

Great Thanksgiving
(Privilege of Prayer)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Out of the deep silence of our hearts You invite us into this prayer.

Thank you.

Out of our memories You call forth Your praise, and we worship you with thankful hearts.

Out of Your deep longing for us, You desire our ceaseless prayers.

In the intimacy of our secret places You speak to us and we listen.

In those same spaces we share with You our most passionate heartfelt cries,
sometime in sounds that can only be interpreted by Your own compassionate heart.

Thank you for the privilege of prayer.

You always hear us.

You always pay heed to the cries of the needy.

We are never far from Your presence; Your constant attentiveness;

Your gracious wish for us to taste and see that You are good.

We need this moment of prayer.

We need it to refocus our lives on You.

We need it to help us regain our bearings, as we find our place in You.

We need this prayer to recall: Your acts of unmerited favor; Your acts of sacrificial love;

Your expressions of an all inclusive unimaginable grace poured out freely upon not just the world but the whole universe!

This is why we never pray alone.

Every time we pray we join our voices with the unending prayers of all the creatures of the earth.

Every time we pray our voices are added to the great multitude of souls gathered around Your heavenly throne proclaiming Your great glory saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We have been blessed by You and by Your Son Jesus.

Through Christ, You taught us how to pray.

When tempted in the desert, Jesus did not use prayer to meet his need alone,

but when others were hungry Jesus prayed and You fed a great multitude.
When others were in need of healing, Jesus prayed for them and You made them whole.
When others were troubled of mind and soul, Jesus prayed and You released them and gave them peace.

Jesus found strength in prayer;
often going away to a quiet place where he could spend time alone with you.
Jesus often prayed all through the night.
Jesus prayed, listening to the sound of Your voice, seeking to obey Your call.
He only did what he saw You doing and only said what he heard from Your lips.

Jesus encouraged us to pray for our enemies and Your blessing upon those who sought to abuse us.
Jesus asked us to pray for not only the just and the unjust.
Jesus gave us the authority to forgive the sins of others by our prayers.

Jesus' prayers went beyond mere words
but were expressed through acts of grace.
As a prayer of blessed hospitality
Jesus washed the feet of his disciples.
Afterwards he invited them to pray the same way with others.

At the Passover meal Jesus prayed the ritual prayer of thanksgiving over the bread,
as they remembered those who still lived in bondage and shared in their prayers for freedom.
Jesus then broke the bread as he shared it, saying:
"Take eat, this is my body given for you."

After supper, Jesus prayed the ritual prayer of thanksgiving over the cup of wine,
As they remembered the sacrifice that turned away God's wrath.
Jesus shared the cup, saying:
"Drink, all of you, for this is my blood poured out as a witness to God's covenant of forgiveness with you and the whole of creation."

We continue these prayers of Christ.
Prayers of persistence.
Prayers of resistance.
Prayers of action.
Prayers of yearning.
Prayers of supplication for our sins and the sins of the world.
As we pray with Christ, we enter into the Great and Holy mystery with Christ Jesus our Lord,
which we will celebrate forever by saying:
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Heart Whisper, Deepest Hunger
attach Yourself to these gifts of bread and wine

transform them for us into the body and blood of Christ,
our only prayer.

Heart Whisper, Deepest Hunger
attach Yourself to the gifts of our bodies, our souls and our spirits
transform us, for the world into the church, the living body and bride of Christ,
our only prayer.

Heart Whisper, Deepest Hunger
we pray for this annual conference and the United Methodist Church.
Forgive our sins of divisiveness and spiritual arrogance.
Humble and instruct our foolish hearts.
Teach us the meaning of Your sacrifice and the depth of Your love for all who sin and fall short
of Your glory.

This we pray in the name of the Most Holy Trinity:
Loving Jesus, Gracious Spirit, Astounding Creator of us all.
All honor and glory is Yours alone, now and forever.

Amen.

Now as lifelong students of prayer and followers of Jesus Christ let us pray:

**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:

You have shared with us the rich blessings of this Holy Mystery in Christ Jesus.
Now expand our prayer to include the needs of those You love outside our churches.
Use our sacrifices with those we have already received in Christ to show them Your great mercy
and unmatched favor that they may choose to join with us in our celebration of Your great love
in Jesus Christ. Amen.