

Great Thanksgiving for 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
(The Cross)

Invitation

One: Come and enjoy the benefits of the cross.  
At this table we find the spiritual nourishment of forgiveness and sacrifice.  
Here we gain the strength and vision to carry out our calling,  
as we pick up our crosses and follow Christ.

Confession

**All: We have refused to take up our cross and follow You. We have sought to serve You with little personal sacrifice. We have chosen to display a lesser love than giving our lives for the sake of others. We have looked for prestige and shunned public humiliation and ridicule. Our witness is dull and lifeless, and few are saved. Forgive us for being out of sync with You. Forgive us for not reflecting the glory of the cross in our own lives and witness. Forgive us for hindering the blessings that You wish to give those struggling, because we have hoarded them all for ourselves. At this table teach us once again the power of Your cross and the necessity for us taking up our own. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

One: We stumble and fall, but God has lifted us up. We have made foolish and self-serving decisions, but God continues to speak wisdom into our hearts. From the cross Jesus declares that we are forgiven, acknowledging that we do not know what we are doing. Pick up your cross, follow Jesus, and sin no more. Amen.

**All: From the cross Jesus declares that your sins are forgiven and that you do not know what you are doing. Pick up your cross, follow Jesus, and sin no more. Amen.**

Thanksgiving

One: Our suffering is never in vain.  
**All: Out of our sacrifice, miracles are born.**  
One: Our imitation of Christ reveals the presence of God.  
**All: When we let Christ's light shine, there is a revival of souls.**  
One: Today we shoulder our cross and all of heaven and earth rejoices.  
**All: Our hearts are filled with a refreshed hope and a clear vision.**

One: God of humility, and sacrificial service,  
God of the cross,  
God of love, we worship You, with all of heaven.  
You are not interested in just saving one soul,  
Your vision,  
the desire of Your heart,  
is the salvation of every single soul.  
You are willing to sacrifice Your own son,  
You are willing to sacrifice us Your beloved community,  
to reach this goal.

You are willing to face any pain,  
to make any sacrifice,  
to overcome any obstacle,  
to make salvation a reality in every life.

We are so grateful that You were not satisfied with just saving a few.  
We are so thankful that You have worked tirelessly to include the likes of us.  
We join with a multitude of thankful souls on earth and in heaven  
to praise your name as we dedicate our lives to picking up our crosses daily  
to help You secure the rest. Accept our praise now as we proclaim:

**All: The Spirit says, "Come!"  
The Bride invites us to come!  
Let us all say, "Come!"**

**All the thirsty, come!  
Everyone receive this gift,  
The water of life.** (Based upon Revelation 22:17)

One: You want everyone to come and no one to perish, but for all to have eternal life.  
Jesus dedicated his life to the fulfillment of this vision quest.  
Just as Jesus was invited by God to pick up his cross,  
we too receive this invitation.  
Jesus begged for there to be another way,  
a less painful way,  
a less humiliating way,  
a less sacrificial way.  
Jesus asked if God would remove this cup so he would not have to drink it.  
It is this same cup, Christ offers to us.  
This is the way of salvation,  
this is how it is made incarnate in each generation.  
The seeds of renewal, revival, and restoration are planted with many tears,  
Yet the greatest of joys are experienced at the harvest,  
the salvation of the next generation that is made possible through our clear witness.  
A witness not just found in stories of the distant past,  
but through the present sacrifices of those who believe in the promises of God.

Jesus did not want us to be led astray  
the way of a disciple is never the way of worldly power,  
for our greatness is born from our service.  
Jesus expressed this greatness by washing the feet of others.  
Jesus expressed this greatness by taking up his cross to die for others.  
Christ invites us to follow in this path.

Jesus did not want us to be led astray,  
at the Passover table when Jesus blessed the bread,

the reminder that there is still a need in this world for deliverance,  
broke the bread making it available to all, saying:  
“Take, eat, this is my body, broken and given for you.”  
Remember and take up your cross.

Jesus did not want us to be led astray,  
at the Passover table, when Jesus took the cup,  
the reminder of the sacrifices made for salvation,  
shared the cup, making it available to all saying:  
“Drink, everyone for this is the cup of my blood,  
poured out willingly in testimony to the eternal covenant  
made between God and humanity, providing the sacrifice  
not only for your sins, but for the sins of the world.”  
Remember and take up your cross.

We feel honored to be invited to take up our crosses.  
We do not feel worthy to join in Christ’s sacrifice  
even as we embrace this holy mystery as our own, proclaiming:

**All: Christ gave his life upon the cross, and so shall we.  
Christ arose from the grave, and so shall we.  
Christ continues to serve humanity, and so shall we.**

One: Call of the cross, Sacrificial heart,  
consecrate these gifts of bread and wine  
so that they might reveal to us the body and blood of Christ  
the price of salvation.

Call of the cross, Sacrificial heart,  
consecrate the gift of our lives, our courage, and our compassion,  
so that they might reveal to the world, Your church  
the crucified body and martyred bride of Christ  
the price of salvation.

Call of the cross, Sacrificial heart,  
consecrate the members of the Choptank Charge of the United Methodist Church  
as they boldly take up their crosses daily to follow Christ.  
Use their authentic and personal witness to encourage those in need of salvation.  
Use the sacrifices they make to clearly show how much You love the world.  
Use their testimony through word and deed display Your presence for all to see,  
a light on a hill drawing all to the source of their salvation.

**All: We pray together from the cross:  
lifting up Jesus whose the only source of grace for salvation,  
through the Holy Spirit who speaks to every heart, wooing them to salvation,  
for the glory of the God who wants no one to perish,**

**may we always bring glory and honor to God, today and always. Amen.**

One: Now let us turn to God in prayer according to the style Jesus taught us:

**All: Way, Truth and Life through the cross, Seeker of the full salvation of all.  
Together, we are going to make Your dream a reality, now and in the years to come.  
Give us today all we need as we work towards the healing of nations.  
Forgive us when our lives have lead others away from salvation,  
just as we forgive others  
when they have lead us away from that same salvation.  
Keep us from shying away from taking up our crosses daily,  
empower us to live before the world a life that portrays the true gospel.  
You are sacrifice, compassion, and the way of salvation for all. Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

With grateful hearts we have entered into the blessing of this holy mystery in Jesus.  
Thank you for Your sacrifice. Thank You for your peace. Thank You for your  
willingness to include us in Your plan of salvation. We are ready to be sent out into the  
world. We are ready to take up our crosses anew. We will demonstrate Your peace in  
this world of chaos and pain. We will do all in our power to share these rich blessing  
with others. May we all bring glory to You, always. Amen.