

Liturgy of Breads of the World – World Communion Sunday
Zion's 'Liberty Bell' United Church of Christ
620 W. Hamilton Street, Allentown, Pa. 18101

NOTE: This liturgy is based on the United Church of Christ Service of Word and Sacrament, and a "liturgy of breads of the world" that has been adapted and passed on from one person to another so many times that original authorship is indeterminate!

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Pastor: This table is open to all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and seek to follow Christ's way. Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Come to this sacred table not because you must, but because you may. Come not because you are fulfilled, but because you need God's mercy and love. Come not to express an opinion, but to seek God's presence and to pray for God's Spirit. Come to this table, then, sisters and brothers, as you are. It is here for you and me that we might again know that God has come to us, shared our common lot, and invited us to join the people of God's new age.

Congregation: Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. We gather at this table to know him in the breaking of the bread.

P: Gracious God, in the breaking of the bread today, we bring twelve different breads, symbols for us of the many different people in the body of Christ throughout the world.

C: Lord, though we are many, yet we are one in you. May we celebrate the gift of diversity you have created in the world, and may we honor the unity of spirit to which you have called us in Christ.

P: We offer dark rye bread in honor of generations of immigrants from Europe who adapted themselves to this new land while preserving traditions from the "old country;"

C: In gratitude for generations of immigrants, our parents and grandparents, great-grandparents and beyond, we give thanks for the legacy of their labor that we inherit in this nation.

P: We offer cornbread in honor of the American Indians who shared maize with the colonists, north and south, and for whom it was often the mainstay of a simple diet;

C: Thankful for the legacy and traditions of the American Indian, we pray to be respectful of their heritage;

P: We offer a tortilla in honor of the families in Latino countries where all too many people suffer injustice and oppression;

C: Lord you have shown that all people are free in Christ. Bless all peoples with the freedom to live their lives in peace.

P: We offer Syrian bread in honor of people of the Middle East caught in the crossfire of national and religious conflicts and war;

C: How long, O Lord, must this region endure violence? Bless them and deliver them from evil, we pray.

P: Included on these trays of various breads, there is day-old bread in our offering, a reminder of the many families in the world who make do with less than they need;

C: Sustain your people who suffer poverty and hunger, O Lord. And guide the leaders of the governments of this world to establish just policies that will ensure all will be fed.

P: We offer naan in honor of our brothers and sisters in India, Pakistan, and central Asia;

C: We pray for these nations, beset by dangerous conflicts, threatened by internal strife, that they may pursue a peaceful path to development.

P: We offer saltines in honor of the elderly poor in our nation, who often eat thin soup and crackers in place of a full meal;

C: We pray that you prosper the ministries of those who work with the elderly, that none is neglected nor forgotten.

P: We offer hot dog rolls in honor of children and youth whose energy and enthusiasm are signs of hope for the future;

C: Bless the youth of our nation with courage and virtue, and inspire them to follow the way of Christ.

P: We offer rice cakes to honor our Asian sisters and brothers, who often feel caught between two cultures, East and West;

C: As major changes are being made in the Orient, so may the Gospel and your Spirit be welcomed and received by those who have never heard the good news.

P: We offer multi-grain bread, symbol of the many people who make up the earth, symbol of all its diverse languages and cultures, unified in one loaf of bread, even as you see us all as one in Christ.

C: O Lord, keep us open to people who are different in language and custom, in race or culture. May we fulfill your calling to offer hospitality to the strangers among us, for we know you dwell in them as you dwell in us.

P: We offer matza in honor of the people of Israel, symbol of salvation through God's "mighty hand and outstretched arm," and shared by Jesus at the Last Supper;

C: With your faithful people in every place, in every time and beyond time, we come to this table to know you in the breaking of the bread.

P: For the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and, when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord God.

C: It is good that we do.

P: We give you thanks, Lord God, our Creator, for bringing the worlds into being, for forming us in your likeness, for recalling us when we rebel against you, and for keeping the world in your steadfast love. We praise you especially for Jesus Christ; who was born of Mary and lived as one of us; who knew exactly the life we know, and yet was obedient to your purposes, even to his death on a cross. We thank you that you stamped his death with victory by raising him in power and by making him head over all things. We rejoice in the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit, in the church you have gathered, in its task of obedience, and in the promise of eternal life. With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name.

ALL: Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God, Most High.

P: Therefore bless now, by your Word and Spirit, both us and these gifts of bread and wine, that in receiving them at this table, and in offering here our faith and praise, we may be united with Christ and one another, and remain faithful to the tasks he sets before us.

C: In the strength Christ gives, we offer ourselves to you, giving thanks that you have called us to serve you. Amen.

P: Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ. Through the cup of blessing we participate in the new life Christ gives. Come, for all things are ready.

THE COMMUNION

P: Let us give thanks.

C: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of your son, Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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