

Holy Communion
(Fifth Sunday of Epiphany- Waiting)

Invitation:

One: You are invited to come and tarry at the table of our Lord. Please don't be quick to rush off. Wait a moment and savor being enveloped by the presence of God. You are invited to come and enjoy this friendship and all of its benefits.

Confession:

All: Forgive us for not waiting: not waiting for You to speak, not pausing for You to act, not taking the time enjoy Your sacred presence. Slow us down. Increase our patience. Open the eyes of our souls to better comprehend what You are seeking to accomplish, not only in our lives, but also in the interconnecting lives of others. Help us as we struggle to release control of our lives into Your very capable hands. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

One: God is patient with you, slow to anger and abounding with steadfast love. Showing great patience, God has forgiven you, now once again follow Christ and learn from his ways.

All: God is also patient with you and is showing great patience. You too are forgiven, now once again follow Christ and learn from his ways. This is wonderful! Amen.

Great Thanksgiving:

One: God invites us to wait a moment,

All: To take a deep breath and let it out slowly.

One: God invites us to pause to take notice of the lives gathered around us,

All: To see each life as a gift, shared with us for but a moment.

One: Taste and see that the Lord is delightful,

All: Filling our days with grace, peace and wonder filled praise.

One: When we wait upon You, Lord, our strength is renewed.

When we slow down and sit beside You, You renew our minds.

When we show a little patience, hope springs forth, unfolding within us all the dreams and visions You are calling into being.

Your new creation takes time.

We must wait until we mature enough to move on.

We must wait to learn what has yet to be revealed to us.

We must wait for others as You work in their lives, just as You have worked in ours.

We must wait, but so do You, as You shape our world, generation by generation.

Those in heaven cry out before Your throne, "How long!"

All of creation groans and cries out, "How long!"

We need to find some patience, because, You, God, are waiting for us.

So we wait.

All: Seeds sprout and they grow.

Out of the earth comes the stalk.

Then will come the fruit.

**We then have to wait,
For the full fruit to mature.
Then we will harvest.** (Mark 4:27b-29)

All: We do have to wait.
It was only in the fullness of time that Jesus came.
Jesus had to wait as he grew in wisdom and stature.
Jesus wanted to wait a little longer when his mother asked Him to turn water into wine.
Jesus performed many miracles with some people having waited many years
for God to respond to their prayers.
In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wanted to wait just a little longer
as he listened intently for the will of God.

Jesus waited for his disciples to take up the tasks of hospitality.
When he could wait no longer,
Jesus rose up, taking the towel and basin
and began washing the feet of all.
Christ's hope is that we will take the time to care for each other.

Jesus waited, looking forward to sharing the Passover with his disciples.
When the wait was over, Jesus took the unleavened bread with heartfelt thanksgiving.
Breaking the bread, he shared it with the whole company, saying:
"Take, eat, this is my body, broken and shared with you."
Christ's hope is that we will take the time to care for each other.

Jesus waited, looking forward to sharing the Passover with his disciples.
When the wait was over, Jesus took the cup of wine with heartfelt thanksgiving.
Offering the cup, he shared it with the whole company, saying:
"Drink up, this is the cup of my blood, shed as a sign and testimony to the eternal
covenant of grace made by God, guaranteeing forgiveness not only all of your sins,
but the sins of all who believe that they are loved too."
Christ's hope is that we will take the time to care for each other.

Christ's hope is our hope, that we will love as we saw Christ love.
In honor of all that we have seen and heard from Christ
we pledge to embrace this holy mystery we now declare:

**All: As we waited, Christ died for us.
As we waited, Christ arose for us.
As we wait, Christ will come again for us.**

One: Divine Patience, Long Suffering Redeemer,
enliven these gifts of bread and wine
allow them to reflect back to us the reality of the body and blood of Christ,
Immanuel, God with us.

Divine Patience, Long Suffering Redeemer,
enliven these gifts of our bodies, our minds, our very souls,
allow them to reflect back to the world the reality of Your church,
the enduring presence and steadfast bride of Christ
Immanuel, God with us.

Divine Patience, Long Suffering Redeemer,
Thank You for being with the Choptank Charge of the United Methodist Church through
these many years.

Thank You for never leaving them nor forsaking them through many generations.
Let them not grow weary as they await the fullness of Your glory.
Let them use this time wisely as You give them time to perfect their love for You,
for each other, for strangers, for those who misunderstand them,
and even those who may seek them harm.

All: We pray in union with Christ, with the compassion of Christ, willing to suffer with Christ, as we find ourselves empowered by the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the amazing imagination of our Creator, slowly transforming the world with our love. Amen.

One: Now may we open our hearts to pray following the plan set forth by Jesus:

All: God of prevenient grace, who is working in every life, seeking to bring to each life wholeness and full salvation.

Everyday You provide us with your manna. Thank You.

**Everyday You seek to bring healing to our lives,
just as You want us to bring healing into the lives of all others.**

Everyday You bring us a better alternative that we might live a more fruitful life.

Thank You for being so patient. Thank You for being so faithful.

Help us to be more like You. Amen.

Prayer after communion:

We are so grateful that You have shared with us this holy mystery of Jesus Christ. Those who wait upon the Lord, surely renew their strength. We have been empowered to love more widely. You have opened our hearts to those who seemed to be so unlovable. Now send us out as your disciples, to bring the good news of salvation to everyone we see. Help us share what we have seen and heard, knowing that You seek to bless them too. Use our lives to bring You glory. Amen.