

Great Thanksgiving  
(Remembering The Journey)

One: We are united.

**All: We are the one family of God.**

One: God excludes none of his children.

**All: God loves all the children of the world.**

One: This is more than a reason for celebration.

**All: Let us come into God's presence  
with hearts filled with thanks and praise!**

One: When others said we were not good enough,  
You chose us to be Your own.  
When others said we did not measure up,  
You made up that difference so we would  
When others found reason why You could not possibly love us, You found enough  
reasons for why You could.  
This is the good news.  
This is what makes our hearts sing,  
and not only ours, we are joined with a great symphony of voices, all singing their hearts  
out in their own unique ways.  
The earth and the heavens are filled with these voices, because no one has been left out  
nor left behind. Together we proclaim:

**All: My eyes are not proud,  
Nor look down on another.  
I refuse to judge.  
My soul rests secure in God.  
So peaceful like a weaned child  
Safe in mother's lap.  
Trust wholly in God.  
Now, at this very moment,  
And forever more! (Psalm 131)**

One: You are accepting of us, just as we are,  
and so is Jesus,  
the lamb of God,  
that takes away the sins of the whole world.  
Jesus openly embraced those others turned away.  
Jesus included women among the disciples,  
when others would have sent them home.  
Jesus included the young  
and those others marginalized for any number of reasons.

Jesus did not let who he was  
separate him from others.

He was the first to kneel  
before others to minister to their needs:  
Even the needs of his betrayer;  
Even the needs of his denier;  
Even the needs of those who would desert him.  
None were excluded,  
but all were invited to extend God's embrace.

When Jesus took the sacred bread  
with a prayer of thanksgiving,  
calling the community into remembrance of all those who still struggled under the  
yoke of oppression. All were invited when Jesus said, "Take and eat this is my  
body given and broken for you." None were excluded,  
but all were invited to extend God's embrace.

When Jesus took the sacred cup with a prayer of thanksgiving, calling the  
community into remembrance of those harmed by our unrepentant hearts. All  
were invited when Jesus said, "Drink with me, each of you, for this is the cup of  
my blood, poured out as an offering in honor of God's eternal covenant of  
forgiveness with you and with the whole world." None were excluded,  
but all were invited to extend God's embrace.

We want to become as inclusive as Christ.  
We too want to extend the loving embrace of God.  
The direction we seek we have found in the holy mystery that our lives seek to  
declare:

**All:** **Because Christ died, we die to sin.**  
**Because Christ lives, we have new life.**  
**Because Christ returns,**  
**the world sees him in us.**

**One:** Open heart, Out Poured Grace,  
drench these gifts of bread and wine with Your presence, transforming them for  
us into the body and blood of Christ, uniting us all.

Open heart, Out Poured Grace,  
drench the gift of our lives,  
our minds, our bodies, our eternal souls,  
with Your presence, transforming us for the world,  
into Your church, the gracious body,  
and the humble bride of Christ, uniting us all.

Open heart, Out Poured Grace,  
drench Otterbein United Methodist Church  
with your presence.  
Open our hearts to share Your love with all.

Open our minds that we might understand and show compassion to all Your children.

Open their arms so that no one is ever a stranger.

**All: We ask this with Christ, for the sake of others, by the power of God's loving Spirit, so that God will be honored through our unity and the inclusion of all for the glory of God and his eternal kingdom. Amen.**

One: Now as the one body of Christ let us pray as we were taught saying:

**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 in the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*(Prayer after Communion)*

All: Thank you for sharing with us the grace of this Holy Mystery in Jesus Christ. In it we sense the great unity of Your church and Your calling to reconcile the whole world through Christ. Now send us out to share this good news, that all are welcome, all can find a safe place and a home with You. Let our lives magnify this unity that we find in Christ, today and always. Amen.