

Holy Communion
(Baptism of Our Lord - God Who Comes)

Invitation:

One: The Lord has come to you, and invites you personally to come and join him at this table. You do not have to find God, for Divine Love has already found you. You do not have to choose to follow God first, for Divine Love is already revealing Themselves to your life. God comes choosing never to leave you nor forsake you, choosing to become a constant companion throughout your life. Come and join together in this sacred meal.

Confession:

All: We confess that we have not always noticed that You have come into our lives. We have found it hard to believe that You are poor or homeless. We have a hard time imagining You living as a prisoner or as a refugee seeking safety because there are those seeking to take Your life. Yet You are the God who comes to us, choosing to stay with us. Help us notice when You are hungry and thirsty. Make our hearts aware when you are a stranger in our neighborhood or locked away in prison feeling deserted by humanity. Open our ears to hear Your cries for mercy and restorative justice. Accept our repentance for we never want to turn You away empty again. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

One: Although your sins are as scarlet, Christ alone comes and make you whole. By the grace of Jesus Christ your are forgiven. Go beloved and sin no more.

All: Although your sins are as scarlet, Christ alone comes to make you whole. By the grace of Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven. Go beloved and sin no more.

Great Thanksgiving:

One: Listen! Can you hear the voice from heaven?

All: God calls us beloved and sounds so pleased with us.

One: Notice the water swirling past you.

All: I can you feel each and every sin being washed away!

One: Do you feel the joy of the Lord?

All: It bubbles up from deep within my soul, filling me with eternal gratitude.

One: You do find joy in our lives.

You come to us dreaming great dreams of possibility.

You come to us with a hope that tomorrow will be even better than today.

You come to us bringing healing for the nations, starting within our own hearts.

You come to us ready to do something new, never imagined nor thought of before.

In Your presence we join with the whole human race to sing Your praises.

These praises rise up to heaven and are echoed by the hosts of heaven, as we sing:

All: God is among us!

We now dwell in God's presence!

We're the Lord's people!

**God is present now!
And chooses to be our God.
Wiping every tear.**

**Morning, crying, pain,
God even takes death away
They will be no more.** (Revelation 21:3b-4)

One: God does come into our lives.
Jesus is Immanuel, God with us.
Jesus came as a baby and grew to be a man
full of wisdom, gaining divine and human favor.
Not claiming his sinless perfection,
Jesus was baptized by John, repenting of the sins that tarnish our world.
Jesus taught with authority and authenticity,
showing us that our lives were in the hands of a loving God.

God comes into our midst not as the ruler of the universe
but as the humble servant of all.
This is why Jesus got up from his seat,
took off his outer robe, and picked up the towel and basin.
There was no one disqualified from receiving this divine hospitality.
Jesus knelt and washed the feet of everyone,
with the hope that we would do likewise,
spreading divine love throughout the world.

God comes into our midst as one of us,
so with thanksgiving, Jesus took the Passover bread,
remembering those who still cry out to God for deliverance.
Jesus broke the bread and distributed it to all, saying:
“Take and eat. This is my body broken and shared with you.”
Jesus hopes that we will do likewise,
spreading divine love throughout the world.

God comes into our midst as one of us,
so with thanksgiving, Jesus lifted up a cup of Passover wine,
remembering the pain caused by hardened human hearts
that refuse to acknowledge the suffering of others.
Jesus shared the cup and passed it to all, saying:
“Drink all of you, for this is the cup of my blood
which I pour out willingly to glorify God’s everlasting covenant of grace
established for the blessing of all.”
Jesus hopes that we will do likewise,
spreading divine love throughout the world.

God has come into our lives,

baptized us with water and the Spirit
for the transformation of the world through love.
In this holy mystery we have found our call,
which we wholeheartedly embrace:

**All: Christ came to bless the world through his death.
Christ comes to bless the world through his life.
Christ comes again to bless the world through us.**

One: Always Present One, who will never leave us,
touch these gifts of bread and wine
transforming them for us into the body and blood of Christ
and transforming us to become like him.

Always Present One, who will never leave us,
touch the gifts of our labor and leisure,
transforming them for the world, into Your holy church,
the very present body and humble bride of Christ,
and transforming them to become like him.

Always Present One, who will never leave us,
inspire now the Choptank Charge of the United Methodist Church.
Baptize them anew with living water filling them afresh with Your Holy Spirit.
Allow them to reflect Your holy presence for the sake of all who have not met You.
Come into their presence and be their God
and allow them the privilege of being Your people.

**All: This is our prayer to You most sacred Trinity
may our diversity match Your own,
may our unity match Your own,
may our love match Your own,
so that the world might see Your glory,
now and always. Amen.**

One: Now let us pray following the pattern that Jesus taught us by praying:

**All: God who comes and dwells among us,
holy is the community You raise up.
You come to blessed us so that we can bless.
You come to forgiven us, so that we can forgive.
You come to strengthen our resolve when tempted to be unloving,
so we can strengthen and encourage others to become more loving.
For love is Your rule, love is Your desire, and love is Your will, always. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

You have come to us in this holy mystery found in Jesus Christ, just as You come to us through the waters of baptism. You have come to us again within this community of faith and we are grateful. Now send us out as your apostles to bring good news to the poor, that we might

bind up the broken hearted and help set those in bondage free. Use us to help others notice that You have come into their lives. Dwell now in the praises of Your people. Amen.