

AN EMERGENT EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

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Summary:

This worship service plan is designed around the centrality of the Eucharist and is non-sacramental. Please use songs according to CCLI guidelines.

Length: 9 pages

An Emergent Eucharistic Liturgy for a Modern (Non-Sacramental) Evangelical Fellowshipⁱ

*Come, Let us sing for joy to the Lord;
Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
And extol him with music and song.
For the Lord is the great God,
The great King above all gods.*

*Come let us bow down in worship,
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
For he is our God,
And we are the people of his pasture...
(Psalm 95:1-3, 6-7)*

Call to Worship

We come together as a community of faith to worship a Holy God. God has done a great work in our lives, both individually, and in our community when we gather together. As we celebrate this Holy Eucharistⁱⁱ -- what St. Augustine called "the visible form of the invisible grace given us by God"-- may we remember that this is, in fact, a Holy moment.

Song : Holy Moment (M Redman)ⁱⁱⁱ

As we come today, we remind ourselves of what we do.
That these songs are not just songs, but signs of love for You.
This is a holy moment now, something of heaven touches earth
Voices of angels all resound- we join their song.

Come, come, come let us worship God
With our hands held high and our hearts bowed down.
We will run, run, run through Your gates, O God
With a shout of love, with a shout of love.

Lord, with confidence we come before Your Throne of Grace.
Not that we deserve to come, but You have paid the way.
You are the Holy King of all, heaven and earth are in Your hands.
All of the angels sing your song- we join them now.

Let this be a holy moment now
Let this be a holy moment now.

The Holy Eucharist, or communion that we celebrate is a work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God comes to us with his grace and because of his offering of grace, we are fully able to remember, and know in our hearts, the sacrifice made for us by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We express our faith to God and receive grace from God. Each are needed.

We are both spiritual and physical people and God meets us in our physical body with the physical elements of this bread and this wine. Sacraments, perhaps a term unfamiliar to our ears, are, in fact, God's body language to us, ^{iv} his creatures, who live in a physical world. Just as with the other times, when we refer to "body language" as showing a person's true intent, maybe even contradicting a visual or oral language, this "body language" of God shows his true intention for us. This sacrament, is joined with the revelation of God that we have received by his Word, and this union not only explains his love for us, but confirms it.

The Word tells us to examine our hearts as we prepare for communion. In 1 Corinthians 11:28-29, Paul reminds us we are experiencing a Holy Moment, and what our response should be:

Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. (1 Corinthians 11:28-29)

Does this mean only perfect, sinless saints of God are the intended recipients of this grace of God? Certainly not, for we do not partake of this communion because we are holy and pious, we partake because we are Followers of Jesus, often riddled by doubt and anxiety and anger, nearly fainting from, what Nancy Mairs^v calls, "severe hypoglycaemia of the soul". We need this connection with God to feed our souls as we strive, together as a community of Faith, to be Followers of Jesus.

The Holy Word of God tells us:

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:35, 37-39)*

Let us draw near to our Lord and Saviour as we sing, with our hearts and our voices, of his redeeming sacrifice for us. ^{vi}

Song : Once Again (M. Redman)

Jesus Christ, I think upon Your sacrifice
You became nothing, poured out to death
Many times I've wondered at your gift of life
I'm in that place once again
I'm in that place once again

And once again I look upon the cross where You died
I'm humbled by Your mercy and I'm broken inside
Once again I thank You
Once again I pour out my life.

Now You are exalted to the highest place
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow
But for now, I marvel at this saving grace
I'm full of praise once again
I'm full of praise once again

Thank you for the cross
Thank you for the cross
Thank you for the cross, my Friend

Song: How Deep the Father's Love for Me (S. Townsend)

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure.
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ

His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Song: Cleanse Me (J. Edwin Orr)

Search me, O God and know my heart today
Try me O Saviour, know my thoughts, I pray
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free

I praise thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin
Fulfill thy word and make me pure within
Fill me with fire where once I burned with shame;
Grant my desire to magnify Thy Name

Liturgy of Communion:^{vii}

(Leader stands behind the Communion Table and says)^{viii}

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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

People: 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.

Leader: 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.

Leader: When the Lord Jesus ascended, He promised to be with us always, in the power of Your Word and Holy Spirit.

Leader: 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.”

Leader: 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. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

So come^{ix} to the Table to receive this new covenant. As we come, let us remember that we **receive** communion, not **take** communion, for it is God who is offering His grace to us. All we must do, to experience this wonderful mystery of God, is to come, accept and receive.

Songs: *As the People gather
to the Table or to the altar, as desired,
to receive the elements and then return to their seats.*

Let Us Break Bread Together
Surrender (M. James)
Refiner’s Fire (B. Doerksen)

Leader: 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.

People: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, who have received 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.
By Your Spirit, make us one with Christ, and one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world.

People: Amen.

Leader: And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray;

All: Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
Forever and ever, Amen

Let us join together in song as we offer our thanks, and our love, to God.

Song of Response; I Will Offer Up My Life (M. Redman)

I will offer up my life
In spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love
As my worship to You
In surrender I must give my every part
Lord, receive the sacrifice
Of a broken heart

Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a Friend, to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
As a praise of Your name
For the things You have done?
Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart

You deserve my every breath
For You've paid the great cost
Giving up Your life to death
Even death on a cross
You took all my shame away
There defeated my sin
Opened up the gates of heaven
And have beckoned me in

Leader: As you depart this place and go into the world, remember to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength; and to love your neighbour as yourself. And as the Apostle Paul reminds us:

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:17).

Leader: We depart in faith.

People: **Trusting God to guide us through this week.**

Leader: We depart in hope.

People: **Knowing God holds the future in his hands.**

Leader: We depart in love.

People: **Serving others in the name of Christ.**

Leader: We depart in faith, in hope, and in love.

People: **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**Song of dismissal:
“I will Offer up my life” as an instrumental”**

ⁱ The “Modern” Church that I am choosing is the church of my Youth. It is a Church of the Nazarene, with a large percentage of 40-50 year olds, and a large group of teens. The congregation averages about 75. It is non-liturgical, but is quite familiar with the “responsive readings” format as part of the service. It would be non-sacramental in its theology, but accepts the concept of “means of Grace”, although does not use the terms ordinance or sacrament.

ⁱⁱ I believe the term “Eucharist” will be accepted if it is explained in concepts that are understandable. The commonly used term would be “Communion“, or “The Lord’s Supper”.

ⁱⁱⁱ Unsure whether it is necessary to provide publishing details for songs.

^{iv} Taken from Leonard J. Vander Zee. *Christ, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper: Recovering the Sacraments*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004.

^v as quoted in Vander Zee, 68.

^{vi} “Congregational singing” is an important way to learn in my church. The lyrics of a song are always very important. In an Emergent setting, this would be seen as part of the participatory liturgy.

^{vii} While the term “liturgy” would be unfamiliar in this Modern church, I think the benefit of comfort and of tradition in using the same “service” with each Lord’s Supper, would be welcomed and embraced.

^{viii} From *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, as quoted in Martin Thielen. *Ancient-Modern Worship: A Practical Guide to Blending Worship Styles*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000, 106.

^{ix} This would be a departure of practice for my church, as Communion was always received in the pews.