

## **Prelude**

## **Lighting the Candles**

## **Special Music**

### **Call To Worship**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **Call to Prayer**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,

always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

**You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.**

**Silent Prayer:** Ask Our Father to bring to your heart and mind memories of where you have seen an act of mercy, unity, or unconditional love transforming: Our Community; Your Family; Your Life.

### **Call to Confession**

**When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.**

**You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,**

**and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day**

**when justice shall roll down like waters**

**and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,**

**when nation shall not lift up sword against nation,**

**neither shall they learn war anymore.**

**Silent Confession:** The Holy Spirit “leads us not into temptation...”. The Holy Spirit leads us to awareness of our many temptations. Ask the Father to bring to your heart and mind moments you suffered shame, guilt, or blame. Also ask the Father the names of the people you shamed, judged, or blamed. Offer these memories to God praying, “Father, I give you the spaces in my heart and mind occupied by these thoughts and feeling. This I give in the name of Christ.

### **Call to Unity of Heaven and Earth**

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:  
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.

***Proclamation of the Good News of Christ***

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.  
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
and to announce that the time had come  
when you would save your people.

**Special Music**

**Hear the Word:** Luke 23:32-46

**The Sermon/Homily/Mediation:** *Mercy: The Fruit of the Cross.*

Fear never does anything new. Fear always fights. It runs the same old race. It is trapped on a never ending wheel that goes around and around in circles. Jesus asks, Why are you afraid? It is lord until we answer.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Genesis 1:31 What happened to our eyes and ears? God sees everything as Good. We see Good and Evil. I hear a reason to change. How about you? Unfortunately we insist that God see things our way. Getting it right and good creates a lot of fear.

Fear of right and wrong is a clear sign that Jesus sees us sitting beneath the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan, the serpent who tempted Adam and Eve, is also the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is the unseen spiritual force that tempts us to judge. Satans convinces us to be god rather than reflect God's image. The one to whom we listen, repeat, and act is lord of our life.

What God sees is very good. Satan tempts us to call God into question. The judge see self as Good and those who fail to measure up as evil. It is hard to accept the Way to Truth when the Lie lords your life!

To hear the Tempter just listen to our questions. Did God create evil? How can God be Good if God allows... Friends sin begins with our hearing. The actions we judge to be sin are symptoms of the health of our souls. The symptoms turn this world into a divided, hostile, lonely place. It's just as Rob Thomas sings, "But I'm lonely now, and I don't know how. To get it back to good" We who sit beneath the tree of knowledge of good and evil don't know how to get it back to good, much less "very good."

Knowledge also teaches application. But first we must drop the judgement.

I am not certain about the “it” of which Thomas sings. But I applaud his confession. He confesses, “I do not know how.” Change begins when we reach the end of self, and hunger for grace filled relationships. The end of self is humility who proclaims, “I do not know...how. I do not know how to get it back to Good. Knowledge never get us back to good. Holy Spirit led experiences of God’s mercy, grace, and love restores us to God’s image. Christianity thrives where people practice mercy, grace, and love in the presence of neighbors suffering shame, guilt, and blame.

When we reach the end of self we find that we have long been lonely. What a revelation! What a blessing! The Holy Spirit leads us to this blessed revelation. We are lonely because we continue to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. Church, Satan is bound in the prison of hell. We, however, continue to write the memory of his evil deception on one another’s hearts, souls, and minds. So...how do we get it back to Good? How do we return to reflect the image of God? The answer is to be led by the same Spirit that was in Christ Jesus.

Before we look at the image of God reflected by Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary let's look at our selfish, defiant, self. Look and listen to the voice of evil that makes self look good at the expense of our neighbor.

It is not my fault. (Blame)

Leave me alone. I will do it myself. (Selfishness says, my will be done. Moreover, I do not need you to accomplish it. Loneliness is the fruit of our selfish will!)

If you loved me, you would do what I say. (To get my will done, I will guilt you into it.)

If you loved me, you would fix \_\_\_\_\_. (Same as above.)

If you really believed in God you would never do it again. (shame)

I am unworthy. (The unified voice of shame, guilt, and blame. Utter loneliness. The essence of Sin.)

The very root of sin lies in making what we know more important than being Who God created us to BE!. God reveals the image we are created to reflect through Jesus Christ on the Cross. Let’s listen to Jesus reflect the image of God as He speaks from the Cross.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. Luke 23:34 (Mercy)

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” Luke 23:43 (Grace)

Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Luke 23:46 (Faith in God’s unconditional Goodness)

If we want to change our lives to reflect the image of God we must practice doing the same things Jesus did on the cross.

Jesus met all judgement and condemnation with Mercy. (Luke 23:34)  
Mercy gives us eyes to see the Truth. God is Grace. Paradise is the place where loneliness is transformed into Communion with God and Neighbor. Paradise is the Kingdom of God on earth that reflects God's will in Heaven. Today is the day to be with Jesus in Paradise. Paradise is made of mercy and grace greater than all our sin. Abiding in God's Grace teaches us to pray in Jesus' Name. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit". Father, mercy and grace have taught me to commit good and evil into your hands.

What we know has the power to make us judges. Who we know has the power to make us neighbors.

What we know about our neighbor often leads to judgement. Charles Lippse told a story about a congregation who refused a clergy woman. Charles mercifully got the appointment changed. But first he asked the church leaders what they will do when one of their daughters or grand daughters answers God's call to parish ministry.

What will we do when a child we love marries a person born of a different race?

What will we do when one of our children comes out of the closet?

What will we do when one of our cherished friends becomes a victim of disease, sexism, divorce, adultery, or violence.

Satan will tempt us in every way to judge, condemn, and take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Will we become like Satan? Or will we let the Holy Spirit lead us to the cross. At the cross we change our focus, language, and actions. At the Cross we change from shame, guilt, and blame to mercy, grace, and love.

I suppose poverty, racism, sexism, divisions and disease will be with us always. But so is the same Spirit that was in Christ Jesus.

In the name of Christ I invite you to hear the change that takes place when we eat the fruit of the cross of Christ.

The judge cries, "Father forgive them they do not know what they are doing. The merciful gives witness to Jesus, "Truly I tell you, Today you will be with me in paradise. Come and See the truth. Living together in grace is greater than all our sin. The Grace filled community of faith prays, "Father, into your hands we commit our spirit. Yep the good and evil.

### **Receiving the Word**

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.

***Instructions: What word did God place upon your heart and mind in the hearing of the Word or the proclaimed message. Let this Word into the spaces you emptied in the above Prayer and Confession.***

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection  
you gave birth to your Church,  
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,  
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

***Instructions: Suffering is a Human creation. Suffering rises out of Shame, guilt, and blame. Afflictions are of the world. (disease, plagues, famine... )***

**The People pray: "Holy Spirit, lead Us not into the temptations of suffering but deliver us from such evil. Amen."**

At his ascension you exalted him  
to sit and reign with you at your right hand.

### **Call to Holy Communion:**

Instructions: The pastor directs persons' row by row to rise and move to a Communion Station. At Trinity we have Stained Glass Windows with wide sills. These windows are more than 10 feet apart. They surround the Church Building. We have tables in front of the large stained glass windows in Narthex 1 and space for a table in Narthex 2. We also have the kneeling rail where Stations will be set up at least 10 feet apart. Therefore we have 20 Stations. Ushers will sanitize each station after people take their seat. We will serve 20 people at a time until all have been served. Notice that when people receive Common they take off their mask while facing the Stained Glass windows which depict Christ.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,  
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

**"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."**

When the supper was over he took the cup,  
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

**"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."**

### **The Blessing**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

**Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,  
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.**

### **The Invitation to God's Table**

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**"Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again."**

### **The Benediction:**

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,  
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.  
Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever. Amen.

### **Postlude**