



# 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* For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. – 1 John 5:3-4

## **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 10:44-48**

*One* While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can

anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

## **The Second Reading:**

### **John 15:9-17**

*One* Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you

these commands so that you may love one another."

## **Teaching**

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

This lesson from Acts concludes the story of Peter and Cornelius. Cornelius, a devout centurion living in Caesarea, was bidden by God to find Peter in Joppa where he was residing with Simon the tanner. It was in this house that Peter had the dream challenging his views of what foods were clean. Directed by God to go with Cornelius' people to Caesarea, Peter discovers that God has been acting in and through this surprising person, a Gentile centurion. Peter begins to preach and while he is speaking that the Holy Spirit shows up, poured out even on the Gentiles in the crowd. Peter realizes that baptism cannot be withheld from them, for the Holy Spirit had already been received.

- This is a story of two lives that cross unexpectedly by the guidance and call of God resulting in a surprising conclusion for all those involved. When has your life crossed

unexpectedly with someone that resulted in surprising blessing?

- How is God challenging us to grow right now?
- What are we withholding that God invites us to extend?
- How has the Holy Spirit brought you a surprising lesson? What was the lesson?
- The reading from John comes from the end of the last meal Jesus shares with his disciples. What might change if we understand ourselves to be friends of God?
- How is our joy complete when we live abiding in Christ's love? What does it mean to have Christ's joy within us?
- What conditions does Jesus give for receiving whatever we ask of the Father in prayer?

## **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*

*Here is a prayer modified from "Prayers of the People from Youth Sunday," St Luke's Episcopal Church, Jackson, TN*

*One Holy God, We thank you for all of the days of our lives, especially for the days you bring us together as a family of faith.*

We thank you for opportunities we are given to grow closer to you as a youth group and as a church.

We also thank you for the people that have been placed in our lives to help us grow into the kind of people we are called to be – our adult youth leaders and Sunday School teachers, our parents, and our teachers in school.

Holy God, we lift up our prayers to you for ourselves, our friends, our community, the Universal Church and our world: For our families – brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, grandparents, godparents and our pets, for friends both new and old, and all who are in need of an extra helping of your grace.

For us to be better stewards of your creation and for the end of pollution. For those youth in the juvenile justice system, that they may find hope and healing and lead productive lives.

Loving Lord, we lift up to you all those who are sick or suffering: For those who live with cancer, addiction, autism, depression, Parkinson's and loneliness, and all of those with physical afflictions.

For those worrying over the health of their loved ones. For every name lifted as a prayer request, may they know your mercy. For those grieving the loss of a loved one.

God, we lift up to you those around the world who do not have enough –  
enough food,  
enough access to healthcare,  
enough peace,  
enough love,  
enough joy.

We pray for those looking for work.

We pray for peace on earth: For all who live under the threat of war and for victims of war everywhere. We pray for the men and women who serve our country. We pray for those impacted by violence – for the perpetrators and their victims and all touched by the ripples created by violence. We pray for our world and her leaders; may they make decisions out of love for all of your people.

May we know you are with us, not just in this space but everywhere and always.

*All* **Amen.**

## 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.**

*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.**

*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.*