

Matthew 25 Worship Service



Order of Worship

Opening Sentences

Jesus says: Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

See Matt. 5:3–12

**And blessed is the church
that serves with the love of God
to eradicate systemic poverty.**

Jesus says: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they will be filled.

**And blessed is the church
that trusts in the grace of Christ
to build congregational vitality.**

Jesus says: Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

**And blessed is the church
that seeks by the power of the Spirit
to dismantle structural racism.**

Blessed are you, O holy, triune God,
and blessed is your holy realm forever.

Gathering Prayer

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another's will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life's creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again
—Judy Chicago

Confession and Pardon

A voice is crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way of the Lord.

Matt. 3:3

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

**Merciful God, we confess that we have wandered
from your way of truth and life.**

**You call us to share all that we have
and work together for the common good,
but we hoard up treasures for ourselves
and deny others their daily bread.**

Systemic Poverty

**You call us to set the captives free
and seek justice for the oppressed,
but we live in fear of our neighbors
and hide ourselves from our own kin.**

Structural Racism

**You call us to walk in newness of life
and to be witnesses to the resurrection,
but we dwell in the valley of dry bones
and keep silent about your saving love.**

Congregational Vitality

**Forgive us, God of grace.
Set us free from sin, death and fear
so that we may serve you with gladness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Hymn:

Change My Heart, O God

Hymn #695

Sung in Spanish, Korean, and English

Hear the good news:
God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ,
we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer for Illumination

Speak to us, O God, with the voice of your Holy Spirit,
that we may know the way of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture

Matthew 25:31–46

Sermon

Seeing Jesus

The Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett

Litany of Commitment

Hymn:

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Hymn # 103

Sung in Korean

Jesus says: Repent,
for the realm of heaven has come near.

Matt. 4:17

I invite you, in the name of Christ,
to turn from what is evil and turn to what is good,
rejecting all that is contrary to the gospel
and embracing the vision of the Matthew 25 church.

Do you renounce
the evils of systemic poverty and economic exploitation?

We renounce them!

Will you devote yourself
to doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with your God?

We will, with God's help.

Do you renounce
the sins of structural racism and white supremacy?

We renounce them!

Will you devote yourself
to breaking down the walls of hostility
that separate us from one another?

We will, with God's help.

Do you renounce
the ways of fear, isolation and scarcity in the church?

We renounce them!

Will you devote yourself
to the church's teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

We will, with God's help.

Affirmation of Faith

A Brief Statement of Faith (excerpts)

We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives.**

Systemic Poverty

We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

**In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image
to live as one community.**

Structural Racism

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

**The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

Congregational Vitality

With believers in every time and place,
**we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God
in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Offering

Jesus says: The realm of heaven has come near.
Freely you have received; therefore, freely give.

Matt. 10:7–8

Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

Anthem

Jesus, Be with Us

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks and praise, O Lord:
You have created us in your own image.
You have claimed us as your beloved people.
You have called us to be a blessing for others.
Use the gifts of your good creation
and the works of our hands
to lift up the oppressed,
break down dividing walls,
and build up your church;
all in the name and for the sake
of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Hymn

When the Lord Redeems the Very Least

Hymn #852

Blessing and Charge

The God who was and is and is to come
is with us in Christ Jesus.
The blessing of the triune God
be with you all. **Alleluia!**

Matt. 1:23; 28:20

Jesus says: Remember, I am with you always,
to the end of the age. **Thanks be to God.**

A Choral Reading of Matthew 25:31–46 (New Revised Standard Version)

The reading is arranged for four voices (A, B, C, and D); alternately, the bold type may be spoken in unison by a group, perhaps divided into right- and left-hand sides. Note that Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person in this passage: Jesus is the Narrator and the figure of the King/Shepherd (or Son of Man), although this script assigns two different voices to those roles.

The highlighted words are read in multiple languages.

A Narrator (Jesus): ³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand,

B King/Shepherd: ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for **I was hungry** and you gave me food, **I was thirsty** and you gave me something to drink, **I was a stranger** and you welcomed me, ³⁶ **I was naked** and you gave me clothing, **I was sick** and you took care of me, **I was in prison** and you visited me.’

A Narrator (Jesus): ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him,

C **Sheep/Right Hand:** **‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’**

A Narrator (Jesus): ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them,

B King/Shepherd: ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

A Narrator (Jesus): ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand,

B King/Shepherd: ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for **I was hungry** and you gave me no food, **I was thirsty** and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ **I was a stranger** and you did not welcome me, **naked** and you did not give me clothing, **sick** and **in prison** and you did not visit me.’

A Narrator (Jesus): ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer,

D **Goats/Left Hand:** **‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’**

A Narrator (Jesus): ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them,

B King/Shepherd: ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

A Narrator (Jesus): ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

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