

World Communion: Blessing not Burden

Recommended by the CRCNA Office of Social Justice, Office of Race Relations, and Worship Ministries

Call to Worship

Leader: We praise the God of all nations and peoples,

People: Whose mercy extends to the ends of the earth.

Leader: Who are my brothers and sisters?

People: They who walk in the way of Christ.

Leader: Who is my family?

People: They who dwell in God's house.

Leader: We are many members,

People: But one body.

-United Methodist

http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_UMCGiving/resource-files/World_Communion_Sunday_litany.pdf

Gathering Prayer

God, as we gather in this sacred community of faith, we remember that our congregation is but one of the many parts of your eternal and universal church. Though we come from different backgrounds, we are all part of the body of Christ. Make us ever mindful and understanding of the suffering of our members, jubilant in their joys and knowledgeable of their condition. We pray for our continued ministry with our brothers and sisters around the world. May we see ourselves one day as you see us. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

-United Methodist

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Songs of Praise:

To accentuate the gifts of all people groups consider singing songs that come from around the world. If your congregation doesn't know any use this opportunity to teach them one or two, if possible have someone from the nation the song originates from introduce it. You can find songs from the global church in many hymnals such as: *Lift Up Your Hearts*. Another good place to find global songs is the music of the Iona community.

Litany of Celebration:

(A leader, or a group of readers, should read the un-bolded text; the bold is the response of the congregation.)

Abraham and Sarah did not know whether their visitors meant harm or good, still they opened their tent in welcome, and they were blessed. From the stranger, we hear the good

news of God's covenant love.

We praise you for the blessing of the stranger.

Boaz saw in Ruth not a project, but a partner. From the stranger, we are given the lineage of Christ.

We praise you for the blessing of the stranger.

The man lay dying on the Jericho road until the strange and reviled Samaritan came to his aid -- sharing his oil and wine. From the stranger, we receive help and healing.

We praise you for the blessing of the stranger.

When the people of Israel were strangers in Egypt, only as valuable as the bricks they produced for Pharaoh's economy, God heard their cry and saved them. When we are strangers, we come to know a God who frees us.

We praise you for the blessing of the stranger.

Christ hides in the face of the stranger, reminding us that "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." In the stranger, we can experience the presence of Christ.

We praise you for the blessing of the stranger.

We are called in Scripture, again and again, to welcome the stranger -- and the many blessings that the stranger may bring.

For the immigrant, the refugee, the one we do not know, we give our thanks and praise. The family of God is worshiping you in many languages, and following you in many cultures, all over the world. But the diversity of the family of God has also come right here -- to this community. May we receive the blessings you bring to us, Lord, through the gift of the stranger.

Confession and Assurance:

God, we confess that we do not know how to show true hospitality.

We are quick to welcome those we already know, and slow to open our doors to those who seem different, unknown, or threatening.

We are so quick to guard what we have, to protect our assets, to keep out those who might be a burden.

We are suspicious of the stranger.

Because of this, we confess that we have missed opportunities to experience you, Lord.

For you were a stranger, seeking welcome.

Forgive us, Lord, for failing to open our doors even to you.

Open our eyes to the stranger in our midst, that we may experience your blessing

Through living lives of hospitality.

Leader:

Hear this good news: for you Jesus Christ came as a stranger. For you, he lived the life of a sojourner. For you, he died an outsider. For you, he conquered death and ascended to

heaven, assuring your welcome as a citizen in the Kingdom of God. Because of his great love and endless hospitality, know that you are forgiven, and free to live as one who is blessed by the love of that stranger, our Savior. Amen.

Scripture

The following texts are suggested for use this Sunday by the *Revised Common Lectionary*. Whether or not you follow the RCL you may find the Old Testament and Psalm passages particularly meaningful for a World Communion Sunday that accents the immigrants in our midst.

Old Testament: [Lamentations 1:1-6](#); [Lamentations 3:19-26](#)

or [Habakkuk 1:1-4](#); [2:1-4](#)

Psalm: [Psalm 137](#)

New Testament: [2 Timothy 1:1-14](#)

Gospel: [Luke 17:5-10](#)

Other possible texts that focus on the blessings that the immigrant, the stranger brings:

[Matthew 25:31-46](#)

[Hebrews 13:1-3](#)

And of course there are many prominent immigrants in scripture, here are a few:

-Abraham/Sarah

-Joseph

-Naomi/Ruth

-The people of Israel

-Mary/Joseph

-Jesus

Or consider one of the scriptures listed on the [“I Was a Stranger”](#) bookmark.

Holy Communion

Rubrics, alternatives, and options are presented in red italics.

Consider using breads from various nations for this service. You may even chose to do what one church did, meet the day before and bake these breads together, a time of fellowship with people from various cultures.

The Invitation

We come to the table not just as individuals but as a community. By sharing the loaf and the cup, Christ makes us one with him and with each other. Come to the joyful feast of the Lord.

The Thanksgiving

[The people stand.]

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

People: It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

Minister:

Lord, our God, send your Holy Spirit upon us,
that all who eat and drink at this table
may be one body and one holy people,
a living sacrifice to the glory of Jesus Christ,
who in word and deed announced
love's new reign of justice, reconciliation, and peace
and opened the way of everlasting life for all who believe.

Therefore, with people of every nation, tribe and language, with the whole Church throughout the ages, we bring ourselves: all that we are, and all that we are not, joyfully giving thanks saying:

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Words of Institution

Minister: We give thanks to God the Father that our Savior, Jesus Christ, before he suffered, gave us this memorial of his sacrifice, until he comes again. At his last supper, the Lord Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it *[here the minister breaks the bread]* and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup after supper *[here the minister pours the wine]* and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this in remembrance of me." For whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

[The following may be added:]

Minister: Therefore in unity with Christians everywhere, let us proclaim the mystery of our faith.

People: Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

The Prayer of Consecration

Minister: Lord, our God, send your Holy Spirit so that this bread and cup may be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. For just as many grains of wheat are gathered to make one loaf of bread and many grapes are gathered to make one cup of wine, we the many of God, are made one in the body of Christ, the church. May the breaking of the bread and the pouring of wine remind us of the costliness of Christ's sacrifice and that in him we are no longer strangers and foreigners but adopted children of God. In this sacrament may we and all your saints be united with Christ and remain faithful in hope and love. Gather your whole church, O Lord, into the glory of your kingdom.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray,

All: "Our Father in heaven . . . Amen."

The Communion

[During the distribution, communion hymns may be sung, or the minister may read an appropriate passage of Scripture.]

Before the distribution of the bread

Minister: The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

People: We who are many are one body, for we all share the same loaf.

Or

Minister: The bread of life for all who hunger.

Before the distribution of the wine

Minister: The cup filled with the juice of many grapes is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

People: The cup which we drink is our participation in the blood of Christ.

Or

Minister: The cup of compassion for a broken world.

Thanksgiving

[The sacrament may conclude with a song of thanksgiving or another appropriate expression of thanksgiving. Psalm 103 is widely used here in the Reformed tradition.]

And/Or

Prayer after Communion

All: Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the sacrament of his body and blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart.
Through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

And/or

Minister: May this meal nourish us and refresh us,
May it strengthen us and renew us,
may it unite us and keep us in God's gracious love, now and forever. Amen.

Let us pray:

God of love, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this meal.
Send us from here to reveal your love in the world.
Inspire in us the resolve and the courage, the compassion and the passion,
to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Amen

Blessing

Let mutual love continue.
Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.
Remember those who are in prison,
as though you were in prison with them.
Be content with what you have.
And remember that God has promised,
"I will never leave you or forsake you."
-from Hebrews 13:1-3,5 (NRSV)

More Worship Resources for World Communion Sunday

[Come All You People: A Service for World Communion Sunday](#)

[Litany for the Whole World: A Prayer for World Communion Sunday](#)

[I Come with Christians Far and Near: A service for World Communion Sunday](#)

Lift Up Your Hearts - pg. 1052-1053 - Hymns and songs from around the world

Find more resources at reformedworship.org (search for “World Communion”)