

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, rejoice in God, For God has refreshed the parched earth.

**All:** We praise you, O God.

Leader: Rejoice for the rain that falls by night, and soaks at once into the dry ground, causing half-dried-up roots to swell, and the deep cracks in the earth to close.

**All:** We praise you, O God.

Leader: Rejoice for the great drops that fall at midday; rejoice in the small streams, singing on their way from the hills down into the valleys, to make the rivers swell and fill the reservoirs and supply the cities and irrigation channels with water.

**All:** We praise you, O God.

Leader: For the ground, for rain, for seeds and tools, for strength in arms and backs, for the will to work and for creative minds.

**All:** We praise you, O God.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Holy Spirit, Life-Giver, who moved over the waters in the creation, who led your people through the waters of the Red Sea to liberation, and who comforted your exiled people by the waters of Babylon, draw us together as we gather in your name.

**All:** Creator God, we thank you for your love in all creation, especially for your gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life. We ask your blessing on this gathering.

Leader: As we come together from many places to mingle the waters of our experience and faith, may we find sustenance, insight and refreshment for the task of repairing our world.

**All:** Amen.

### OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God, you cause the rain to fall on the just and the unjust, the righteous and the unrighteous. Come as cool refreshment for fields parched by drought — or exploitation.

Come as parting waters for lives flooded by disaster — or greed. Come as justice rolling down like waters; as righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of mercy, hear our prayer.

When your desert people cried out to you in hunger and in thirst, you gave them bread from heaven and brought out water from the rock.

When the poor and needy seek sustenance and there is none; when their tongues are parched with thirst, you answer them:

“I, the God of Israel, will not forsake you!”

We — your people, too — hungry and thirsty for righteousness, cry out: “Do not forsake us!”

But your answer comes, confounding and convicting: “Do not forsake me!” you say.

“You, Lord?” we respond. “When did we see you?”

Then, like a feast spread before us, you reveal your fullness in our neighbor’s longing gaze.

In your mercy you have created enough for our neighbor and for us, except that we desire so much. In your mercy you show us that our unbridled desire is killing both of us. In your mercy, you show us the connection between our need for righteousness and our neighbor’s need for water.

Free us from our greed, O God of mercy.

Pound righteousness from our stony hearts — like water from a rock — that our neighbor may know no want; that our lives might once more be full.

Amen.

### PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

Leader: Listen for a word from God:

I, who whispered and worlds crept out of timeless tides;

I, who called and creation croaked back;

I, who breathed and nothingness emerged as abundant life;

I have heard your cry.

I receive your tears as ransom for your sin.

My kiss of forgiveness and welcome home shall moisten your lips to sing my praise.

You, whom I love, rejoice in my bounty.

Blossom like a well-watered garden:

that the world may know the Merciful God you serve;

that the world may sorrow no more.

This is the word of God.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

Amen.

#### OFFERING INVITATION

We come each week to this place to give thanks for the Abundant Life we enjoy in Jesus the Christ. We come each week, with checkbooks and crisp bills, shiny coins and offering envelopes that bear our names. The offering plate floats by, bearing our gifts along to some unfamiliar place; to someone waiting, wanting, wandering; to someone we will never meet. But this week — as we collect the Week of Compassion offering — I invite you to imagine the journey your offering will take. Every time you turn the tap for water to bathe, or drink, or wash your dishes . . . I invite you also to turn the tap that is your “stream of consciousness.” Be conscious of the lives that are saved because God touched your heart to give to this offering. I invite you to be aware that each life you touch is none other than Jesus himself. Then, may your Thanksgiving begin in earnest. Let us receive our offerings.

#### OFFERING PRAYER

(Use before or after offering)

God of all we are and have and will become, receive our offerings. Transform them by your grace into hope and salvation to all who thirst in body or spirit. Make them like a gentle rain on parched lands, so the world may see and believe your life-giving love endures forever.

Amen.

#### BENEDICTION

With the good news of God still moistening our mouths, let us go seek our salvation with the least of these.

May we be a well of hope to our thirsting neighbors; an oasis of opportunity to all we encounter.

Amen.

### BENEDICTION

May the God who shakes heaven and earth,

whom death could not contain,

who lives to disturb and heal us,

bless you with power to go forth

and proclaim the gospel.

Amen.

### HYMNS

(Numbers indicate the hymn number in The New Century Hymnal, The Pilgrim Press, 1995)

Crashing Waters of Creation (326)

For the Fruit of All Creation (425)

For the Healing of the Nations (576)

God of the Sparrow God of the Whale (32)

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending (565)

I've Got Peace Like a River (478)

Joys Are Flowing Like a River (284)

Let Justice Roll Like Streams/ Blessed Quietness (588)

Standing at the Future's Threshold (538)

Take My Gifts (562)

Through All the World, a Hungry Christ (578)

We Are Not Our Own (564)

We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky (563)

We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed (540)

When, Like the Woman At the Well (196)

Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed) (528)

You Walk Along Our Shoreline (504)

*Church World Service, One Great Hour of Sharing,*

*For congregational use*