

Holy Communion
(Fourth Sunday of Lent: Commandments)

Invitation:

One: Everyone is invited to Christ's table. Everybody is invited to receive into their lives Jesus Christ and to incorporate him into their lives. Come just as you are, knowing that Christ has plans to bless your life. Come, Christ has made room for you at this table.

Confession:

All: We admit that we have not kept Your commandments. It has been so easy for us to create and worship other gods. We have misused Your name; making it unholy before the world. We and our society choose not keep your Sabbaths. We do not respect our elders, nor view their lives as relevant. We are violent, lustful, thieving, liars. We are not satisfied with what we have. Forgive us for creating loop holes in our hearts so we feel free to disregard Your ways of love, mercy and compassion. Convict our hearts. Change our evil ways. Forgive our sins. Transform our lives so the world can experience redemption starting with us. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

One: Although your lives are but filth, God through Christ has made them pure and clean. Through the gracious gift of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

All: Although your life is but filth, God through Christ has made you pure and clean. Through the gracious gift of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Rejoice and be glad! Amen.

Great Thanksgiving:

One: How I love Your Law!
My daily meditation,
Making me wiser.

**All: Your law is with me.
I have more understanding,
My meditation.**

One: I understand more
For I keep all Your precepts
held back from evil.

**All: So I keep Your word.
I will never turn away,
From Your ordinance.**

One: How sweet Your words taste
Sweetest honey in my mouth.
I hate all that's false. (Psalm 119:97-104)

All: This is why our lips sing your praises.

One: The goodness of Your laws resonate in our bones
and softens our hearts.

We know in our souls that Your laws are not made to judge others,
but only our own lives.
Your precepts show us how to love You with all our hearts,
with all our minds, and strength,
and how to love our neighbors as ourselves.
Use Your rule to shape our lives, so we might bring You joy.
Inspire us to use your guidance to transform our world into heaven on earth.
Empower us to teach others Your ways, by how we live before You.
Our desire is to have everyone join us in serving You.
Our wish is that they will want to join with us as we sing Your praises.
Our delight is joining with all Your saints and angels in heaven in their celebration of
your laws.

**All: Blessed is the one,
Who comes in God's holy name.
With blessing we come!**

**The Lord is our God,
Giving us inspiration.
Offer now Your praise!** (Psalm 119:26-27)

One: We do praise You, and we magnify Your Word, Jesus.
Your Word is a light for our path
and a lamp to our feet.
Jesus did not come to do away with Your law,
but that through his grace might fulfill it.
Jesus demonstrated for us that Your commandments
deal with every aspect of our behavior:
not just what we do to others, but also with what we say,
what we think, and even our intent.

Jesus went beyond rules and social conventions.
Shocking everyone's sensibilities,
Jesus left his seat of honor,
and embraced the role of the lowest slave,
washing the feet of those unworthy to feel the touch of his hands.
Jesus summed up all the commandments saying, "Love one another."

During the Passover meal, Jesus gave thanks for bread.
This was the bread used as a reminder not to forget those who suffer.
Taking this bread he broke it and shared it:
"Take and eat, this is my body broken and given for you."
Jesus summed up all the commandments saying, "Love one another."

Later Jesus gave thanks for wine.
This was the wine used to remember the foolishness of hardening our hearts.

Taking this wine he shared it:
“Drink, this cup is filled with my blood,
poured out in worship of the God who has made with us an eternal covenant of grace,
assuring us that not only are our sins forgiven, but the sins of all who will call upon the
Name.” Jesus summed up the commandments saying, “Love one another.”

We do hold sacred Your commandments.
We know of their blessing and hope.
The blessing and hope we have testified to in Jesus,
whom we declare through this holy mystery:

**All: Christ’s life was sacrificed.
Christ’s life is resurrected.
Christ’s life will return again.**

One: Divine Ruler, Sacred Commandments
rest on these gifts of bread and wine
revealing to us the body and blood of Christ
the life giving presence of God.

Divine Ruler, Sacred Commandments
rest on these gifts of our faithfulness
revealing to the world, Your church
the true body and spotless bride of Christ
the life giving presence of God.

Divine Ruler, Sacred Commandments
rest upon the Choptank Charge of the United Methodist Church.
Let love be the rule they follow above all others.
Let Your mercy flow through them to all they meet.
Let the joy of forgiveness dance in their hearts.

**All: By love, through love, with love, because of love
we follow Christ by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit,
enlightened, inspired, and illuminated by the imagination of our Creator,
whom we adore and serve now and always. Amen.**

One: Now let us pray together following the outline that Jesus gave us, praying:

**All: Way, Truth, Life, Teacher, Leader, Redeemer
Your commandments are the rule of our lives.
Daily provide the manna we require, never too little, never too much.
Forgive us for breaking Your commandments,
just as we forgive others who have done the same.
Keep us from giving up and turning away from You,
but encourage us as we follow You day by day.
For we want to please You,
we want to live in a way that makes You proud of us,**

always. Amen.

Prayer after Communion:

Thank you for allowing us to share in this most sacred mystery revealed in Jesus Christ. We realize that we cannot keep your commandments if there is anyone whom we do not love. In their lives let us see You whom we adore. Send us out into the world, so we can be with You, care for You, and love You with all our hearts, minds and strength. May You be glorified in all we do. Amen.