

LITURGY OF THE EMPTY HANDS

The following Liturgy is designed to deviate only minimally from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as set out in Uniting Worship and other liturgical resources, to allow for the absence of bread and wine/juice – while retaining familiar foundations, in uncertain times...

Preparation for this liturgy may be made by telling the story of communities sharing the Lord's Supper without access to bread or wine/juice/water, due to scarcity or imprisonment, such as:

- *Thomas Pettepiece, as narrated by Alex Gondola, Jr, which can be accessed at: [http://www.yucaipamethodist.org/sermon -- August 19 2012.pdf](http://www.yucaipamethodist.org/sermon--August192012.pdf)*
- *Pavel Florensky, Russian mathematician and priest, exiled, imprisoned and eventually executed (in 1937) for his faith; reportedly sacrificing all of his own small ration of bread and water, to offer fellow inmates the Sacrament.*

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

THE PEACE

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

The people may exchange a sign of the peace by using a nod or hands-together 'namaste'-style gesture, with words such as 'Christ's peace be with you,' 'the peace of God' or simply 'Peace' or 'Shalom'.

HYMN/SONG

SETTING OF THE TABLE

During the hymn, empty plates or baskets and empty cups and (if used) jugs are brought to the table; or, being already in place, are uncovered.

And invitation to the Lord's table is given.

Any prayer of invitation or approach may be inserted from Uniting in Worship (or other resources, editing only for phrases such as 'this bread', 'this wine' etc)

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Any Great Prayer of Thanksgiving may be inserted from Uniting in Worship (or other resources).

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NARRATIVE OF INSTITUTION

The Narrative of Institution can be inserted from Uniting in Worship (or other resources). As a telling/reading/remembering of the narrative from Scripture, it need not verbally or visually reference any bread or cup actually present on the table. However, gestures (such as lifting the elements as they are mentioned) should be avoided.

ANAMNESIS (Remembrance)

And so we come to *this* table, to do as our Saviour commands, celebrating the redemption he has won for us.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

In this empty plate/basket [*lift and show*], we choose to see the world's hunger. We remember that millions of people, this day, lack bread for Communion, bread for breakfast, bread for life. We acknowledge that we ourselves hunger, this day, in ways that no earthly bread can satisfy.

Hospitable God, **meet us in our unmet hungers – and help us to put our abundance at the service of the poor.**

In this empty cup [*lift and show*], we choose to see the world's thirst. We remember that millions of people, this day, lack wine for Communion, fruit for juicing, water for life. We acknowledge that we ourselves thirst, this day, in ways that no earthly cup can quench.

Hospitable God, **meet us in our unmet thirsts – and help us to put our fullness at the service of the empty.**

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'
(Matthew 5:6)

In the name of Christ, Amen.

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EPICLESIS (Invocation)

Pour out the Holy Spirit on this empty plate/basket, this empty cup, that they may be for us – even in their emptiness – the body and blood of Christ.

Any continuing text of the Epiclesis Prayer may be inserted from Uniting in Worship or other resources, as desired: eg:

Make us one with him, one with each other, and one in ministry in the world, until at last we feast with him in the kingdom in its fullness.

OR

... so that we may take his Life into our lives, and be taken and blessed, broken and given for the world.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE 'BREAKING OF THE BREAD'

The minister mimes taking bread and breaking it, in full view of the people, in silence or saying any suitable sentence, eg:

It is Christ who is the bread of life,
Who satisfies the hungry heart.

The minister mimes pouring wine from jug to cup, or simply lifts the cup, in silence or saying any suitable sentence, eg:

It is Christ who is the cup of hope,
Who revives the thirsty.

The minister holds out the empty plate/basket and cup to the people, saying something like:

The gifts of God for the people of God.

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THE COMMUNION

The empty basket and cup are held out to each person who comes forward, with words such as:

Receive what you hunger for.

Receive what you thirst for.

People may mime taking and eating/drinking – or may simply pause in reflection.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*Any suitable prayer may be inserted from *Uniting in Worship* or other resources.*