

BUILDING GOD'S BELOVED COMMUNITY
A Communion Service With Prayers & Blessings For Peace

PRELUDE "Make Me a Blessing"

WELCOME & COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS Grace Wallace, COSSO Coordinator

INTRODUCTION Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Spiritual Formation Director

A ZOOM BLESSING

May our virtual time together be blessed,
may there be no complications when we click on the links,
may the internet connections be strong,
may there be joy in seeing old friends and meeting new ones,
may we contribute to discussion and listen with respect,
may our understanding be broadened in our studies
and our faith strengthened,
for the building of God's beloved community.

HYMN OF PRAISE "Great is Thy Faithfulness" **UMH 140**

And now I invite you to share these words from James 5 as we are Called to Worship-

CALL TO WORSHIP *(adapted from James 5:14-16)*

Are any among you in need of a blessing?

Call the elders of the church and have them pray over us, and anoint us with oil in the name of the Lord.

The prayers of faith will bless you, and the Lord will raise you up.

May the Lord bless us with understanding.

Are any among you in need of forgiveness?

We will confess our sins and pray for one another.

May the Lord bless you and guide you, that you may be a blessing to others.

A BLESSING PRAYER

Living God, you divided the waters of chaos at creation. In Christ, you calmed storms and healed the sick. Tame the forces of nature and calm the will of world leaders who shock us with their power. Keep us from calling natural disaster or human tragedy your justice. And may the blessing of your peace help us build your beloved community throughout the world. For it is in the strength of your Spirit that we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF APPROACH

We are here, God. We have felt your touch in the sunlight and seen your power in winter storms. We have wondered at your mystery in the stars and we marvel that the creator of the universe knows us by name. Bless us with your peace.

Bless us with your peace, Creator God.

We are here, Jesus. We know that you have come to find us. We have listened to your words. We have felt the warmth of your love, and we thank you. Bless us with your peace.
Bless us with your peace, Loving Jesus.

We are here, Holy Spirit. We are grateful for your presence and for the ways you bring us closer to you, for the ways you comfort us and guide us. Bless us with your peace.
Bless us with your peace, Guiding Spirit.

A BLESSING FOR THE CALL TO MINISTRY

(for you as you remember your call)

May the blessings of your hands open closed minds.

May the struggles of your calling bring hope in uncertain times.

May all your doubt restore your faith.

May the hungers of life fill the emptiness of your heart.

May you find words of divine love to inspire a beloved community of peace.

May the mystery of the Eucharist be shelter for the lost and food for the hungry.

May the words of your mouth and the meditations of your heart be prayers for the world.
Amen.

HYMN "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

UMH 103

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:14-16

REFLECTION "Light for Our Darkness" by Dr E. Wray Bryant

Dr. E. Wray Bryant received his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and his Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He is Assistant Professor of Religion at Capital University and teaches Bible I at COSSO.

SONG "This Little Light of Mine"

UMH 585

HOLY COMMUNION IN COMMUNITY

(adapted from Thom M. Shuman, The Soft Petals of Grace, Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose, 2016)

A GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

May God in community be with you.

And also with you.

Called to be God's beloved community, let us offer our praises.

With grace-filled hearts, we come from many places to remember and gather at God's table.

At the beginning, God of Creation,

you painted sunrises and sunsets on the blank canvas of chaos.

You sang creation's song, while nature danced into being.

When you would have clothed us in your light,

we found sin and death to be a more comfortable fit.

Prophets came with warnings calling us to faithful living,

but we wanted control of our lives.

So, you sent Jesus, to heal our brokenness.

You overlooked our ignorance, and through him you gave us forgiveness and the assurance of new life.

Now, with the blessings of grace, love and unity,
with faithful companions and teachers,
and with all the saints of every time and place,
we lift our songs of thanksgiving:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord. All creation sings of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes to make us disciples.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, God-over-us; and blessed is Jesus Christ, God-with-us;
and blessed is the Spirit of God, light-among-us.
He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant to put on humanity;
he humbled himself on a cross to free us from sin and death.

As we remember his life, death and resurrection, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ died. Christ was raised. Christ will come again.

Creator of all good things, send your Spirit to flow over us
and through these gifts of bread and drink;
bring light and goodness to us as we gather together
even in our distance.

As we break the Bread of life, we become living hope for a world in chaos.
As we drink from the Cup of grace, we hold your kindness and peace
that we might be poured out to those who thirst for you.
May we be blessed in the building of your beloved community.

**And when we gather around your table,
with saints and sinners, disciples and deniers,
may we find ourselves closer to you than we ever thought we might be,
God in Community, Holy and One. Amen.**

IN COMMUNION

As one Beloved Community with you, we remember the bread you provide. (*break bread and eat*)

As one Body, we drink to remember your love poured out for us. (*all drink*)

PRAYER

God of all hope, thank you for living in us and loving us.

May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all creation. Grant that we may become the Beloved Community that shares each other's burdens and joys, and speaks love wherever there is hate, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"Go Forth for God"

UMH 670

A BLESSING FOR SERVICE IN MINISTRY

(adapted from the COSSO graduation service)

Gracious God, we thank you for calling faithful servants to lead your Church. We humbly trust all our students to your care. Continue to give them courage, patience, and vision, and bless them with caring communities, as they work with others to build your kingdom on earth as in heaven. Amen.

A COMMUNITY BLESSING FOR GOING FORTH

**May God bless us and keep us;
May God's light shine upon us, and be gracious to us;
May God's face turn toward us, and give us peace;
May God bless us and the world around us,
this day and all days. Amen.**

POSTLUDE "The Irish Blessing" (Be Thou My Vision)

PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS ADAPTED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES:

Ruth Burgess, Blessed Be God (Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 2025).

Edward Hays, Prayers for the Domestic Church (KS: Forest of Peace, 1998).

R.C. Mitchell and G.A. Ricciuti, Birthings and Blessings (NY: Crossroad, 1991).

John O'Donohue, To Bless the Space Between Us (NY: Doubleday, 2008).

Barbara Brown Taylor, An Altar in the World (NY: HarperCollins, 2009).

Rock Travnikar, The Blessing Cup (Cincinnati: St Anthony, 2002).

UMC Book of Worship.