

An Instructed Holy Eucharist

Processional Hymn

SPEAKER 1: Please be seated. We gather today for the Holy Eucharist, the central act of Christian worship for over 2000 years. Christians across the world and down through the ages have gathered, and are gathering, for what we are doing today: listening to the scriptures and praying, and then sharing the Risen Lord's mystical Body and Blood. In these simple acts, we enact the truths of our lives.

SPEAKER 2: *Eucharist* is a Greek word meaning *thanksgiving*. It is one of the oldest names for this form of Christian worship. Other names for this service include: the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, the Mass and the Divine Liturgy.

SPEAKER 3: In a way, our Eucharist is like a Thanksgiving dinner at the family table. The family of Christ Jesus gathers at his table to celebrate, to tell family stories, to spend time together, to break bread and eat, to share as a family our present life with its joys and sorrows, and to look forward to the future.

SPEAKER 4: It cannot be stressed enough: **the Holy Eucharist is not a performance to be watched.** The Greek word what we do together, *liturgy*, means *the work of the people*. Together with God the Father, Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we make it happen.

SPEAKER 5: The Eucharist makes us a powerful offer: if we are willing to enter into the words, the music, the sharing of the sacramental meal, we will be drawn into the center of life. If we deeply involve ourselves in what is happening, we will be moved, and maybe changed, and we will go out afterward in some way different than the way we came in.

SPEAKER 6: The Eucharist should be celebrated with joy. If there is no delight in all this, we are missing the point. Often we are too serious, too rigid, too cold with one another, and with God. Something VERY good has been done for us in Christ Jesus, and a great meal is spread for us. So, we should sing out the hymns with joy, and speak the prayers boldly.

SPEAKER 1: The Holy Eucharist consists of two parts. The first called the **Word of God** focuses on listening to God through Holy Scripture. The flow of God's Spirit during this portion of our worship is that of God reaching toward us. We began with a hymn of praise, opening our lives to the One who made and loves us. Now we will continue with an ancient greeting, "Blessed be God"...and a prayer, called the Collect for Purity that is based on Psalm 51 and sums up our worship: that God knows our hearts, and we stand in need of cleansing by the Holy Spirit to worship fully. We will then sing an ancient Christian hymn, the Gloria in Excelsis Deo, whose words remind

us of the song of the angels at Jesus' birth. Then we pray the Collect of the Day, a prayer that gathers, or collects our thoughts for this day in the Church year. Now please stand.

Opening Acclamation, Collect for Purity, Gloria and Collect of the Day

SPEAKER 2: Please be seated. We next enter the central part of the Liturgy, or Service of the Word. The reading of passages from the Old Testament and Psalms has its roots in worship in Jewish synagogues and the Gospels record that Jesus himself stood on occasion and read from the Law or the Prophets. Our first two readings come from the Hebrew Scriptures. We commonly call them the Old Testament, but the words Hebrew Scripture is more respectful of our spiritual roots, and is what Jesus himself studied.

SPEAKER 3: The next two readings that we hear come to us from the New Testament. The first one of these today is from one of the letters of Paul. Then we sing a hymn, and hear a passage from the Gospel recounting Jesus' life and teaching. The Gospel Acclamation is way of expressing joy for the gift of the Holy Word, and it has a practical use – so that we don't have silence when Pastor and acolytes are walking. We stand for the Gospel reading as an expression of attention, respect and reverence for the Lord. Christ comes to us, we believe, as the words of Scripture are read, and as they are explored in the sermon.

SPEAKER 4: The purpose of the sermon is to take what we have heard in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospel, and to apply its meaning for this family of Christians, in this place, for this day. The task of the sermon is to connect the Christ Jesus whom we meet here with the Christ Jesus who is meeting us at our breakfast table, in the daily news, in our work and in our schools. Today's sermon will be just a few short words from Pastor Heidi. Now we will continue with the readings.

First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, Gradual Hymn, Holy Gospel, Sermon

SPEAKER 5: The Nicene Creed is our common affirmation of faith. We recite the Creed at this point in the service as a response to God's call to us in both the readings and sermon. In Latin, the word *Credo* means, "*I believe*". It was composed in 321 in the Common Era by the first worldwide conference of Christians. It says who we are by binding us to the historic Christian faith. Each of the three paragraphs is dedicated to One Person of the Holy Trinity. It states what we as a Church believe, even as our individual understandings may grow and change over the years.

SPEAKER 6: After the Creed comes the Prayers of the People, when we express to God our care and concern for the needs of the world, as well as our particular concerns. We pray for those whose needs you have made known to the Church.

SPEAKER 1: Following the Prayers is the Confession. It is the ultimate prayer for God’s forgiveness and mercy for ourselves. We confess all together, and admit to God that our lives have not always been filled with kindness, respect, and good thoughts and actions. Please use the time between the call to confession and the beginning of the prayer to consciously and deliberately name in your heart how you have sinned against God and your neighbor.

SPEAKER 2: The declaration of forgiveness and absolution leads naturally to what follows: the exchange of peace. This ancient greeting of peace to each other dates back to the Church’s earliest celebration of the Eucharist. Through it we are invited to express our unity and reconciliation with one another in Christ. In so doing we acknowledge Christ in those around us. Let us now stand and say together the Nicene Creed.

Creed, Prayers, Confession, Peace, Announcements, Offertory Hymn, Doxology

SPEAKER 3: We now enter the second part of our liturgy called the **Holy Communion**. The flow of the energy of God’s Spirit is to feed us at the banquet table. This is the drama at the heart of life. We recall and give thanks for the event that gives life to us all – Christ Jesus’ giving of himself, even to death on the Cross, so that we might open ourselves to God’s love and find real life as we allow Christ’s life to shape our lives.

SPEAKER 4: We began with the Offertory, during which our gifts of money are collected, and the bread and wine are brought forward. The money is a tangible sign of our daily work; it represents the first fruits of our labor. We give back to God in gratitude for what we have already been given.

SPEAKER 5: The bread and wine are the products of both God’s bounty in nature and the work of human labor. All of them placed on the altar are symbols of our offering all of our lives to Christ our Lord. St. Augustine once wrote, “See that bread and wine? That is you. You are there on the altar.” Just as the sacramental bread and wine become the mystical body and blood of the Risen Lord, so we in this Eucharist, ordinary as we are, become Christ’s Body to feed the world.

SPEAKER 6: As we enter into this meal, we are made one with Christians around the world – in Russia, India, China, Brazil, the United States and Rwanda, just to name a few. We experience here and now the hope of the world – a Kingdom, a place, where no one goes hungry, where all are accepted and forgiven and gathered at the banquet table. In short, we experience what life is for, what life could be, and what by the grace of God, life will be.

SPEAKER 1: Now we will hear the words, “Lift up your hearts,” as our feast begins, and Pastor Heidi really means it. We don’t want to just be here in this building but lifted up and out to where God is. A special prayer for the season is prayed, and then we sing the Sanctus, the song of the cherubim sung around the throne of God, “Holy,

Holy, Holy Lord...”. With these words, we acknowledge that we are now passing into the deepest dimension of our lives as we draw toward the Lord’s table.

SPEAKER 2: Our prayer recalls Jesus’ Last Supper: “in the night in which he was betrayed,” Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. Here are the four actions of Communion: taking.... giving thanks.... breaking the bread.... and sharing.... in Communion.

SPEAKER 3: We are now at the very one still point of our turning world – God’s love for us in giving us Christ Jesus and through him new life. Christ our Passover Lamb is sacrificed for us. Now let us keep the feast. Please stand for the Great Thanksgiving.

The Great Thanksgiving, Lord’s Prayer

SPEAKER 4: Following the Lord’s Prayer, Pastor Heidi breaks the bread so that we can share it and sharing in it, partake of Christ together. The fraction anthem is sung so that our attention is drawn to Christ who was broken. His brokenness, and our brokenness leads us to new life through our communion with Christ. The preparation is now complete. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus is truly present. It is time for all of us to come to the Lord’s table for the feast of life.

SPEAKER 5: We come forward bringing ourselves, our busy, happy, confusing, difficult lives. And we are fed the Risen Lord’s very self. Love welcomes us, receives us, heals us, and fills us with the life that will never end.

Fraction, Communion, Communion Hymns

SPEAKER 6: The final part of the Eucharist is very short for a reason. We should not plan to stay here. We now have work to do. We say the Post-Communion prayer, we receive a blessing and we are dismissed. We have been fed by the Risen Lord. We have been made one with Him and each other. Now we are sent out into the world, to be Christ to those around us and to serve the Lord. “Become what you eat,” St. Augustine said. And so we take the love and peace we have received out to do our part for the healing of our world. Please stand or kneel for our prayer.

Post Communion Prayer, Blessing, Final Hymn and Dismissal