

Great Thanksgiving
(The Forgiving God)

You forgive us, no questions asked.
You choose to forgive us not just once,
but seventy times seven,
over and over and over again.
When we break Your holy Sabbath and treat it as common,
You have forgiven us.
When we have spoken Your name in vain,
placing words into Your mouth that were never Yours,
You have forgiven us.
When we make things more important than You,
worshiping their promise of power,
You have forgiven us.
When we have not shown proper respect to our parents,
You have forgiven us.
When we have committed adultery with eyes filled with lust,
You have forgiven us.
When we have robbed the poor, taking bread out of the mouths of starving children,
You have forgiven us.
When we have murdered your beloved children
with the words of our mouths and the actions of our hands,
You have forgiven us.
When we have spoken falsely about a political opponent,
You have forgiven us.
When we have been filled with desire for what others have,
You have forgiven us.
All You have asked is that we do the same for others.
All You ask is that we not return evil with evil, but with good,
with prayers of blessing for our enemies, not curses.

We are so grateful for Your mercy.
We are overwhelmed by Your generosity.
We sing for joy with all our hearts, because of the burden You have lifted from our souls.
How can we deny anything You would ask of us?

Jesus lived before us as a very human example of Your forgiveness.
Jesus did not separate himself from sinners,
but did warn the self-righteous of their peril.
Jesus shared how You listen to the cries of sinners,
but how You will always turn the proud away.
Jesus praised the faith of outsiders,
while those who thought they were faithful
contemned everything Jesus said and did.
On the cross,

stripped,
humiliated,
beaten and lynched,
Jesus did not call down ten thousand angels to destroy the world,
Jesus prayed for You to forgive us for our willful ignorance.

When his own disciples were more worried about which one was the greatest,
Jesus did not condemn them in their sins,
but getting up quietly,
took a basin and a towel,
and God stooped down and served us just the way we were.
You only asked one thing in return, O God,
“Forgive as I have forgiven you.”

You know we are unworthy sinners,
but as an act of Divine forgiveness,
Jesus, took the bread of Passover,
used to acknowledge those still held in bondage,
with a prayer of thanksgiving, broke it, and shared it with the world.
“Take and eat, this is my body broken and given for you.”
You only ask one thing in return, O God,
“Forgive as I have forgiven you.”

You know we are unworthy sinners,
but as an act of Divine forgiveness,
Jesus took, the last cup of Passover,
used to acknowledge the Divine hope given to the world,
with a prayer of thanksgiving, blessed it and shared it with the world.
“Drink from this cup, all of you, for it contains my blood,
poured out to proclaim the truth of God’s eternal covenant of forgiveness,
with us and with the whole world.”
You only ask one thing in return, O God,
“Forgive as I have forgiven you.”

Forgiveness is so important,
that if anyone has anything against us,
You ask us to stop what we are doing,
leave worship and seek their forgiveness
as we extend a portion of the forgiveness with which You have already freely blessed us.

This Holy Mystery is why Christ died.
This Holy Mystery is why Christ is alive today.
This Holy Mystery is why Christ will come again.

Breath of Mercy, Embrace of Forgiveness,
bring renewed life to these gifts of bread and wine,
by allowing them to become for us the very body and blood of Christ

the price of forgiveness.

Breath of Mercy, Embrace of Forgiveness,
bring renewed life to us sinners saved by Your grace,
by allowing us to become Your church, the living body and loving bride of Christ,
the price of forgiveness.

Breath of Mercy, Embrace of Forgiveness,
anoint Hurlock United Methodist Church with Your presence.
Use this community as a living expression of Your forgiveness and grace.
Empower them to be Your mercy.
Enrich them to be Your provision for those in need.
Expand their love as You expand Your love within their souls,
so Jesus will be lifted up and draw all to Your forgiveness and grace,
so the Holy Spirit will come down with the life changing power of forgiveness and grace,
so that You, Creator God, may remake this sinful world, with forgiveness and grace,
that You alone might receive the honor, glory and devotion due Your precious name,
today, tomorrow and throughout the years to come.
Amen.

Now as the forgiven people of God, let us pray with Christ:

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:

Thank you, forgiving God for sharing with us this Holy Mystery that we have found fully in
Jesus Christ. In the gift of this bread and this wine, we have experienced Your generous
forgiveness once again. So with renewed joy, send us out in to the world as Your apostles of
grace and forgiveness, use our lives as You continue to redeem Your world. May all the world
join us in Your rich fellowship around one table. Amen.