

OPENING VISUAL MEDITATION

Slideshow of Back Home Church Pictures

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: So many ways of being church.

So many ways of changing church

ALL: Tall steeple. Pipe organ.

Purple hymnal. Offering plates.

One: So many ways of being church.

So many ways of changing church

ALL: Worn wooden pews. Cold metal folding chairs.

Handbells. Praise bands. Laying on of hands.

Preachers who preach.

Sermons that can't keep us awake.

Relevant words. Empty words.

Ancient words. Tough words.

One: So many ways of being church.

So many ways of changing church.

ALL: Meaningful mission and lives that are changed.

Toxic charity where lives stay the same.

Relationships that matter.

Relationships that have soured.

Energy for enemies. Befriending the outcast.

One: So many ways of being church.

So many ways of changing church.

ALL: Focused on ourselves. Focused on others.

Fighting amongst ourselves. Fighting to end injustice.

One: Let us worship the One who calls us to be the church.

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Church is not always a place where *we* feel welcomed.
The Church is not always a place where *others* feel welcomed.
Together, let us name what needs to change:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

It's pretty easy, Lord, to love you at Montreat—
Everyone else seems to. Plus it's fun:
Energizers. Incredible music.
Inspiring leaders. Beautiful mountains.
It's much harder to follow you at home
in churches that may or may not get us.
When we become tired or angry with the church as it is,
ignite a spark inside us
to help craft the kind of place and the kind of people
 where the odd ones are accepted
 where the feeble are given a hand
 where the hungry can fill their bellies
 where the broken are made whole. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Sisters and brothers and all members of the family of God,
we name what needs to change
so that we can build a church
where all are welcomed.
We do not do this on our own.
But by the grace of God.
Know that God leads the way
as we open up space and make room for all of God's children.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:1-13

When the day of Pentecost had come,
they were all together in one place.
²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound
like the rush of a violent wind,
and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them,

and a tongue rested on each of them.

⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"

⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?

⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹

⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

¹¹Cretans and Arabs— in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

The word of God for the people of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Belhar Confession (Article 1 and 4)

One: We believe that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;

ALL: we believe that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged;

One: we believe that God calls the church to follow in this;

for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;²
ALL: we believe God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;

One: We believe that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger,
 helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;²

**ALL: we believe that for God pure and undefiled religion
 is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering:**

One: we believe that God wishes to teach the church
 to do what is good and to seek what is right;

**ALL: we believe that the church must therefore stand by people²
 in any form of suffering and need,²
 which implies, among other things,²
 that the church must witness against² and strive against
 any form of injustice,²
 so that justice may roll down like waters,²
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

There are plenty of seats at God's Table.
 You never have to be stressed out about where you will sit.
 Or whether there will be a place for you.
 Because this is where God always shows up
 to meet you
 to feed you
 to love you
 to empower you.

We are nourished at this table
 so that we can go out and make a world of difference.

So join us in this feast.
 Each and everyone of you is welcome.
 Just the way you are.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Spirit of God is here in this place.
We can feel her moving in our midst.
 Open your hearts. Get ready for this mysterious feast.
We are ready. Let's eat.

If your parents make you write thank you notes,
tonight we write one to God.

Thank you for loving us, God.

For nourishing us.

For never letting us go.

(The World)

In the beginning God created:

day and night

earth and sky

seas and stars.

In the beginning God created:

plants and trees

birds and crawling things

sea creatures and wildlife.

In the beginning God created:

human beings

And in the same breath gave us our marching orders:

"You are the leaders. Take charge. Be responsible."

When God finally took a break and looked around,

God smiled,

calling every single piece of creation

not just good, but supremely good.

(The Incarnation)

But things did not stay supremely good.

Life got complicated.

Competition brewed.

Hostility, and hatred festered.

People were wounded. And the earth was too.

Human beings botched their marching orders.

Take charge turned into conquering, controlling, beating, and destroying.

Leadership became looking out for oneself and winning at all costs.

God's words, "Be responsible" a distant echo, ignored and forgotten.

But God stubbornly held onto this world,

refusing to give up on humanity.
 So God sent God's Son to wake us up,
 to call us out, to turn us around.

His name was Jesus.
 Born to a single mom and her bewildered fiancé, Joseph.
 He grew into a skilled carpenter.
 But mostly remembered for being
 a teacher, a healer and antagonist.
 He loved the unlovable, touched the untouchable,
 and forgave what everyone else said was unforgiveable.

(Salvation)

The weak befriended him, but the strong...the strong despised him.
 Leaders feared Jesus while the marginalized cheered him on.
 Before long, he was called an enemy of the state.
 A danger to religion.
 Human hands nailed him to a cross.
 Where he suffered and died,
 declaring God's love for the world.
 On the third day, he rose, transforming death—
 Transforming the world.

(Intercessions)

We cannot feast, O Lord, and forget the world around us:

friends who are hurting,
 families who are broken
 secrets that are eating us alive
 people without clean water to drink
 or enough food to eat
 states passing laws that demonize and exclude
 a world at war
 a Church divided
 the earth being ravished

(Consecration)

Gluten free bread and grape juice—

the tools with which we are to remember you, O God.
There's nothing fancy or magical about them.
But we gather round this table and eat them,
to be reminded that you love us and you call us.
Tonight, we eat
so we can walk out into the world
and be brave and honest,
 kind and just,
 real and stirred up.

Bless this bread and bless this cup.
Swirling your Spirit through these crumbs of bread and droplets of juice—
swirling your Spirit through each and everyone of us.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION BY INTINCTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
And the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.