A Responsive Communion Liturgy

This liturgy is used annually at First Congregational Church of Malone, New York, during United Church of Christ Women’s Week. It is distinctive in how the entire congregation participates in praying and blessing the elements. The pastor presides at the table and, in the brief form, calls forth thanksgiving and praise from the people. The bread is broken and wine is poured at the end of the prayer.

The Communion Prayer

Pastor (standing behind the communion table):

Let us gather around the table with the offering of bread and drink upon it and the promise of the Living Christ among us. This is the welcome table of God where all who seek to be at peace with their neighbor and all who seek the mercy of God in Christ are embraced. Come, for we are invited in to this holy mystery. Come.

People: We are ready!

Pastor: Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. All who come to me shall not hunger, and all who believe in me shall never be thirsty.

People: We are hungry and thirsty. O Lamb of God, we come!

Pastor: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took his authority as the Christ and offered the bread in thanksgiving and said . . .

(The pastor lifts up the bread.)

People: “Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Pastor: In the same way, and by the same authority, Jesus offered the cup in thanksgiving and said,

(The pastor lifts up the cup.)

People: “Take, drink. This is my blood of the new covenant which is 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 pastor may hold hands, palms down, over bread and cup)

Pastor: Come, Holy Spirit. Come. Open our eyes to the mystery of Christ’s presence in these ordinary things in these our ordinary lives. May they be for us the very essence of the living Christ in our midst. Through the broken bread . . .

People: We participate in the Body of Christ.

Pastor: Through the cup of blessing . . .
People: We participate in the new life Christ gives.

(The pastor then breaks the bread and pours the cup. The pastor opens hands toward the people.)

Pastor: These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready!

**Sharing of the Elements**

(For Women's Week at Malone, the elements are distributed by women deacons to the congregation sitting in their pews. The congregation waits until all are served before consuming. The pastor says “Bread of Heaven” as a sign to take the bread, and “Cup of Blessing” as a sign to drink from the cups. Afterwards, the entire congregation is invited to pray the following in unison.)

**Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ, and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink. Thank you for feeding our hunger and relieving our thirst. Now send us into the world to do the work you have given us to do: to find the lost and lonely, to heal broken souls, to free prisoners, and make the powerful care. Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil, and to proclaim in all we say and do your good news in Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.