophets and poets, you called us to faithfulness and justice. You commanded us to remember the poor and the needy, the orphan and the stranger. With infinite generosity you forgave us as we followed selfish goals and ignored your words of love. Never abandoning us to our sinfulness, you came among us and showed us the path of life. Therefore we praise you, joining the saints and angels in proclaiming your glory, as we say,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and honour and praise to you, holy and living God. Your word of peace has been active from the beginning; your justice has sought incarnation in every age. In the fullness of time you looked with favour upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive your Son through the power of your Holy Spirit. Expecting his birth she sang

of your purpose: The mighty shall be cast down and the humble lifted up; the promise of mercy to Abraham and all his children shall be fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He pronounced the blessedness of peacemakers, all those who are willing to seek first your Kingdom and your righteousness. Jesus yearned to draw all the world to himself, yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. We returned violence for his friendship, crucifixion for his self-offering. Yet even this you turned to blessing, and transformed his unjust death into the means of salvation.

On the night before he died for us, our Savior Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Accept, O Lord, our sacrifice of praise, this memorial of our redemption. Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts. Let them be for us the Body and Blood of your Son. Send your Spirit upon us also, and grant that we who eat this bread and drink this cup may be filled with your life and goodness. Through the abiding presence of Christ, empower us to live the gospel of peace and bring reconciliation to the world in his Name.

**Glory to you, holy and living God.**

**Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne;**

**love and faithfulness go before you.**

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honour and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father...**

*After communion*

**Soul of Christ, sanctify me**

**Body of Christ, save me**

**Blood of Christ, inebriate me**

**Water from Christ's side, wash me**

**Passion of Christ, strengthen me**

**O good Jesus, hear me**

**Within thy wounds hide me** (from the *Anima Christi*)

*Blessing*

## **Ash Wednesday Communion**

*[This is pieced together from a mix of prayers in  
Alternative Worship book and liturgy found online]*

### *Opening sentences*

There is no other day like Ash Wednesday. The proud and the meek, the arrogant and the humble are all made equal on Ash Wednesday. The healthy and the sick, the assured and the sick in spirit, all made their way to church in the grey morning or in the dusty afternoon. They line up silently, eyes downcast, bony fingers counting the beads of the rosary, lips mumbling prayers. All are repentant, all are preparing themselves for the shock of the laying of the ashes on the forehead and the priest's agonising words. 'You are dust and to dust you shall return.'

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart you will not despise. Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all

### **And also with you**

### *Opening prayer*

Massive and longer lasting God

You hate nothing you have made

You forgive the sins of everyone who regrets them and is

sorry

Create and make in us new and conscientious hearts that, regretting the stuff we've done wrong and acknowledging our sad state,

we can receive from you, God of all mercy,

total forgiveness and peace

through Jesus Christ our Lord who is alive and parties with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

**Amen**

### *Readings*

#### *Invitation to observe lent*

Dear People of God: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting. This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Saviour, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their

repentance and faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. To make a beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer.

*Keep silence*

*Confession*

Psalm 51:1-17

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy

*Imposition of Ashes*

As a sign of penitence with which we shall keep this season of preparation for Easter I invite you to receive on your head in ash the sign of the cross, the symbol of our salvation

God our Father you create us from the dust of the earth: grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality; for it is by grace alone that we receive eternal life in Jesus Christ our Saviour

## **Amen**

O God you have made us for yourself and  
against your longing there is no defence

**Mark us with your love and release in us a passion for  
your justice in our disfigured world that we may turn  
from our guilt and face you our heart's desire**

Amen

[People are marked with ash using these words]

Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return

Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ

## *Communion*

On a day of fasting, on a day when we  
remember the frailty of our own bodies,  
We are invited to share in one meal and to  
remember the frailty of one body above all.

All you who want to follow Jesus Christ into the  
wilderness, come and share in this meal;

All you who want to follow Jesus Christ to the cross, come  
and share in this meal;

All you who want to receive the life of God which is  
stronger than death, come and share in this meal.

Look at us Lord

Our hands are empty

Our hearts are hungry

What do we want?

**We are here to say that we are hungry -  
We are hungry for you, God our maker  
We are hungry for a world where people are  
loved and affirmed  
We are hungry for you Holy Spirit  
We are hungry for justice  
We are hungry for community  
We are hungry for celebration  
We are hungry for you Jesus Christ  
We are hungry for change**

God of life,  
Today we remember that you are hungry too;  
Jesus Christ, your wilderness hunger  
Has prepared this meal;  
Your hunger for life drove you to make yourself  
Into food for the life of the world;  
In our hearts we celebrate your life and death and life from  
death,  
And we proclaim  
This bread will be for us your body  
This wine will be for us your blood

So we do now what you did at the last feast,  
On the night you were betrayed,  
Gathered with your friends  
Around a table you took bread and wine

You said they were your body broken and your blood  
poured out  
A new relationship to God

**Send down your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts  
of bread and wine**

**That they may become for us your body**

**Healing, forgiving and making us whole**

**And that we may become, for you, your body loving  
and caring in the world**

**Until your kingdom comes**

**Amen**

On the night when he was betrayed

Jesus Christ took bread and broke it

And said, 'this is my body which is given for you. Do this to  
remember me.'

Later he took the cup of wine

He said, 'this cup that is poured out for you is the new  
relationship with God made possible by my death.'

People of God here is your food

People of God here is your drink

Take, eat and drink - receive the life of Christ

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life

The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life

[Bread and wine are shared]

*Prayer after communion*

*The dismissal*

Go now, take courage to share the love of Christ

And take care to show his love

The blessing of God the merciful creator

The blessing of Christ, the stirring saviour

The blessing of the Holy Spirit the giver of life

Be among us and remain with us

This day and the days of lent to come

**Amen**



## Icons of the present

*[see Grace Pocket Liturgies for the rest of the liturgy]*

The eucharist is an icon

The eucharist is a window

In the eucharist the bread and the wine become transparent to the presence of the risen Christ

This is a foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth when all things will be transparent with his presence in the same way, and all things will be sacraments to one another, including we ourselves.

*After-communion prayer*

*Looking out through the window*

Now that we have eaten bread that fed our inner vision

Now that we have sipped the wine that washed the windows of our soul

the view from here is clearer

We see beauty and wrongdoing in true colours

No longer blurred together by the sin that clouded conscience, like John we see the struggle, and know we must take sides.

**Father of all creation**

**Give your servants in all situations your wisdom and strength, to choose the right path and to walk it.**

**Give us your protection as we walk your line  
and may the vision of your presence be always in our  
windows like a cloud of smoke by day  
and a pillar of fire by night.  
Through Christ the icon of God  
and the Spirit who gives sight  
Amen**

## Drinks Eucharist

*[This communion prayer was written and used round the table in someone's home during a meal. At the part describing the cup people were invited to chink their glasses/bottles together]*

It takes many different drinks to make one party  
different in strength and purity  
different in colour and taste  
coming from different places  
to be poured out together in celebration

Let Christ be the unity that binds them  
in their finished state  
as he is the root of the fruit that made them.

On the night of his arrest  
Jesus and his friends held a party  
in memory and celebration of how God set his people free  
from all that had enslaved and oppressed them.

While they ate, Jesus took some bread, thanked God,  
broke it and gave it to his friends saying  
"Eat this, it is my body broken for you. Do this to  
remember me."

Later when the party was ending he filled his glass,  
thanked God and held it out to them saying,  
"think this all of you, this is my blood  
spilt for you and many others  
to mend the broken bond between God and humanity"

In this God-touched bread and wine  
creation sees its bondage broken  
sign of hope and foretaste of its freedom

## **Easter Day**

*[This liturgy was created communally over breakfast on Easter Day by asking people to complete the sentences  
Resurrection turns...]*

*We have faith...*

*When Jesus comes again...*

*It was shared in a communion service]*

Resurrection turns brokenness into

healing and wholeness

Resurrection turns war into peace

Resurrection turns illness into health

Resurrection turns random into meaningful

Resurrection turns injustice and suffering into  
justice and joy

Resurrection turns rejection into acceptance

Resurrection turns hate and fear into love

Resurrection turns incompleteness into completeness.

We have faith to believe resurrection will happen where  
people live on refuse heaps

We have faith to believe resurrection will happen in  
prisons

We have faith to believe resurrection will happen in Iraq

We have faith to believe resurrection will happen in  
our city

We have faith to believe resurrection will happen

in Equador

We have faith to believe resurrection will happen in sink estates.

When Jesus comes again people will no longer feel the need to hurt each other

When Jesus comes again we won't be constrained by hips and gall stones and colitis and cancer and AIDS

When Jesus comes again people will treat each other like God is in everyone

When Jesus comes again we will all be alert in the morning

When Jesus comes again people will know themselves as they really are, not depressed, but able to change

When Jesus comes again people will look up and know God.



## **Safespace Telford**

*[We have been inspired by and used many prayers from Safespace in Telford including these communion prayers that were written for communion shared around the meal table]*

### *Welcome*

The door is open

The table has room

The food is plentiful

The water is cool

The company is warm

The rest is undisturbed

The shelter is total

### **Welcome**

There are no special places

There is no head of the table

There are no VIPs

There is no honoured guest

There is no standing

There are no servants

There are no exceptions

### **Welcome**

The welcome is universal

The entrance is free

The invitation is open  
The hand is extended  
There is no time limit  
The time is now  
The meal is served

**Welcome**

Eat & Drink

Rest

Think

Speak

Be yourself

Be one with us

Be one with God

**Welcome**

Whether you deserve it or not

Whether you think you deserve it or not

All are welcome

You are welcome

Christ welcomed his brothers and sisters to the table,  
He washed them as a servant washes important visitors,  
He fed them as parents feed their children,  
He laughed with them as friends laugh together,  
He blessed them as a host blesses guests,  
He loved them as God loves all creation.

**Welcome**

### *Community*

Welcome to the table. Eating together is a vivid sign of community. Sharing tonight as we do regularly we are community, in communion with each other and with the creator and redeemer God. We reflect the image of a God who is by nature fellowship, family. Yet family is difficult, it requires honesty and sacrifice. It is vital that we are honest with each other and before God and that we give of ourselves to each other and to God's purpose.

Reflect on and release the things which harm our relationship with God and each other.

### *Global*

In sharing this meal we share not only with each other, but with people of faith the world over; male and female, rich and poor, powerful and weak, experienced and naïve, old and young, global and local, every race and every creed... all approach the table as equals, as Jesus lay down his authority at the table, so we lay down any remnants of pride, prejudice and self-importance and any feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and hurt. This is a Global table, all are welcome, all are equal.

### *Timeless*

Not only is this table one among many across the planet, it is a timeless place... we eat together in a meal shared

by seekers and believers through the ages; Disciples and Desert Fathers, Celts and Catholics, Western puritans and Eastern Orthodox, Conservatives and Charismatics, Liberal and Liberationist, The certain and the uncertain, modern and post-modern, the hurting and the healers. In eating together we join in the history of God's church.

### *Sharing*

Jesus sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, "You've no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you before I enter my time of suffering. It's the last one I'll eat until we all eat it together in the kingdom of God." Taking the cup, he blessed it, then said, "Take this and pass it among you. As for me, I'll not drink wine again until the kingdom of God arrives."

Taking bread, he blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory."

He did the same with the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant written in my blood, blood poured out for you."

As people all over the world and down throughout the ages shared this meal, and received from God, so we receive, in order that we might be refreshed and sustained to live God's purpose in community, to live out our God-

created identity, to live generously and graciously, to fight oppression and injustice, to minister to culture, to join God in God's world, to be a living sacrifice.

## Hold This Space

*[We have been inspired by and used many of the wonderful prayers and liturgies written by Cheryl Lawrie. The introduction and after communion prayer are from Cheryl and Grace added in the middle section]*

### *Introducing Communion*

The first time this story was told  
they gathered around a table  
a ragged collection of people –  
sinners  
betrayers  
the power-hungry,  
fragile  
lonely  
lost.

The first time this story was told,  
Jesus promised that it was for all time  
that *whenever* the bread was broken  
and the wine was poured,  
*wherever* the story was told around the table  
he would be there.

Today we tell the story  
as its been told a thousand times over;  
we break the bread,

and we pour the wine;  
sure, as we do,  
that we belong at this table  
and that Jesus is here with us.

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;  
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:  
this is my body, given for you all.  
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;  
he took the cup, gave it and said:  
this is my blood, shed for you all  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
do this in remembrance of me.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup  
we celebrate the cross on which he died to set us free.  
defying death he rose again and is alive with you to plead  
for us and all the world.  
Send your Spirit on us now, that by these gifts we may  
feed on Christ with opened eyes and hearts on fire.

If we come to this table angry,  
let this bread and wine be our peace.

If we come to the table as sinners,  
let this bread and wine be our grace.

If we come to the table betrayed,  
let this bread and wine be our wholeness.

If we come to the table broken,  
let this bread and wine be our hope.

If we come to the table empty,  
let this bread and wine be our life.

For this is a holy table,  
with food to fill a hungry world  
and wine to quench thirsty hearts.  
It is God's in the making,  
and ours for the taking.

*A Prayer For After The Distribution Of Communion*

Maybe in this there has been a glimpse of the kingdom  
a foretaste  
a hint  
a promise.

Let it hold you and let it send you  
so you will never be at peace

until all are fed  
until all know home  
until all are free  
until justice is done

until peace is the way  
until grace is the law  
until love is the rule.

Until God's realm comes  
until God's realm comes  
until God's realm comes...

Amen.



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