



# Neighborhood Perch Church

Sundays around Cabarrus County

*This service is designed for use by a small gathering of God's people outside of the assembly of the full community. It draws from the Eucharistic tradition, but it is not a sacramental meal. All Christians are called to bless, and this includes blessings of food and drink shared and the people gathered. The people assemble with greetings and conversation. Candles are lit by individuals as they arrive, accompanied by a moment of silent prayer. One person acts as the leader to keep the flow of the worship moving. Prayers and readings are divided among the rest of the group.*

*The leader opens with Call to Worship*

## **Call to Worship**

*One* I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. – 1 John 5:13

## **Opening Prayer**

*An appropriate prayer is offered to set the tone for worship. Collects from The Book of Common Prayer, especially the collect appointed for the day, are always appropriate.*

## **Music Offering**

*Please feel free to hum along! Singing in a mask is discouraged by health officials due to concerns for higher CO2 rebreathing when singing.*

## **The First Reading:**

### **Acts 1:1-11**

*One* In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs,

appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.

"This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

## **The Second Reading:**

### **Luke 24:44-53**

*One* Jesus said to his disciples, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

## Teaching

*In small groups of approximately three, remaining at appropriate physical distance, choose questions to discuss for approximately twenty minutes.*

- What does it mean to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ today?
- How is God nudging us out of our comfort zones so that we may use our gifts in the service of the Gospel?
- What does it mean to cultivate resurrection hope while also acknowledging the reality of grief? Can both be true?
- Jesus' final words to his disciples are a prayer. Jesus prays that they will have wisdom, that they will be protected, and that they would always stay near to truth.
- What does it mean to you that Jesus prays for you?
- As citizens of the Kingdom, how are we called to respond to

difficult times?

- What do we learn about what Jesus valued by the way he spent his final days?

## Prayer of Blessing

*Before leaving your small groups, standing and remaining at appropriate physical distance, spend approximately five minutes praying for one another in turn. Begin by asking what each person would like prayers for and then have the other members of the group lift them to God.*

## Prayers of the People

*The whole group gathers for prayer. Prayers may be formal and prepared ahead of time, or come forth from the group at the time of worship.*

*Prayers are always offered for:*

- *The Universal Church, its members, and its mission*
- *The Nation and all in authority*
- *The welfare of the world*
- *The concerns of the local community*
- *Those who suffer and those in any trouble*
- *Those who have died*

*One* As we celebrate the ascension of Christ, let us pray with amazement, wonder, awe, and astonishment. Joining Christ who intercedes for all the world

before God, let us offer our prayers to God, saying: O God of wonder, *hear our prayer.*

O God, we stand amazed; for Christ ascended from the earth in order to be everywhere at once. We are in awe; for in leaving, Jesus has not left us alone. We thank you, O God, for the life of your Son. Turn our eyes continually to see, to gaze with wonder at your miraculous ways. *Silence.*

O God of wonder,  
*All* **Hear our prayer.**

*One* Turn the eyes of ordinary people, young and old, poor and rich, to see signs of Jesus. Show us everywhere the signs of Jesus, who is raised up and giving freedom and working power and justice. *Silence.*

O God of wonder,  
*All* **Hear our prayer.**

*One* Turn the eyes of your Church to see the poor places in which Christ now dwells. Help us to see the body of Christ, wounded and yet bright with the light of the Spirit. *Silence.*

O God of wonder,  
*All* **Hear our prayer.**

*One* Turn the eyes of the leaders of nations to envision a new world in which peace and harmony reign. Turn the eyes of all in power to see the oppressed and the needy. For all who live by your inner sight, we give thanks. For more such people to lead the peoples, we pray. *Silence.*

O God of wonder,  
*All* **Hear our prayer.**

*One* Turn the eyes of all gathered here beyond this place. Help us to look toward our glorified Lord, and then to look back anew. *Silence.*

O God of wonder,  
*All* **Hear our prayer.**

## **Confession**

*One* Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

*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.**

*One* 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. **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*All* **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

### **Blessing of the Meal**

*This portion of the service follows the shape of the Last Supper, and therefore may sound familiar and much like the Eucharist. However the elements are not consecrated, they are blessed, something all Christians are called to do. In times of pandemic, each person brings their own bread and wine. It is the time of prayer together that is shared, not the food.*

*Begin by having the person who will lead the prayer over the bread to invite each person to make ready the food they brought. When all are ready, the prayers are offered.*

*One* On the last night that Jesus gathered with his friends he took bread and he blessed it and shared it with his friends, for God who loves us, feeds us. As God's people ate manna in the wilderness and were satisfied, so we share this bread with Christ, and with one another. May it be for us bread from heaven, strength for our bodies, balm for our souls, and may it empower us to be Christ's body in this world. *Silence.*

*One* On the last night that Jesus gathered with his friends, he took wine and he blessed it and shared it with them. God who made us delights in us, and gives us good gifts to delight our tongues, and give joy to our souls. As Jesus offered the Samaritan woman water that would not fail, so Jesus offers us the same. May this wine be for us the holy drink of heaven, and may quench the thirst of our souls.

*All* **Holy and life-giving God, we thank you for the bounty of your Creation laid before us. We ask you to bless it, that it may be to us a holy**

**meal. We give thanks for all those who labored so that it might sustain us. Through it may you give us the strength to be your good stewards; to care and tend your creation, and to care especially for our siblings – all the people of this world. We ask these things by the grace of Jesus Christ and in power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*This service includes the work of The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, The Rev. Josephine Robertson, All Saints Episcopal Church, Bellevue, WA and Renew Community House Church.*

*The gathered join in eating. As this requires removing mask, care must be taken to ensure proper physical distancing continues. Music may be appropriate.*

## **Music Offering During the Meal**

*Please feel free to hum along!*

## **Sending Blessing**

*One person offers a blessing on the group gathered as they are sent into the world to do the work God has given each to do.*

*All*    **Amen.**

*One*    Go in peace to love and serve the  
          Lord

*All*    **Amen.**