

Holy Communion  
(Advent 1-The Unexpected)

Invitation:

One: Come to this simple table to find common bread and ordinary juice.  
Yet when you come do not be surprised to find the unexpected,  
the presence of Christ, the Lord seeking to enter your life.

Confession:

**All: Forgive us for not really expecting to find You here, for wanting to rush through rituals and meet imagined religious obligations. Forgive us for not expecting Your incarnation, Your living presence among us in the here and now, in the ordinary. Help us to become more like the shepherds who found an ordinary child lying in a manger, who was Christ the Lord. Help us to open our lives to the unexpected of God. Amen.**

Words of Assurance:

One: It was unexpected but while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.  
This is the Gospel, that in the name of Jesus Christ you are all forgiven.  
**All: It was unexpected but while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.  
This is the Gospel, that in the name of Jesus Christ you too are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Thanksgiving:

One: Follow your heart and not your eyes.  
**All: We embrace the unbelievable.**  
One: Divine Love is present here.  
**All: Love shines from every face.**  
One: Let us fill this place with worship and adoration.  
**All: We are in the presence of the Holy! We have come before the Divine!**

One: You are holy!  
You are divine!  
We meet You in our lives in unexpected ways.  
Where others see a stranger, we see You.  
Where others encounter an enemy, we encounter You.  
Where others find a sinner, we find You standing before us.  
When we see You thirsty, we rush to find You a glass of fresh cool water.  
When we know that You in prison, we beg the jailer to let us in to keep You company.  
You invited us to worship You in unexpected places  
as You present Your needs before us.  
We worship You with gifts of food when we notice Your hunger.  
We worship You with medical care, and with opportunity when You seem to have none.  
We join with angels and together we become Your answers to prayers  
causing heaven and earth to be filled with Your praises:  
**All: Thank you, thank you, thank you, Lord, provider of every need.**

**Every good and perfect gift comes from You.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed are all those who serve in Your name.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

One: We do thank you, Lord. We thank you for Jesus.  
Jesus was fully human.  
He came as a human baby, born of a human mother, in the natural way.  
Jesus grew up as a very human child, who had a way of worrying his parents.  
Jesus became a human man  
who was a skilled laborer, living by the sweat of his brow.  
But here is what was unexpected:  
Jesus was fully divine!  
Jesus was instrumental in the very creation of the universe.  
In the beginning, Jesus was right there in the middle of it all.  
Even though Jesus was divine, he chose to become human and live among us.  
Jesus lived among us as the love of God in all of its glory,  
even forgiving humanity as we took his life, torturing him on a cross.

It was unexpected when Almighty God,  
humbled himself before his creation,  
knelt down and washed the feet  
of those who would deny him,  
betray him,  
and desert him,  
to show the world that God's love is unconditionally.

It was unexpected when Almighty God,  
took the Passover bread used to celebrate deliverance,  
blessing it, breaking it, and sharing it with everybody, saying:  
"Take and eat this is my body broken and given for you."  
Remember, God loves us all unconditionally.

It was unexpected when Almighty God,  
took the Passover cup used to remember the cost our sin,  
blessing it, and sharing it with everybody, saying:  
"Drink with me, all of you, for this is the cup of my blood,  
poured out as a witness to the eternal covenant of grace  
made with you and with all for the forgiveness of sins."  
Remember God loves us all unconditionally.

It may be unexpected, but God does love us all unconditionally.  
This is why we have chose to follow him  
and to live our lives according to this holy mystery which we boldly declare:

**All: Christ died for the sake of all.  
Christ lives for the sake of all.**

**Christ will come again for the sake of all.**

One: Unimaginable, Unexpected Surprise,  
demonstrate the power of Your incarnation using this bread and wine,  
allowing them to become for us the body and blood of Christ,  
the full expression of Your unconditional love.

Unimaginable, Unexpected Surprise,  
demonstrate the power of Your incarnation using our lives,  
allowing them to become for others, Your church,  
the sacrificed body and the faithful bride of Christ,  
the full expression of Your unconditional love.

Unimaginable, Unexpected Surprise,  
awaken the souls of the Choptank Charge of the United Methodist Church.  
Allow them the grace to be awakened to Your glorious presence in their world.  
Let them see Your face, as it comes alive on the faces of others, young and old.  
Give them the privilege of sharing with You their hospitality.  
May the kindness and friendship they show You each day fill Your heart with joy as they  
become perfect expressions of Your unconditional love to all.

**All: We pray this in the name of the incarnate, Jesus Christ.  
We pray this by the power and the in filling of the Holy Spirit.  
We pray this with the inspiration of our Loving Creator,  
as an expression of our faithful worship and our heart felt devotion. Amen.**

One: Now as those who find the unexpected in the life of Jesus Christ, let us follow his  
example and pray:

**All: Unexpected Love,  
Who unconditionally embraces everyone,  
no matter who they are or what they have done.  
Give to everyone all that we need every day.  
Forgive us for not loving everyone like You do,  
just as we forgive those who struggle in their love for us.  
Help us avoid the urge to hate,  
and keep us from believing that we have a right to judge.  
For Your ways are loving, full of mercy, and kindness, always. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

We give You thanks for sharing with us this holy mystery in Jesus Christ. You have  
shown us Your unexpected love and have forgiven all of our sins. You have even allowed us the  
privilege of becoming Your disciples. Now send us out into the world as Your emissaries of  
grace. Use us to show Your love for those for whom love is a stranger, that they may know that  
You will be with them always even to the end of the age. Amen.