

Holy Communion for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
(Rejection)

Invitation:

One: If you have ever felt rejection, you are welcome at this table. If you have ever been turned away by those you love, you are welcome here. If you are feeling estranged and alone, come to this table and enjoy this community of faith. Jesus understands as one despised and rejected. Come!

Confession:

All: Lord, we have rejected you. We have not always approved of the company you kept. We have disagreed with your political views and at times your theology. You have made us feel uncomfortable, so we have dismissed you for not being who we expected you to be. Help us not to reject you again when you come to us, homeless or diseased. Give us the courage not to stay away when you are in prison or voting against me. We do not intend to turn you away, now help us become like you as you embrace us all. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

One: Even though, what you do to anyone, you do it to Christ. Christ turns the other cheek. By this act of grace you are forgiven and set free.

All: Even though what you do to anyone, you do to Christ. Christ turns the other cheek. By this act of grace you are forgiven and set free.

Thanksgiving:

One: Our God was despised,

All: And is acquainted with grief.

One: One viewed as stricken.

All: Struck down, afflicted,

One: Crushed for our iniquities,

All: Yet making us whole. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

One: Yes, you know rejection first hand.
We, your people have always had short memories.
We quickly forget your deliverance,
your healing touch,
your rich blessings,
your covenant of grace.
Not so, the birds of the air who praise you each morning,
or the insects who praise you in the night.
Those around your throne,
the angels, and archangels,
the seraphim and the cherubim,
their praise never ends.
Today we remember to join them:

**All: Holy, holy, holy God of compassion, mercy and grace.
The who universe displays the reality of your presence.
Blessed is everything that remembers your goodness,
and never forgets that your faithfulness never fails.**

One: Yet you have been rejected by us in so many way as has your beloved, Jesus.
We have been like the scribes and teachers of the law rejecting Jesus
because he does not fit the stories we tell.
We have been like the people of Nazareth rejecting Jesus because
he did not agree with their prejudices and misconceptions.
We have rejected Jesus like the crowds who cried “Crucify! Crucify!”
Because we chose too have chosen to follow the crowds.
We have rejected the good news about Jesus just like the first disciples who
thought it was only a foolish tale told by women.

At first the disciples rejected Jesus,
who taking up the basin and towel tried to wash their feet.
Yet Jesus does not accept rejection
and seeks to wash us clean despite our objections.
May our acts of love not be stopped by the rejection of others.

As an act of acceptance, Jesus spoke a word of prayer over bread.
After breaking this bread he made it available to all.
“Take a bite, this is my body broken and given for you.”
May our acts of love not be stopped by the rejection of others.

As an act of acceptance, Jesus spoke a word of prayer over wine.
After pouring this wine he made it available to all.
“Take a sip, this is the cup of my blood,
a gift and an offering celebration the eternal covenant of God’s grace,
which provides for the forgiveness of every sin, personal and corporate.”
May our acts of love not be stopped by the rejection of others.

We do not reject the ways of Christ,
but we embrace them and proclaim them to the world:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

One: Rejected, Hated, Despised
Show your grace through this bread and wine,
In your mercy allow them to become the body and blood of Christ.

Rejected, Hated, Despised
Show your grace through us gathered here,
In your mercy allow us to be for others your church,
the perfect body and sanctified bride of Christ.

Rejected, Hated, Despised
meet the needs of the Choptank Charge
use their distinct witness within their communities;
allow the world to receive their witness;
let them share the glory of your presence with all they encounter.

**All: We pray to glorify Christ.
We pray to magnify the Spirit.
We pray to proclaim the love of our Creator for all the world.
We pray, and worship, kneel and bow down to bring honor to your name,
today, tomorrow, and always. Amen.**

One: Now let us pray together the prayer Christ taught us:

**All: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

**All: We appreciate that you have in your mercy have given us this opportunity to
partake in your holy sacrament. You have never rejected us. You have always
made allowances for us. You have shown us the breadth of your grace. Now we ask
that you send us out to share your good news of great joy with all people. Use our
lives to show others the path to this your table of abundant grace. Amen.**