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SAINT ISIDORE

E P I S C O P A L

ST. ISIDORE MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES CUSTOMARY

WHAT IS A CUSTOMARY?

Within The Episcopal Church, a customary is a document used to define the accepted expectations, standards, usages, and other customs of a particular faith community. In the case of St. Isidore Episcopal Church, each of the comprising missional communities has its own distinctive emphases and practices.

WHAT IS A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY?

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas defines missional communities as “spiritual and relational outposts for those that cannot, or will not, participate in a traditional expression of Church.” Leaning into language from Duke Divinity School, the Diocese of Texas encourages missional community leaders to see these faith communities through the paradoxical lens of “traditioned innovation.” In other words, Episcopalian missional communities are intended to encourage faithfulness to the best of the Church’s history and tradition while pursuing fresh ways of being the Body of Christ outside the four walls of a traditional parish church setting.

AFFILIATION & BELIEFS

St. Isidore Episcopal Church in Spring, TX is a Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and is under the pastoral care of its Vicar, Fr. Sean Steele. All of St. Isidore’s missional communities are firmly rooted in the Christian faith, committed to the spiritual beliefs and practices of the Anglican tradition, and are part of the global Anglican Communion and Mainline Protestantism via The Episcopal Church.

CORE VALUES

St. Isidore is an eclectic church where each of its comprising missional communities has its own distinctive emphases in order to meet the unique felt-needs of a particular group of people. For that reason, each community looks and operates a little differently. Yet it is also vital for the spiritual unity and social cohesion of the whole congregation that each missional community embody these six core values of St. Isidore as described by Fr. Sean:

1. Offensive Generosity

Our Lord gives generously and abundantly, so we choose to make our daily decisions from a place of gratitude. We gladly share ourselves and the resources God gives in ways that reflect our trust in God and our commitments to serve others, especially the underserved poor. We create opportunities for people to be healthy and whole. We break bread often and everywhere, seeking to nourish bodies, minds, and souls. We've learned we can't out give God.

2. The Sacred is in the Profane

God uses the ordinary. God transforms the common. God is everywhere, all the time. We reject the common heresy that the spiritual world is good and the material world is evil. We are inclined to look for evidence of God's handiwork in even the messiest places of our lives.

3. The Truth is in the Tension

We embrace difference. We reject tribalism as destructive to human flourishing. We reject either/or thinking on complex issues. We lean into the discomfort of difference in the room, trusting that the truth and justice we all seek are not easily grasped. No one has arrived. Seeking higher ground, we will agree to disagree, and together to accept the messiness of life as a given, allowing the personal paradoxes of Jesus to be our basis for staying in conversation.

4. The Wisdom is in the Room

Wisdom is treasure! We begin our search for wisdom with the people already present. Pentecost means the Spirit has been shed abroad, free to speak wisdom to or through anyone. We embrace full participation on the part of the laity, who learn to expect the Spirit's guidance on matters great and small. Scripture, history, facts, dreams, and intuitions all work together in our communal search for the practical wisdom we need to live well.

5. All are Welcome

We actively invite all people to experience the love of Christ. With unconditional acceptance, we are intentional about engaging and partnering with the local community. We create spaces where both giftedness and brokenness are welcome. We joyfully affirm being a “community of misfits” where we foster honesty, authenticity, and vulnerability as the path to creating real connection and experiencing real transformation. We show up fully because we believe God loves us as we are. All means All.

6. All Hands on Deck

We need everyone — everyone's gifts, everyone's heart, everyone's prayers, everyone's commitment to the mission of the church, each in his or her own way. We will never cease to invite people to be part of this great call because the mission of God's church is urgent and encompasses everything.

COMMON FEAST

In order to maintain a sense of unity across all of the decentralized missional communities, all missional community participants are invited and encouraged to attend the monthly Common Feast worship service at 11:00 AM on the first Sunday of each month. The worship service is hosted at The Abundant Harvest Kitchen building at 24803 Oakhurst Dr. Spring, TX 77386 and streamed online for those unable to gather in-person.

EUCCHARISTIC SERVICES

The primary Eucharistic service of St. Isidore is the congregation-wide Common Feast. Any other missional community worship services that include the Eucharist need to follow the general outline of the so-called “Rite III” liturgy on pages 396–401 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and honor any other stipulations from Fr. Sean and the Episcopal Diocese of Texas regarding the liturgical and sacramental practices of missional communities, especially the document entitled “Missional Communion: Communion at Missional Communities.” This document is available at:

https://aa86e41e7d951355383b-cb342165bfeaa4f2927aec8e5d7de41f.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/c/0e5979310_1488385264_communion-for-missional-communities-20170301.pdf

RESERVE SACRAMENT

The consecrated elements of Christ’s Body and Blood must be stored in a reverential manner to reflect the sacred nature of Communion. While this may not always be feasible, the ideal is for the reserve sacrament to be stored in some kind of traditional tabernacle.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

St. Isidore often uses Eugene Peterson’s, *The Message*, or the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) as our preferred biblical translations because of their gender-inclusive language.

WORLD RELIGIONS

Each of St. Isidore’s missional communities is firmly committed to Christian beliefs and practices, especially in the context of its worship services. During a Eucharistic service we only use the Bible rather than quote from the sacred texts of other religions like the Islamic Quran or the Hindu Vedas. This does not mean that other world religions are prohibited from being brought up during private discussions or group discussions, but the congregation as a whole is unambiguously grounded within Christian beliefs and practices.

HONORING THE HOSTS

While missional communities belong to all their participants, we ask that they honor the regulations and expectations of the commercial or residential setting where the community is hosted. As a commercial example, please wear shoes and a shirt if a restaurant requires them. As a residential example, if the host has severe food allergies and asks that no food with gluten or peanut butter be brought into the home in order to prevent accidental cross-contamination, all participants are expected to honor that wish.

MULTI-LEVEL MARKETING

Everyone in St. Isidore is encouraged to their share God-given charisms. We celebrate and use our skills and abilities to love and serve others. However, Multi-level Marketing (MLM) has become increasingly common in American Christianity. Unfortunately, this often involves the exploitation of relationships for financial gain, especially from church small groups. We want no part of that. Because missional communities are particularly susceptible to this problem, St. Isidore strictly prohibits participants from promoting/recruiting for MLMs, or any other business venture, during official community events. There is likewise a prohibition against using the church's official communication channels (e.g. text, email, social media pages, etc.) for financial gain.

CHILD SAFETY

St. Isidore treats the protection of children as an issue of utmost importance. We require all lay leaders to be Safeguard certified with the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. All St. Isidore missional communities must have at least one Safeguard certified person present and two must be present when there are children. In addition, we strongly encourage as many people as possible within the congregation to do this abuse prevention training. Our goal is to have a high concentration of adults and teenagers undergo the Safeguard training in order to create a kind of congregation-wide "herd immunity." Safeguarding certification classes are now offered year-round by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. If you are interested in being Safeguard certified, please contact us at safeguarding@isidores.org.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. GUIDELINES

Dr. Eric Law, an Episcopal priest and founder of the Kaleidoscope Institute, developed the original “Respectful Communication Guidelines” to help promote socially healthy and culturally sensitive dialogue. Our Theologian-in-Residence, Carson Clark, has since adapted them into the following form to be available for use in St. Isidore missional communities:

- R** = take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you think, feel, and say without blaming others
- E** = use **EMPATHETIC** listening to understand where others are coming from
- S** = be **SENSITIVE** to differences in personalities, communication styles, and backgrounds
- P** = slowly **PONDER** what you hear from others rather than rushing to respond
- E** = carefully **EXAMINE** your own assumptions, perceptions, and biases
- C** = keep **CONFIDENTIALITY** when people share personal matters in their lives
- T** = **TRUST** one another to have a good faith discussion instead of a contentious debate

WELCOMING & AFFIRMING

St. Isidore Episcopal Church provides a LGBTQIA+ welcoming and affirming environment, but also welcomes those who believe differently insofar as they are respectful toward the community's affirming stance, gracious toward those who disagree, and thoughtful in the manner in which they express their own perspectives. As a congregation, we lament the hurt caused by the Church's past and present judgmentalism and we humbly repent of all the ways the Body of Christ has failed to follow Jesus by radically loving all of God's children.

TRANSPARENCY

It has often been said that sunlight is the best disinfectant. We value a church-wide culture of transparency about our core values, policies, finances, and the like. St. Isidore welcomes thoughtful feedback. We invite all persons in our community to share their comments, questions, and concerns with the Vicar (sean@isidores.org), Warden (warden@isidores.org), or missional community lay leaders. If for any reason these do not feel like viable avenues for communication, these things can also be brought directly to the Episcopal Diocese of Texas (lhines@epicenter.org).

SLOW CHURCH

A COMMUNITY OF SAINT ISIDORE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SLOW CHURCH CUSTOMARY

INSPIRATION FOR SLOW CHURCH

Much of the beliefs, practices, and vision for St. Isidore's Slow Church community comes from a 2014 book by C. Christopher Smith and John Pattison entitled *Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus*. The book's principles are being adapted and locally applied for our specific context, but it remains the conceptual foundation for our community.

ETHOS

To use a biblical metaphor, the Church needs Mary *and* Martha. Whereas so much of our frenetic American society is focused on "Doing," Slow Church consciously intends to be a space for "Being." Our community offers an opportunity to pause, center ourselves spiritually and psychologically, focus on being mindfully present in the moment, ground our faith in the ancient beliefs and practices of the Christian tradition, empathetically listen to one another, and discerningly ponder to gain wisdom without rushing to judgment. The overall ethos is about cherishing our fellowship while taking time to rest and reorient in the presence of God.

ECLECTIC SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Like most of St. Isidore, the Slow Church community has remarkably eclectic spiritual needs reflecting differing personalities, life experiences, sacred pathways, belief systems, and the like. All of these perspectives are valid. Rather than trying to find watered-down compromises, we use the pastoral principle of "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." If we are doing this right, there should be parts of the worship service that each person feels comforts and satiates certain felt-needs and other parts that are uncomfortable and challenging. Here we are leaning into the St. Isidore principle, "The truth is in the tension."

DISTINCTIVE PRACTICES

Slow Church is a missional community of St. Isidore Episcopal Church seeking to bring together the best of high church practices and the house church movement. We welcome everyone and see this community as a six-fold holistic mosaic of:

1. Contemplation

Leaning into the deep mystical tradition of the Church, we use spiritual practices like Centering Prayer, The Examen, *Lectio Divina*, Peripatetic Prayer, Hesychastic Prayer, the Northumbrian Community's *Celtic Daily Prayer*, and Taizé worship. This is not a "contemplative community" as such, but contemplative practices are an essential element of the community's eclectic spiritual DNA.

2. Tradition

Leaning into more historic Roman Catholic and Episcopal practices, we use adapted liturgical prayers sampled from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and other liturgical sources. We also use the Christian calendar, Creeds, sacred rituals, and some vestments to create a sense of the ancient continuity of the Christian faith. Our goal is to reject traditionalism, which is the dead faith of the living, and to lean into tradition, which is the living faith of the dead.

3. Social Justice

Leaning into a culture of patient reflection, we have ongoing conversations that explore what it means to follow Jesus and pursue the Kingdom of God in all areas of life and society. We desire well-rounded conversations that include sharing feelings from the heart, the integration of faith and learning from science and the liberal arts, mystical insights from contemplation, an exploration of social justice themes through the spiritual lens of Kingdom ethics, etc. These conversations are characterized by a spirit of empathy, compassion, grace, humility, vulnerability, and open-minded curiosity.

4. Hospitality

Leaning into the St. Isidore tradition of meeting in homes, we cultivate a safe, friendly, and welcoming environment where we experience a deep sense of community while worshiping together, discussing together, and sharing meals together. According to the authors of *Slow Church*,

“When the topics of generosity and sharing arise in conversation, our minds often jump to giving money. Although giving money is essential to the redemptive work of churches and nonprofits and shouldn’t be discouraged, many of our systems of philanthropy promote sharing in a way that keeps the giver well removed from the recipient. For churches, one of the most transformative, and intimate, forms of generosity is hospitality: sharing our homes, our tables, and ourselves with others, particularly strangers... In the Christian tradition of hospitality, even as the host is blessing the guest, the guest is blessing the host. The relationship is paramount. Hospitality isn’t a transaction or impersonal charity; it is seeing in the other the image of God, connecting to that uniquely precious person, and giving them the space and security they need to reveal their authentic self. The hosts also leave themselves vulnerable enough to reveal their own authentic selves.”

5. Basement Mentality

Leaning into St. Isidore’s core value about “The Sacred in the Profane,” we value a radical authenticity that invites people into God’s love and grace where they are. To employ a metaphor, most Midwestern churches have basements, which is where events like Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) are hosted. Upstairs in the sanctuary there is usually an unstated expectation of presenting oneself as successful and put together, but downstairs in the basement people speak naturally while being open and honest about the ups and downs of their lives. There they share who they really are. Our goal is to take that “basement mentality” of A.A. and metaphorically bring it upstairs into the sanctuary. We don’t shame anyone for being impious, but we also don’t tolerate shaming anyone for expressing traditional Christian piety.

6. Paradoxical Hope

Leaning into the New Testament's vision of God's Kingdom, our community exists in the holy tension of the "already" and "not yet" of divine hope. Our hope is grounded in a belief that God works all things for good because, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "the arc of history is long but it bends towards justice." At the same time, we reject the sub-culture that Brené Brown describes as "toxic positivity," which seeks to avoid any overt recognition of brokenness or suffering. There is a *via media* between optimism and pessimism. This community embraces praise and thanksgiving while simultaneously recognizing the essential role of grief and lament within Christian worship for those things "done and left undone." Our complex lives reflect the liminal space of Holy Saturday between Christ's death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. As a community, we believe the radical hope of the Gospel is paradoxically most beautiful and restorative when we openly acknowledge the full extent of the individual brokenness and societal injustice in the world.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

All of St. Isidore Episcopal Church is under the pastoral care of Fr. Sean Steele and Carson Clark serves as Slow Church's lay minister. However, the community also has an informal leadership structure to help steer its vision through a slow, discerning process of consensus-based decision-making. Because this is an informal group rather than an official committee that votes on things, we jokingly refer to this team as the "Fellowship of the Ring."

LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

Slow Church welcomes differing levels of involvement from its participants. For some this is their primary St. Isidore community while it may be a complementary/secondary community for others. We also welcome anyone who wants to occasionally drop by when they need to get their contemplative and/or social justice "fix" a few times a year. Our hope and intention is simply to serve others however we are able.

LOCATION

Slow Church is a house church community and, under ideal circumstances, gathers in-person in Carson and Alicia Clark's home chapel at 24202 Lenze Rd. Spring, TX 77389.

DATES & SCHEDULE

Slow Church meets on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. There may also be special social and/or service events on fifth Sundays. Here is the schedule with estimated times:

Opening:

Guests are welcome to arrive as early as 10:00 AM for set up, food prep, conversation, or spiritual direction.

Spiritual Movement 1 & 2:

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Transition:

12:15 PM – 12:30 PM

Spiritual Movement 3:

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Closing:

Guests are asked to briefly help clean up, then are welcome to stay as late as 2:30 PM for pastoral care, spiritual direction, or just to hang out.

PANDEMIC SAFETY

Slow Church takes an empathetic, cautious, and community-oriented approach to pandemic protocols that carefully follows the latest CDC guidelines in terms of social distancing, mask wearing, vaccinations, COVID testing, etc. We also follow Harris County's public health directives since the Clarks' home is located there. No one will ever feel pressured to gather in-person and it is crucial to us that anyone who, for whatever reason, feels uncomfortable gathering in-person never feels excluded from their spiritual community.

MEDIUMS

Slow Church embraces a mindset of long-term flexibility that allows us to seamlessly pivot between exclusively online gatherings, a hybrid model, or exclusively in-person gatherings as circumstances evolve. Slow Church started exclusively on Zoom due to the pandemic, but will discerningly “ride the waves” as things open up and close down over time. Our foremost priority is ensuring we are inclusive toward all people’s felt-needs during this pandemic amid differing medical circumstances, social preferences, and the like.

WORSHIP MUSIC

Reflecting Slow Church’s twin emphases on contemplation and tradition, the primary musical worship is Taizé while the secondary musical worship is traditional hymns. Only occasionally is contemporary worship music used. Whereas much of contemporary Christian worship is premised upon excitement and enthusiasm, our worship music is focused on mindfulness and transcendence.

AGAPE FEAST

Although nobody is required to stay for the agape feast, which is functionally the second half of our worship service, this sacred communal meal is an essential part of the Slow Church in-person experience. Rather than a time for informal conversation, as often happens after a church service during a potluck meal, the agape feast is a continuation of the Lord’s Supper. During this shared meal, we have loosely-moderated discussions that center in some way around the question, “What does it mean to follow Jesus and pursue his Kingdom in all areas of life and society?” In order to establish and maintain healthy social expectations that are conducive to a deep sense of fellowship during the agape feast, we ask all participants to follow the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. guidelines found in the St. Isidore customary.

CUSTOMS REGARDING HOSPITALITY

Slow Church highly values the common good. We are committed to going out of our way to extend hospitality in ways that make all participants feel welcomed, loved, and safe. For this reason, we have established the following customs regarding hospitality:

- We provide a worry-free Communion experience by exclusively using gluten-free elements for the Eucharist.
- We provide a Zoom accommodation to participate in the community if even a single person desires it.
- We provide child care for participants with families, ideally from a caretaker who is Safeguard certified.
- We provide food accommodations for participants with known food allergies and sensitivities during all community meals at the Clarks' home.
- We provide a fragrance-free environment for chemically sensitive worshipers, which means we ask in-person participants not to wear perfumes, colognes, or body sprays.
- We provide a cautious environment for those who are consciously taking a more careful approach to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We provide an open-minded, pro-critical thinking environment for participants to integrate insights from STEM, liberal arts, contemplation, and the like with their faith.
- We provide a healthy spiritual environment for people to express differing thoughtful perspectives without fear of shaming, bullying, gaslighting, name-calling, or the like.

OTHER EVENTS

The Slow Church community extends beyond its Sunday worship events. Often working in tandem with the larger St. Isidore family, here is a sample list of other future activities we can imagine:

- Attending St. Isidore's monthly Common Feast service
- Hosting spiritual retreats and spiritual direction
- Hosting book studies and prayer meetings
- Hosting movie nights and board game nights
- Volunteering at The Abundant Harvest Kitchen
- Attending The Woodlands Pride or Houston Pride
- Visiting a yoga Meetup.com event
- Worshipping with other churches in ecumenical services
- Going camping at a Texas state park

ONLINE LITURGY

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 1: CONTEMPLATION

*Service begins at a slower pace.
It is about 75% of normal to cultivate
a sense of centeredness and peace.*

Officiant The first spiritual movement of our worship: contemplation.

OPENING

Officiant Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am.
Be still and know.
Be still.
Be.

*Singing bowl is rung three times
signifying the Trinitarian God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his Kingdom, now and forever.

Officiant Lord, to whom shall we go?
People You have the words of eternal life.

Officiant Lord, whom shall we seek?
People You are the Holy One, you are the Lord.

Officiant Lord, we believe;
People help our unbelief.

Officiant Most loving God, we gather to worship you: the Author of all creation. We are tired, weak, weary, and worn. Our lives are hectic and disjointed, so we come to you that we may be healed. Help us, O God, as we seek in you all that is true, beautiful, and good. Imbue within us a spirit of peace and hope, that we may embrace all that is from you, and turn away all that is from the evil one. In this busy world, may we find in you a serene simplicity that may be a beacon of solace to all of your children.

All Amen.

ACCLAMATIONS

Officiant	O Lord, let our souls rise up to meet you,
People	as the day rises to meet the sun.
Officiant	You, O Lord, are the glorious morning;
People	you are our refreshment and peace.
Officiant	You are the sounds of the breaking dawn;
People	you are the sweet smell of the morning dew.
Officiant	You are the wonderful sunrise;
People	you are the restorer of hope.
Officiant	You are the air that we breathe;
People	you are the song of beauty.
Officiant	You are the Lord, our Creator;
People	you are the wellspring of life.

TAIZE WORSHIP

*The Taizé Community is an ecumenical
Christian monastic fraternity in France.*

*Taizé music is contemplative and emphasizes
the repetition of simple phrases from Scripture.
The song lasts for roughly 2-3 minutes.*

CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATION

Officiant	Loving God, we pause to rest in you. May we be still. Fill our hearts that we may abide in love and trust. Christ, as a light illumine and guide me. Christ, as a shield overshadow me. Christ under me; Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
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Reader 1 A contemplative meditation from _____.

*Reader reads from a
contemplative source.*

CENTERING PRAYER

Officiant Thomas Merton described contemplative prayer as prayer “centered entirely on the presence of God.” As we prepare, please sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Take a deep breath, relax, and quiet your soul. I invite you to choose a sacred word such as “love” or “grace” that encourages your intention to be in the Lord’s presence. Let that word be gently present as a symbol of your openness to the Holy Spirit’s divine movement within you. Whenever you become aware of anything—thoughts, feelings, perceptions, upcoming plans, or anything else—simply return to your sacred word as your spiritual anchor.

Holy God, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence, where your love is revealed to all who call, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

*Singing bowl is rung once at the beginning
followed by 5 minutes of silence.*

*Singing bowl is rung once to
signal the end of Centering Prayer.*

SERENITY PRAYER

All God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.

TAIZE WORSHIP

*The Taizé Community is an ecumenical
Christian monastic fraternity in France.*

*Taizé music is contemplative and emphasizes
the repetition of simple phrases from Scripture.
The song lasts for roughly 2-3 minutes.*

PSALM READING USING LECTIO DIVINA

Officiant Lectio Divina, or “Divine Reading,” is an ancient, contemplative spiritual practice. Scripture is not treated as texts to be studied, but as the living story to be experienced. A short passage of no more than three verses will be slowly read three times with silence after each.

Reader 2 Our reading today comes from _____.
With each reading we will listen and perceive with a different emphasis. During this first reading, ask yourself, ‘What captures my attention in this passage or my inner experience?’

*Reader reads passage followed
by 15 seconds of silence.*

Reader 2 During this second reading, ask yourself, ‘What does this passage tell me about the character of God?’

*Reader reads passage followed
by 15 seconds of silence.*

Reader 2 During this final reading, ask yourself, ‘What might the Holy Spirit through this passage invite me to do or change?’

*Reader reads passage followed
by 15 seconds of silence.*

*Singing bowl is rung once
to mark the end of the
Contemplation movement.*

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 2: TRADITION

*The pace quickens slightly.
It is now about 85% of normal
with a sense of gravitas.*

Officiant The second spiritual movement of our worship: tradition.

THE SEASONAL COLLECT

Officiant Our seasonal collect for _____.
 The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Officiant Let us pray.

*Officiant reads seasonal Collect
reflecting the Christian calendar.*

People Amen.

THE GOSPEL READING

Presider or Officiant speaks.

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Presider or Officiant reads passage.

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION & MUTUAL INVITATION

*The Priest, Officiant, or another layperson
leads the reflection for 10 minutes.*

*The remaining 20 minutes goes to mutual invitation.
If someone does not want to share,
they may say “pass” and invite someone else.*

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Officiant Finalized in the eighth century, the Apostles' Creed has roots as far back as the first and second centuries. Let us recite it together, grounding our faith in the tradition and sound doctrine of the undivided Church and joining in spirit more than 1,900 years of our covenantal brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

All I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

AN ANCIENT COLLECT OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Officiant Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them; Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Officiant Let us pray for our stewardship of the Church and the world.

Reader 3 Direct the leaders of your Church, of this country, of all nations, and all those whom you have placed in positions of authority.
Father, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 3 Incline the hearts of those of us whom you have blessed financially away from selfish greed and pleasure, so we may humbly serve those in need.
Christ, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 3 Give us the wisdom and will to conserve the good earth that you have given us and to use its resources rightly to your honor and glory.
Spirit, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 3 Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory to the world.
Blessed Trinity, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Presider or Officiant speaks.

Presider Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

15 seconds of silent reflection.

All Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.

*If Priest is present, use first Absolution.
If not, use second Declaration of Forgiveness.*

Presider Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

All Amen.

OR

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

All Amen.

THE PEACE

Presider or Officiant speaks.

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

*A brief time of passing the peace with cheer;
Unmuted greetings, smiles, waves, peace signs,
Vulcan “Live Long & Prosper” salutations,
and digital high-fives are all welcome.*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Officiant Let us give thanks for all of God’s gifts in our lives.

Reader 3 For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea, for your
continued care of the world you have made, and for your power to work all
things for the good of those who love you, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 3 For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends, for your
knowledge of all our needs before we ask or imagine, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 3 For minds to think, hearts to love, and hands to serve, for health and strength to
work and leisure to rest and play, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 3 For the many ways in which You demonstrate You are our God, sovereign over
all that is, and that You love us dearly, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

INFORMAL PRAYERS & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant Let us come before the Lord with our thanksgivings and lament, petitions and praise, for ourselves and for others.

*A short time of casual sharing and praying.
Prayers should be relatively concise.*

*After each prayer request is given,
a volunteer prays aloud for the request.*

*Prayers of thanksgiving, lament, and praise
are encouraged in addition to petitions.*

Officiant Lord, please answer these prayers according to your perfect will.
Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, let us pray:

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 is the Kingdom,
 the power and the glory,
 forever and ever.
 Amen.

THE BLESSING

*For Slow Church's online services,
a blessing is given in lieu of the Eucharist
as the spiritual climax of the worship.*

This is not the Benediction.

*If Priest is present, use first priestly blessing.
If not, use second lay minister blessing.
Lay persons should not use the Sign of the Cross.*

Presider May the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you, among you, and remain with you,
now and forever.

OR

Officiant May God guard and keep us,
this day and through the weeks to come.
May Jesus keep us in his peace
and the Holy Spirit guide us day by day.

TRADITIONAL HYMN

*When possible, the hymn reflects the Christian calendar.
Songs come from the 2010 Celebrating Grace hymnal.*

*Singing bowl is rung once
to mark the end of the
Tradition movement.*

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 3: SOCIAL JUSTICE

*The pace quickens again,
It is about 95% of normal
with a sense of liveliness
to indicate a call to action.*

Officiant The third spiritual movement of our worship: social justice.

MODERN EXHORTATION OF RACHEL HELD EVANS

Officiant “We’re tired of the culture wars, tired of Christianity getting entangled with party politics and power... We don’t want to choose between science and religion or between our intellectual integrity and our faith. Instead, we long for our churches to be safe places to doubt, to ask questions, and to tell the truth, even when it’s uncomfortable. We want to talk about the tough stuff—biblical interpretation, religious pluralism, sexuality, racial reconciliation, and social justice—but without predetermined conclusions or simplistic answers.”

PRAYERS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Officiant Heavenly Father, make us a people of love and truth.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Officiant Incarnate Word, make us a people of grace and peace.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Officiant Breath of God, make us a people of hope and reconciliation.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Officiant Blessed Trinity, make us a people of empathy and justice.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

A LITANY FOR THE KINGDOM

- Officiant O Lord, arise, help us to faithfully be your hands and feet in this world.
- Reader 1 We pray that our allegiance will be to your eternal Kingdom,
All for we are heavenly citizens, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.
- Reader 2 We pray that your Church may transcend the barriers that divide us,
All for we are called to love those of every tribe, even our enemies.
- Reader 3 We pray for the Gospel to drive out all darkness and despair,
All for your Holy Spirit empowers us to be the light of the world.
- Reader 1 We pray for hearts of compassion and minds of understanding,
All for we have a Great High Priest who empathizes with our humanity.
- Reader 2 We pray that we will be ever-mindful of our history of oppression,
All for as we do unto the least of these so we do unto you.
- Reader 3 We pray for freedom from hypocrisy and judgmentalism,
All for we who have sinned must not cast the first stone.
- Reader 1 We pray for liberation from our self-righteous egos,
All for you reorient us to the compassionate spirit of the Law.
- Reader 2 We pray for those who have been judged by the color of their skin,
All for in you there is neither Jew nor Gentile.
- Reader 3 We pray for those who are immigrants and foreigners in this nation,
All for Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt for refuge.
- Reader 1 We pray for those who have been cast out for being true to themselves,
All for we are a people of faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.
- Reader 2 We pray for women called to serve in the Church and the world,
All for they stand in the legacy of Junia, who was known among the apostles.

Reader 3 We pray for the conservation of the good earth you have given us,
All for you made us to be wise stewards of the natural world.

Reader 1 We pray for strength to resist the powers and principalities of darkness,
All for you provide the full armor of God to stand against injustice.

Reader 2 We pray for the end of senseless cycles of violence,
All for blessed are the peacemakers who beat swords into plowshares.

Reader 3 We pray for the restoration of the common good in the public discourse,
All for we are subject to one another, valuing others more highly than ourselves.

Reader 1 We pray for discernment to avoid disinformation and intentional deception,
All for we shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free.

Reader 2 We pray for the wisdom to differentiate civil religion from The Way of Jesus,
All for we stand with the earliest Christ followers in declaring, “Jesus is Lord!”

Reader 3 We pray for help in overcoming our thirst for wealth, power, and prestige,
All for even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.

Officiant Almighty God, you created us in your own image: Grant us grace to contend
fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and help us to use
our freedom rightly in the establishment of justice in our communities and
among the nations, to the glory of your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our
Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever.
All Amen.

DOXOLOGY

*Typically sung in unison
and led by the musician.*

All Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav’nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

BENEDICTION (FRANCISCAN BLESSING)

Officiant May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

*Singing bowl is rung three times
signifying the Trinitarian God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

DISMISSAL

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

*From Easter through Pentecost,
add "Alleluia, alleluia."*

The worship service is now over,
but we invite anyone who wants to hang around and talk for a bit.

HYBRID LITURGY WITH PRIEST PRESENT

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 1: CONTEMPLATION

*Service begins at a slower pace.
It is about 75% of normal to cultivate
a sense of centeredness and peace.*

Officiant The first spiritual movement of our worship: contemplation.

OPENING

Officiant Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am.
Be still and know.
Be still.
Be.

*Singing bowl is rung three times
signifying the Trinitarian God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his Kingdom, now and forever.

Officiant Lord, to whom shall we go?
People You have the words of eternal life.

Officiant Lord, whom shall we seek?
People You are the Holy One, you are the Lord.

Officiant Lord, we believe;
People help our unbelief.

Officiant Most loving God, we gather to worship you: the Author of all creation. We are tired, weak, weary, and worn. Our lives are hectic and disjointed, so we come to you that we may be healed. Help us, O God, as we seek in you all that is true, beautiful, and good. Imbue within us a spirit of peace and hope, that we may embrace all that is from you, and turn away all that is from the evil one. In this busy world, may we find in you a serene simplicity that may be a beacon of solace to all of your children.

All Amen.

ACCLAMATIONS

Officiant	O Lord, let our souls rise up to meet you,
People	as the day rises to meet the sun.
Officiant	You, O Lord, are the glorious morning;
People	you are our refreshment and peace.
Officiant	You are the sounds of the breaking dawn;
People	you are the sweet smell of the morning dew.
Officiant	You are the wonderful sunrise;
People	you are the restorer of hope.
Officiant	You are the air that we breathe;
People	you are the song of beauty.
Officiant	You are the Lord, our Creator;
People	you are the wellspring of life.

TAIZE WORSHIP

*The Taizé Community is an ecumenical
Christian monastic fraternity in France.*

*Taizé music is contemplative and emphasizes
the repetition of simple phrases from Scripture.
The song lasts for roughly 2-3 minutes.*

CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATION

Officiant	Loving God, we pause to rest in you. May we be still. Fill our hearts that we may abide in love and trust. Christ, as a light illumine and guide me. Christ, as a shield overshadow me. Christ under me; Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
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Reader 1 A contemplative meditation from _____.

*Reader reads contemplative
meditation from the lectern.*

CENTERING PRAYER

Officiant Thomas Merton described contemplative prayer as prayer “centered entirely on the presence of God.” As we prepare, please sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Take a deep breath, relax, and quiet your soul. I invite you to choose a sacred word such as “love” or “grace” that encourages your intention to be in the Lord’s presence. Let that word be gently present as a symbol of your openness to the Holy Spirit’s divine movement within you. Whenever you become aware of anything—thoughts, feelings, perceptions, upcoming plans, or anything else—simply return to your sacred word as your spiritual anchor.

Holy God, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence, where your love is revealed to all who call, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

*Singing bowl is rung once at the beginning
followed by 5 minutes of silence.*

*Singing bowl is rung once to
signal the end of Centering Prayer.*

SERENITY PRAYER

All God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.

TAIZE WORSHIP

*The Taizé Community is an ecumenical
Christian monastic fraternity in France.*

*Taizé music is contemplative and emphasizes
the repetition of simple phrases from Scripture.
The song lasts for roughly 2-3 minutes.*

PSALM READING USING LECTIO DIVINA

Officiant Lectio Divina, or “Divine Reading,” is an ancient, contemplative spiritual practice. Scripture is not treated as texts to be studied, but as the living story to be experienced. A short passage of no more than three verses will be slowly read three times with silence after each.

Reader 2 Our reading today comes from _____.
With each reading we will listen and perceive with a different emphasis. During this first reading, ask yourself, ‘What captures my attention in this passage or my inner experience?’

*Reader reads from the lectern
followed by 15 seconds of silence.*

Reader 2 During this second reading, ask yourself, ‘What does this passage tell me about the character of God?’

*Reader reads from the lectern
followed by 15 seconds of silence.*

Reader 2 During this final reading, ask yourself, ‘What might the Holy Spirit through this passage invite me to do or change?’

*Reader reads from the lectern
followed by 15 seconds of silence.*

*Singing bowl is rung once
to mark the end of the
Contemplation movement.*

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 2: TRADITION

*The pace quickens slightly.
It is now about 85% of normal
with a sense of gravitas.*

*In the Anglican tradition,
we generally stand to sing,
sit to listen, and kneel to pray.*

Officiant The second spiritual movement of our worship: tradition.

OPENING

Use during regular services.

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his Kingdom, now and forever.
 Amen.

OR

Use during Lent.

Officiant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
People His mercy endures forever.

OR

Use from Easter through day of Pentecost.

Officiant Alleluia. Chris is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Officiant Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no
 secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your
 Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy
 Name; through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

TRADITIONAL HYMN

*People stand as able.
When possible, the hymn reflects the Christian calendar.
Songs come from the 2010 Celebrating Grace hymnal.*

THE KYRIE ELEISON

Use only during Lent.

Officiant Lord, have mercy.
People Christ, have mercy.
Officiant Lord, have mercy.

THE SEASONAL COLLECT

People remain standing.

Reader 3 Our seasonal collect for _____.
 The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Reader 3 Let us pray.

Reader reads from the lectern.

People Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT OR EPISTLE READING

People sit.

Reader 3 A reading from _____.

*Reader reads from the lectern.
Scripture readings comes from the
Revised Common Lectionary.*

Reader 3 The word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL READING

People stand as able.

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

*Presider reads from the center of the room
to symbolize the incarnation of the Word.*

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE HOMILY

People sit.

*The homily may be preached by clergy or laity.
It is delivered from the pulpit, lasting 10–12 minutes.*

THE APOSTLES' CREED

*People stand as able.
Officiant leads from the pulpit.*

Officiant Finalized in the eighth century, the Apostles' Creed has roots as far back as the first and second centuries. Let us recite it together, grounding our faith in the tradition and sound doctrine of the undivided Church and joining in spirit more than 1,900 years of our covenantal brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

All I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

People kneel or sit as able.

- Officiant Let us pray for our stewardship of the Church and the world.
Reader leads prayers from the lectern.
- Reader 1 Direct the leaders of your Church, of this country, of all nations, and all those
whom you have placed in positions of authority.
Father, in your mercy...
- All Hear our prayer.
Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.
- Reader 1 Incline the hearts of those of us whom you have blessed financially away from
selfish greed and pleasure, so we may humbly serve those in need.
Christ, in your mercy...
- All Hear our prayer.
Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.
- Reader 1 Give us the wisdom and will to conserve the good earth that you have given us
and to use its resources rightly to your honor and glory.
Spirit, in your mercy...
- All Hear our prayer.
Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.
- Reader 1 Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your
truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory to the world.
Blessed Trinity, in your mercy...
- All Hear our prayer.
Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

INFORMAL PRAYERS

- Officiant Let us come before the Lord with our thanksgivings and lament, petitions and
praise, for ourselves and for others.
*A short time of casual sharing and praying.
Prayers should be relatively concise.
Prayers of thanksgiving, lament, and praise
are encouraged in addition to petitions.*
- Officiant Lord, please answer these prayers according to your perfect will.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

People remain kneeling or sitting.

Officiant sits.

Priest leads from behind the table.

Presider Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

15 seconds of silent reflection.

All Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.

Presider Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord
Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit
keep you in eternal life.

All Amen.

THE PEACE

People stand as able.

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

*A brief time of passing the peace with cheer.
Please make sure to greet any online participants.*

THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

People remain standing.

Presider Look with kindness on your people gathered here before you. Through your goodness we have these gifts of bread and wine which the good earth has given and human hands have made.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Presider The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.

Presider Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them up to the Lord.

Presider Let us give thanks for all of God's gifts in our lives.

Reader leads prayers from the lectern.

Reader 2 For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea, for your continued care of the world you have made, and for your power to work all things for the good of those who love you, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 2 For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends, for your knowledge of all our needs before we ask or imagine, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 2 For minds to think, hearts to love, and hands to serve, for health and strength to work and leisure to rest and play, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 2 For the many ways in which you demonstrate you are our God, sovereign over all that is, and that you love us dearly, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

People stand or kneel as able.

Presider Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

All 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.

Presider Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

When our Savior was stretched out on the tree of death, the elements erupted, and the earth gave up its dead. Through his blood, spilled for us, the world was healed and heaven and earth were reconciled. May the Sacrament of his Body and Blood change us and transform us, bringing us at last into perfect communion with our loving Creator.

*Priest lays a hand upon the bread and
the cup during the consecration.*

Presider On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and gave you thanks. He broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is My body, which is given to you; do this in remembrance of Me."

In the same way, after supper he took the cup of wine and gave thanks. He gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of Me."

Presider Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Presider We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this Holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal Kingdom. All this we ask through your Son, Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever.

All Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

People remain standing or kneeling.

Presider Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, let us pray:

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 is the Kingdom,
the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

People stand.

Priest breaks the consecrated Bread.

*In the following,
omit the word “Alleluia” during Lent.*

Presider Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

All Communion at Slow Church is gluten-free.

*The Bread and the Cup are given
to the communicants with these words:*

*“The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven,
The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.”*

OR

*For those worshiping with us online or
for any reason do not wish to partake,
the Priest instead says a blessing
with the Sign of the Cross.*

Presider May the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you, among you, and remain with you,
now and forever.
Amen.

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Priest leads from behind the table.

Presider Let us pray.
All Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal Kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and forever.
Amen.

*Singing bowl is rung three times
signifying the Trinitarian God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

DOXOLOGY

Typically sung in unison and led by the musician.

All Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

TRANSITION

Officiant leads from the pulpit.

Officiant Thank you for worshipping with us today.

After a 15-minute transition, we will continue our service with a communal, New Testament-style agape feast. This meal is not intended as a post-service potluck. As St. Isidore's Slow Church community, we are striving to bring together the best of The Episcopal Church's sacred high church ritual with the house church movement's restoration of early Christian hospitality. For us the Eucharist is not the end of our shared worship experience, but the blessing and beginning of our agape feast.

After the transition, we will continue the feast and move into the final spiritual movement of our worship: social justice. This is a time to not only laugh, cry, and love, but also for us to authentically wrestle with God and our faith. This time always centers around the question, "What does it mean to follow Jesus and pursue his Kingdom in every area of life and society?"

If you are participating online, we will continue to include you during the agape feast. We invite you to use the restroom, get some food, and rejoin us in 15 minutes.

If you are participating in-person, please bring the liturgy with you into the dining room or kitchen and ensure each table has a designated facilitator to lead the movement and moderate the discussion.

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 3: SOCIAL JUSTICE

*The pace quickens again,
It is now at a normal rate
with a sense of liveliness
to indicate a call to action.*

Facilitator The third spiritual movement of our worship: social justice.

MODERN EXHORTATION OF RACHEL HELD EVANS

Facilitator “We’re tired of the culture wars, tired of Christianity getting entangled with party politics and power... We don’t want to choose between science and religion or between our intellectual integrity and our faith. Instead, we long for our churches to be safe places to doubt, to ask questions, and to tell the truth, even when it’s uncomfortable. We want to talk about the tough stuff—biblical interpretation, religious pluralism, sexuality, racial reconciliation, and social justice—but without predetermined conclusions or simplistic answers.”

PRAYERS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Facilitator Heavenly Father, make us a people of love and truth.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Facilitator Incarnate Word, make us a people of grace and peace.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Facilitator Breath of God, make us a people of hope and reconciliation.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Facilitator Blessed Trinity, make us a people of empathy and justice.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

A LITANY FOR THE KINGDOM

*In-person Readers rotate starting left of
Facilitator and continuing clockwise.*

*If you do not feel comfortable reading aloud,
simply say, "Pass."*

Facilitator O Lord, arise, help us to faithfully be your hands and feet in this world.

Reader We pray that our allegiance will be to your eternal Kingdom,
All for we are heavenly citizens, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

Reader We pray that your Church may transcend the barriers that divide us,
All for we are called to love those of every tribe, even our enemies.

Reader We pray for the Gospel to drive out all darkness and despair,
All for your Holy Spirit empowers us to be the light of the world.

Reader We pray for hearts of compassion and minds of understanding,
All for we have a Great High Priest who empathizes with our humanity.

Reader We pray that we will be ever-mindful of our history of oppression,
All for as we do unto the least of these so we do unto you.

Reader We pray for freedom from hypocrisy and judgmentalism,
All for we who have sinned must not cast the first stone.

Reader We pray for liberation from our self-righteous egos,
All for you reorient us to the compassionate spirit of the Law.

Reader We pray for those who have been judged by the color of their skin,
All for in you there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Reader We pray for those who are immigrants and foreigners in this nation,
All for Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt for refuge.

Reader We pray for those who have been cast out for being true to themselves,
All for we are a people of faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Reader We pray for women called to serve in the Church and the world,
All for they stand in the legacy of Junia, who was known among the apostles.

Reader We pray for the conservation of the good earth you have given us,
All for you made us to be wise stewards of the natural world.

Reader We pray for strength to resist the powers and principalities of darkness,
All for you provide the full armor of God to stand against injustice.

Reader We pray for the end of senseless cycles of violence,
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fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and help us to use
our freedom rightly in the establishment of justice in our communities and
among the nations, to the glory of your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our
Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever.
All Amen.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. GUIDELINES

Facilitator N.T. Wright once said, “The reward for getting one answer is you get three more questions. That’s why life goes on being exciting.” None of us have all the answers, and we can all humbly learn from one another. At the same time, shaming, bullying, and gaslighting will not be tolerated in Slow Church. Our eclectic perspectives *must* be voiced in a manner that respects all others and affirms the human dignity of all as beloved children of God made in his image.

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GROUP DISCUSSIONS OVER AGAPE FEAST

There is a specific topic for each agape feast and each table has its own loosely moderated discussion.

Each table has a designated facilitator who gently keeps the discussion on-topic to the day’s theme, ensures everyone follows the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. guidelines, and creates space for everyone to contribute.

BENEDICTION (FRANCISCAN BLESSING)

Officiant The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

Officiant May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

*From Easter through Pentecost,
add "Alleluia, alleluia."*

The worship service is now over,
but we ask everyone to help the Clarks
by cleaning up a bit before leaving.

No one is being rushed out the door.

HYBRID LITURGY WITHOUT PRIEST PRESENT

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 1: CONTEMPLATION

*Service begins at a slower pace.
It is about 75% of normal to cultivate
a sense of centeredness and peace.*

Officiant The first spiritual movement of our worship: contemplation.

OPENING

Officiant Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am.
Be still and know.
Be still.
Be.

*Singing bowl is rung three times
signifying the Trinitarian God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his Kingdom, now and forever.

Officiant Lord, to whom shall we go?
People You have the words of eternal life.

Officiant Lord, whom shall we seek?
People You are the Holy One, you are the Lord.

Officiant Lord, we believe;
People help our unbelief.

Officiant Most loving God, we gather to worship you: the Author of all creation. We are tired, weak, weary, and worn. Our lives are hectic and disjointed, so we come to you that we may be healed. Help us, O God, as we seek in you all that is true, beautiful, and good. Imbue within us a spirit of peace and hope, that we may embrace all that is from you, and turn away all that is from the evil one. In this busy world, may we find in you a serene simplicity that may be a beacon of solace to all of your children.

All Amen.

ACCLAMATIONS

Officiant	O Lord, let our souls rise up to meet you,
People	as the day rises to meet the sun.
Officiant	You, O Lord, are the glorious morning;
People	you are our refreshment and peace.
Officiant	You are the sounds of the breaking dawn;
People	you are the sweet smell of the morning dew.
Officiant	You are the wonderful sunrise;
People	you are the restorer of hope.
Officiant	You are the air that we breathe;
People	you are the song of beauty.
Officiant	You are the Lord, our Creator;
People	you are the wellspring of life.

TAIZE WORSHIP

*The Taizé Community is an ecumenical
Christian monastic fraternity in France.*

*Taizé music is contemplative and emphasizes
the repetition of simple phrases from Scripture.
The song lasts for roughly 2-3 minutes.*

CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATION

Officiant	Loving God, we pause to rest in you. May we be still. Fill our hearts that we may abide in love and trust. Christ, as a light illumine and guide me. Christ, as a shield overshadow me. Christ under me; Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
-----------	--

Reader 1 A contemplative meditation from _____.

*Reader reads contemplative
meditation from the lectern.*

CENTERING PRAYER

Officiant Thomas Merton described contemplative prayer as prayer “centered entirely on the presence of God.” As we prepare, please sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Take a deep breath, relax, and quiet your soul. I invite you to choose a sacred word such as “love” or “grace” that encourages your intention to be in the Lord’s presence. Let that word be gently present as a symbol of your openness to the Holy Spirit’s divine movement within you. Whenever you become aware of anything—thoughts, feelings, perceptions, upcoming plans, or anything else—simply return to your sacred word as your spiritual anchor.

Holy God, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence, where your love is revealed to all who call, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

*Singing bowl is rung once at the beginning
followed by 5 minutes of silence.*

*Singing bowl is rung once to
signal the end of Centering Prayer.*

SERENITY PRAYER

All God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.

TAIZE WORSHIP

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Christian monastic fraternity in France.*

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the repetition of simple phrases from Scripture.
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PSALM READING USING LECTIO DIVINA

Officiant Lectio Divina, or “Divine Reading,” is an ancient, contemplative spiritual practice. Scripture is not treated as texts to be studied, but as the living story to be experienced. A short passage of no more than three verses will be slowly read three times with silence after each.

Reader 2 Our reading today comes from _____.
With each reading we will listen and perceive with a different emphasis. During this first reading, ask yourself, ‘What captures my attention in this passage or my inner experience?’

*Reader reads from the lectern
followed by 15 seconds of silence.*

Reader 2 During this second reading, ask yourself, ‘What does this passage tell me about the character of God?’

*Reader reads from the lectern
followed by 15 seconds of silence.*

Reader 2 During this final reading, ask yourself, ‘What might the Holy Spirit through this passage invite me to do or change?’

*Reader reads from the lectern
followed by 15 seconds of silence.*

*Singing bowl is rung once
to mark the end of the
Contemplation movement.*

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 2: TRADITION

*The pace quickens slightly.
It is now about 85% of normal
with a sense of gravitas.*

*In the Anglican tradition,
we generally stand to sing,
sit to listen, and kneel to pray.*

Officiant The second spiritual movement of our worship: tradition.

OPENING

Use during regular services.

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his Kingdom, now and forever.
 Amen.

OR

Use during Lent.

Officiant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
People His mercy endures forever.

OR

Use from Easter through day of Pentecost.

Officiant Alleluia. Chris is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Officiant Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no
 secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your
 Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy
 Name; through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

TRADITIONAL HYMN

*People stand as able.
When possible, the hymn reflects the Christian calendar.
Songs come from the 2010 Celebrating Grace hymnal.*

THE KYRIE ELEISON

Use only during Lent.

Officiant Lord, have mercy.
People Christ, have mercy.
Officiant Lord, have mercy.

THE SEASONAL COLLECT

People remain standing.

Reader 3 Our seasonal collect for _____.
The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Reader 3 Let us pray.

Reader reads from the lectern.

People Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT OR EPISTLE READING

People sit.

Reader 3 A reading from _____.

*Reader reads from the lectern.
Scripture readings comes from the
Revised Common Lectionary.*

Reader 3 The word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL READING

People stand as able.

Officiant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

*Officiant reads from the center of the room
to symbolize the incarnation of the Word.*

Officiant The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE HOMILY

People sit.

*The homily is delivered from the pulpit,
lasting 10-12 minutes.*

THE APOSTLES' CREED

*People stand as able.
Officiant leads from the pulpit.*

Officiant Finalized in the eighth century, the Apostles' Creed has roots as far back as the first and second centuries. Let us recite it together, grounding our faith in the tradition and sound doctrine of the undivided Church and joining in spirit more than 1,900 years of our covenantal brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

All I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

People kneel or sit as able.

Officiant Let us pray for our stewardship of the Church and the world.
Reader leads prayers from the lectern.

Reader 1 Direct the leaders of your Church, of this country, of all nations, and all those whom you have placed in positions of authority.
Father, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 1 Incline the hearts of those of us whom you have blessed financially away from selfish greed and pleasure, so we may humbly serve those in need.
Christ, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 1 Give us the wisdom and will to conserve the good earth that you have given us and to use its resources rightly to your honor and glory.
Spirit, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 1 Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory to the world.
Blessed Trinity, in your mercy...

All Hear our prayer.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

INFORMAL PRAYERS

Officiant Let us come before the Lord with our thanksgivings and lament, petitions and praise, for ourselves and for others.

A short time of casual sharing and praying.

Prayers should be relatively concise.

Prayers of thanksgiving, lament, and praise are encouraged in addition to petitions.

Officiant Lord, please answer these prayers according to your perfect will.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

*People remain kneeling or sitting.
Officiant leads from behind the table.*

Officiant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

15 seconds of silent reflection.

All Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.

*Lay persons should not use the Sign of the Cross
during the Declaration of Forgiveness.*

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

All Amen.

THE PEACE

People stand as able.

Officiant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

*A brief time of passing the peace with cheer.
Please make sure to greet any online participants.*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CONSECRATED ELEMENTS

People remain standing.

Officiant Look with kindness on your people gathered here before you. Through your goodness we have these gifts, which the good earth has given and human hands have made. By grace we receive this offering of bread and wine, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was consecrated by Fr. Sean of St. Isidore Episcopal Church, so that we might share in these holy gifts.

People We who are many are one Body, because we all share one bread, one cup.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them up to the Lord.

Officiant Let us give thanks for all of God's gifts in our lives.

Reader leads prayers from the lectern.

Reader 2 For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea, for your continued care of the world you have made, and for your power to work all things for the good of those who love you, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 2 For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends, for your knowledge of all our needs before we ask or imagine, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 2 For minds to think, hearts to love, and hands to serve, for health and strength to work and leisure to rest and play, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

Reader 2 For the many ways in which you demonstrate you are our God, sovereign over all that is, and that you love us dearly, we say...

All Thank you, Lord.

Brief silence of 3-5 seconds.

A EUCHARISTIC COLLECT

People stand or kneel as able.

*This collect comes from page 397
of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer for
“Communion under Special Circumstances.”*

Officiant Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood; Mercifully grant that we may thankfully receive it in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries changes us, transforms us, restores us, and brings us into eternal life; and who lives and reigns now and forever.

All Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Officiant Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, let us pray:

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 is the Kingdom,
 the power and the glory,
 forever and ever.
 Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

People stand.

*In the following,
omit the word “Alleluia” during Lent.*

Officiant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Officiant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All Communion at Slow Church is gluten-free.

*The Bread and the Cup are given
to the communicants with these words:*

*“The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven,
The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.”*

OR

*For those worshiping with us online or
for any reason do not wish to partake,
the Officiant may say a blessing
without the Sign of the Cross.*

Officiant May God guard and keep us,
this day and through the weeks to come.
May Jesus keep us in his peace
and the Holy Spirit guide us day by day.
Amen.

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Officiant leads from behind the table.

Officiant Let us pray.
All Almighty and everliving God,
 we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
 of the most precious Body and Blood
 of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
 and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
 that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
 and heirs of your eternal Kingdom.
 And now, Father, send us out
 to do the work you have given us to do,
 to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
 To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
 be honor and glory, now and forever.
 Amen.

*Singing bowl is rung three times
signifying the Trinitarian God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

DOXOLOGY

Typically sung in unison and led by the musician.

All Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 praise him, all creatures here below;
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

TRANSITION

Officiant leads from the pulpit.

Officiant Thank you for worshipping with us today.

After a 15-minute transition, we will continue our service with a communal, New Testament-style agape feast. This meal is not intended as a post-service potluck. As St. Isidore's Slow Church community, we are striving to bring together the best of The Episcopal Church's sacred high church ritual with the house church movement's restoration of early Christian hospitality. For us the Eucharist is not the end of our shared worship experience, but the blessing and beginning of our agape feast.

After the transition, we will continue the feast and move into the final spiritual movement of our worship: social justice. This is a time to not only laugh, cry, and love, but also for us to authentically wrestle with God and our faith. This time always centers around the question, "What does it mean to follow Jesus and pursue his Kingdom in every area of life and society?"

If you are participating online, we will continue to include you during the agape feast. We invite you to use the restroom, get some food, and rejoin us in 15 minutes.

If you are participating in-person, please bring the liturgy with you into the dining room or kitchen and ensure each table has a designated facilitator to lead the movement and moderate the discussion.

SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT 3: SOCIAL JUSTICE

*The pace quickens again,
It is now at a normal rate
with a sense of liveliness
to indicate a call to action.*

Facilitator The third spiritual movement of our worship: social justice.

MODERN EXHORTATION OF RACHEL HELD EVANS

Facilitator “We’re tired of the culture wars, tired of Christianity getting entangled with party politics and power... We don’t want to choose between science and religion or between our intellectual integrity and our faith. Instead, we long for our churches to be safe places to doubt, to ask questions, and to tell the truth, even when it’s uncomfortable. We want to talk about the tough stuff—biblical interpretation, religious pluralism, sexuality, racial reconciliation, and social justice—but without predetermined conclusions or simplistic answers.”

PRAYERS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Facilitator Heavenly Father, make us a people of love and truth.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Facilitator Incarnate Word, make us a people of grace and peace.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Facilitator Breath of God, make us a people of hope and reconciliation.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Facilitator Blessed Trinity, make us a people of empathy and justice.

People Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

A LITANY FOR THE KINGDOM

*In-person Readers rotate starting left of
Facilitator and continuing clockwise.*

*If you do not feel comfortable reading aloud,
simply say, "Pass."*

Facilitator O Lord, arise, help us to faithfully be your hands and feet in this world.

Reader We pray that our allegiance will be to your eternal Kingdom,
All for we are heavenly citizens, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

Reader We pray that your Church may transcend the barriers that divide us,
All for we are called to love those of every tribe, even our enemies.

Reader We pray for the Gospel to drive out all darkness and despair,
All for your Holy Spirit empowers us to be the light of the world.

Reader We pray for hearts of compassion and minds of understanding,
All for we have a Great High Priest who empathizes with our humanity.

Reader We pray that we will be ever-mindful of our history of oppression,
All for as we do unto the least of these so we do unto you.

Reader We pray for freedom from hypocrisy and judgmentalism,
All for we who have sinned must not cast the first stone.

Reader We pray for liberation from our self-righteous egos,
All for you reorient us to the compassionate spirit of the Law.

Reader We pray for those who have been judged by the color of their skin,
All for in you there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

Reader We pray for those who are immigrants and foreigners in this nation,
All for Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt for refuge.

Reader We pray for those who have been cast out for being true to themselves,
All for we are a people of faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Reader We pray for women called to serve in the Church and the world,
All for they stand in the legacy of Junia, who was known among the apostles.

Reader We pray for the conservation of the good earth you have given us,
All for you made us to be wise stewards of the natural world.

Reader We pray for strength to resist the powers and principalities of darkness,
All for you provide the full armor of God to stand against injustice.

Reader We pray for the end of senseless cycles of violence,
All for blessed are the peacemakers who beat swords into plowshares.

Reader We pray for the restoration of the common good in the public discourse,
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Reader We pray for discernment to avoid disinformation and intentional deception,
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Reader We pray for the wisdom to differentiate civil religion from The Way of Jesus,
All for we stand with the earliest Christ followers in declaring, “Jesus is Lord!”

Reader We pray for help in overcoming our thirst for wealth, power, and prestige,
All for even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.

Facilitator Almighty God, you created us in your own image: Grant us grace to contend
fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and help us to use
our freedom rightly in the establishment of justice in our communities and
among the nations, to the glory of your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our
Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever.
All Amen.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. GUIDELINES

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Officiant The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

Officiant May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

*From Easter through Pentecost,
add "Alleluia, alleluia."*

The worship service is now over,
but we ask everyone to help the Clarks
by cleaning up a bit before leaving.

No one is being rushed out the door.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

OPENING SONG

“Hallelujah, My Father”

by Tim Cullen

*Hallelujah, my Father,
for giving us your Son*

*Sending him into the world
to be given up for all*

*Knowing we would bruise him
and smite him from the earth*

*Hallelujah, my Father,
in his death is my birth*

*Hallelujah, my Father,
in his life is my life*

LITANY OF THE BROKEN

- Officiant Christ came for the sick and not the healthy. Therefore, let us pray for those whom the world has forsaken.
- Reader 1 O great God of Heaven, incline your ear to us, and hear our pleas.
People **We have erred and strayed from your paths.**
- Reader 2 Yet here we intercede for the broken among us,
People **for those who are in distress.**
- Reader 1 We ask that your Holy Spirit give comfort to those who are grieving,
People **for blessed are those who mourn.**
- Reader 2 We pray for those who are tired, worn out, and burned out on religion,
People **for your yolk is easy and your burden is light.**
- Reader 1 We pray for those who suffer from loneliness,
People **for you are with us always.**
- Reader 2 We pray for those who earnestly seek you yet feel distant from your presence,
People **for you are Emmanuel, God with us.**
- Reader 1 We pray for those who have been alienated from your Church,
People **for you would leave the ninety-nine for the one.**

Reader 2 We pray for those whose relationships have ended,
 People **for your love endures forever.**

Reader 1 We pray for those who are estranged from family,
 People **for what Joseph's brothers meant for harm, you intended for good.**

Reader 2 We pray for those who have been victims of abuse and persecution,
 People **for justice flows from your throne like streams of living water.**

Reader 1 We pray for those who have been afflicted with illnesses of the body,
 People **for you are the Great Physician.**

Reader 2 We pray for those who suffer from addiction,
 People **for you are the God who has delivered us out of Egypt.**

Reader 1 We pray for those who suffer from mental distress,
 People **for you, O Lord, are our peace.**

Reader 2 We pray for the poor and the oppressed,
 People **for the last shall be first and the first shall be last.**

Reader 1 We pray for those who struggle to believe,
 People **for blessed are the poor in spirit.**

Reader 2 We pray for those who labor with feelings of inadequacy,
 People **for you called ordinary people to extraordinary purposes.**

Reader 1 We pray for ourselves and all others,
 People **for we have strayed away from you, and the road is dark.**

Reader 2 We ask your forgiveness for when our brokenness has harmed others,
 People **for you restored Peter after his three denials.**

Reader 1 May we partake in your divine nature,
 People **for you have granted us fruit from the tree of life.**

Officiant Grant these petitions, O Lord, as you see fit, in accordance with your Holy
 Scripture. We ask these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All **Amen.**

TAIZE SONG

“Bless the Lord”
by Jacques Berthier

*Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life*

SOLEMN COLLECT

Officiant Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death, and become heirs with him of everlasting life. We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.

INFORMAL PRAYERS & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant Let us come before the Lord with our thanksgivings and lament, petitions and praise, for ourselves and for others.

*A short time of casual sharing and praying.
Someone volunteers to pray after each request.*

Officiant Lord, please answer these prayers according to your perfect will.
Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, let us pray:

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 is the Kingdom,
the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

TAIZE SONG

“Jesus, Remember Me”

by Jacques Berthier

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Introduction

Reader 1 The Stations of the Cross, also known as the Way of the Cross or the Way of Sorrows, is a spiritual pilgrimage of empathy with Christ’s suffering. If you’ve ever walked into a Catholic or Episcopal church and seen 14 paintings or sculptures, they represent Jesus’ journey from the time he was sentenced to death until his body was laid in the tomb. If we allow ourselves to lower our guard and enter into this story, we can draw closer to Jesus as we meditate on the love poured out for us in his suffering and dying.

Tradition traces this ancient pilgrimage back to Mary, when she made her own journey retracing her Son’s last steps. Mary’s reflection on the events and encounters of Jesus on his way to Calvary is known as the *Via Dolorosa*, or the Sorrowful Way. While this pilgrimage has its roots that date back centuries, there is a depth and power to it that still resonates with us today. The movements of this pilgrimage remind us that we are not bystanders to an historical event, but are called by God to find ourselves in the story.

Can you see yourself as Simon? Do you relate to Veronica? Do you ever feel crushed by the weight of your own struggles? Do you share Jesus’ feelings of being abandoned by God? Wherever you see yourself in this story, whatever characters speak to your spirit, reflecting on the Stations of the Cross can help us understand that we are never alone. Whether you’re in a season of hope or despair, joy or sorrow, peace or fear, Jesus is there—with a love so strong it endured the burden of the Cross.

Station I

Reader 1 Station I: Jesus Condemned.

Jesus, you stand all alone before Pilate as an innocent man. Nobody speaks up for you. Nobody helps defend you. You devoted your entire life to sacrificially helping others, listening to the smallest ones, caring for those who were ignored by others. They don't seem to remember that as they condemn you to a violent death upon a cross.

Reader 2 Questioned, accused, bound.
An innocent man condemned.
Crowded, but alone.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station II

Reader 1 Station II: Jesus Carries the Cross.

Jesus, your body is mangled. After being beaten and whipped, you accept your cross. You carry it through the dusty streets of Jerusalem, knowing it will only end in your death. You know it won't be easy, but you accept this burden and carry it with loving purpose. For it is not merely a wooden cross; it is all the brokenness, violence, hatred, and prejudice you've come to heal. Carrying this cross is your ultimate act of grace.

Reader 2 Bruised, bloodied, spit on.
Burden of sin accepted.
Heart trembles, death looms.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: “Stay with Me”

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station III

Reader 1 Station III: The First Fall.

Jesus, the cross you have been carrying is too heavy. The fatigue is setting in. You are becoming weak and are almost ready to faint. A jolt of panic takes hold when you lose control and gravity takes over. The earth slams the breath from your lungs. A second later the weight of the cross falls onto your already battered body. Nobody seems to want to help you. The angry soldiers are interested in getting home, so they yell at you and try to get you up and moving again. Out of love you pick up the cross again.

Reader 2 Weight crushes, heart pounds.
Labored breath.
Legs shake and give out.
Bone hits stone, pain sears.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: “Stay with Me”

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station IV

Reader 1 Station IV: Jesus Meets His Mother.

Jesus, you feel so alone with all those people yelling and screaming at you. You don't like the words they are saying about you, and you look for a friendly face in the crowd. You see your mother. Mary feels for her Son. She is suffering with you. She can't make the hurting stop, but it helps to see that she is on your side. She understands and cares. In this moment, her compassion is enough to help you continue.

Reader 2 Sorrow overwhelms.
 Hearts are pierced by bloodied thorns.
 Love strengthens resolve.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station V

Reader 1 Station V: Called into Service.

Jesus, the soldiers are becoming impatient. This is taking longer than they wanted it to. They are afraid you won't make it to the hill where you will be crucified. As you grow weaker, they grab a man out of the crowd and make him help carry your cross. Simon was just watching you—shocked that a man beaten so badly could even stand up—but all of a sudden he is helping you carry your cross. He is sharing your burden.

Reader 2 Call out from the crowd.
Dissonance to harmony.
Pain lifted, weight shared.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: “Stay with Me”

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station VI

Reader 1 Station VI: Veronica’s Compassion.

Jesus, the masses are turning their gaze away from you. The sight is too much and they are fearful for their own lives if they do something to intervene. Suddenly a woman comes out of the crowd. Her name is Veronica. You can see how she cares for you as she takes a cloth and begins to wipe your face. The blood, sweat, and dirt imprints your face on the cloth. She can’t do much, but she offers what little help she can.

Reader 2 Blood washed, love remains.
Compassion freely given.
Behold, His image.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: “Stay with Me”

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station VII

Reader 1 Station VII: The Second Fall.

Jesus, the cross is growing heavier and heavier. Sweat dripping from your brow, blood spilling from your gashes, and the cross draining of all your strength, you fall face down a second time. It is becoming more difficult to get up, but somehow you find the energy to continue. You struggle to your feet and begin walking again. Somehow you overcome the temptation to give up right there. Your sacrifice is not yet finished.

Reader 2 Faith dims, so alone.
Gravity pulls like a stone.
Must I rise? Can I?

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station VIII

Reader 1 Station VIII: Serving the Women.

Jesus, as you carry your cross you see a group of women along the road. As you pass by, you see they are heartbroken. You stop to spend a brief moment with them, but who is comforting whom? The women are encouraging you in the face of great suffering, but you are consoling them in their grief. You have been abandoned by your friends and are in agonizing pain, yet even then you're mindful of the suffering of others. You comfort them and they strengthen you.

Reader 2 Caring eyes, tears fall.
Compassion freely flowing.
Strength comes through pain shared.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: “Stay with Me”

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station IX

Reader 1 Station IX: The Third Fall.

Jesus, your journey has been long. Your strength fails once more beneath the weight of the cross. You know this journey is coming to an end and your death is certain. Yet you struggle and struggle. One final time you reach deep within and summon the courage to climb back to your feet. How is it that you can continue when your broken body demands that you give up? How does your love continue to overcome your pain and exhaustion?

Reader 2 Falling again, crushed.
End is near, Father help me.
This cross is too great to bear.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: “Stay with Me”

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station X

Reader 1 Station X: Jesus Stripped.

Jesus, the soldiers notice you have one thing left of value. They remove your cloak and throw dice for it. Your wounds are torn open once again. You are naked and humiliated. Some in the crowd make fun of you. They taunt you by challenging you to perform a miracle. Others, still fighting a nagging thought that perhaps you are the Messiah, skeptically wonder if you will save yourself. This mob is full of hatred and cold, stone hearts.

Reader 2 Disrobed and laid bare.
Humiliated for all.
Sole possessions gone.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station XI

Reader 1 Station XI: Jesus Nailed to the Cross.

Jesus, you are stretched out on the cross you have carried so far. The soldiers take big nails and drive them through your flesh, pinning your hands and feet to the wood. You feel abandoned by the people you love so much. They seem to have gone mad. You have done nothing but good yet they brutally crucify you. You cry out to your Father, asking why you have been forsaken. Yet even there you minister to us, pray for us, and declare our forgiveness. How is such love possible?

Reader 2 Pounding agony.
Arms stretched wide.
Embrace empty.
Forsaken by God.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station XII

Reader 1 Station XII: Jesus' Death.

Jesus, after sipping some wine to aid your thirst you once and for all declare, "It is finished!" To the very end you are faithful. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." You breathe for the last time and bow your head in death. Adam's curse has been fulfilled. The day turns to night. The earth quakes. The Temple tapestry is torn in two. The dead are raised. "Truly, this was the Son of God!" exclaims a Roman centurion. You have emptied yourself unto death.

Reader 2 Darkness consumes all.
Body spent; veil torn in two.
Now, it is finished.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station XIII

Reader 1 Station XIII: Jesus' Body Taken Down.

Jesus, your suffering and pain are ended. The side of your emptied, lifeless body is pierced to ensure you really are dead. Your body is gently taken from the cross and put in the lap of your mother. The blood, sweat, and dirt wiped away. Finally your battered body is treated with the love you so richly deserve.

Reader 2 Lifeless, lifted down.
Wrapped by mercy.
Women watch and weep.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

Station XIV

Reader 1 Station XIV: Jesus' Body Entombed.

Jesus, your body is prepared for burial. Joseph gave you his own tomb. He laid your body there and rolled a large stone in front of it, then went home. Your suffering, the betrayal, the torture... It has all been swallowed in the darkness. What a sorrowful day it has been for so many people. All is quiet. Joy is lost. Our Messiah is dead.

Reader 2 Placed in the tomb.
Behind stone, darkness.
Descend to face accuser.
Blackness, lightless, death.

Reader 2 Lord Jesus,
All **Help us walk in your steps.**

Taizé meditation: "Stay with Me"

*Stay with me, remain here with me
Watch and pray, watch and pray*

60 seconds of silent reflection.

CLOSING SONG

"Were You There"
by an unknown, enslaved
19th century African-American

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Ooooooooooh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

*Were you there when the nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when the nailed him to the tree?
Ooooooooooh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when the nailed him to the tree?*

*Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Ooooooooooh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?*

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Ooooooooooh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*