

A Liturgy for Unification Sunday
December 25, 2016
Unification Task Force

Call to Worship

We come to this place and time of worship as individual worshipers. We come from north, south, east and west. We come as young adults, children, widows, families, single people, employed, retired, and somewhere between. We come with diverse political and theological viewpoints. We come with our own unique perspectives on life and faith. We come separate but are made one body by the love of Jesus Christ. In Christ we are one today, tomorrow, and all the days of ahead. May this oneness be reflected in our worship today and in our lives in the coming days.

Call to Confession

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sin, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us offer our confessions to God.

Prayer of Confession (responsive)

We live in a broken and hurting world, Compassionate God.

Come and restore us, Reconciling God.

Greed, hate, power, jealousy, pride and anger are only a few of the behaviors that separate us from each other.

Come and renew us, Loving God.

We nurse old wounds, we refuse to consider a different point of view, we are afraid of those we don't know, we act as if we have the best and only way.

Come and heal us, Merciful God.

We succumb to the idea that things will never change, that situations are hopeless, that conflicts will never cease, that relationships will remain broken.

*But the good news is that God has the last word in our brokenness
and that word is Jesus.*

So, come, Lord Jesus, with your saving love and grace.

Come to save us from our sin. Come to save us from ourselves.

Come Lord Jesus to restore and mend broken lives, broken families, broken communities, and broken churches.

Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The good news is this—Jesus came into the world to save us—to save us from our divisions, our greed, our selfishness, our hatred, and our sins. This day we are saved to live our life in a new way—a life that reflects the restorative love of Jesus. Amen.

Song

They Will Know We are Christians by Our Love

Prayer for Illumination

Through your word, O Lord, open our hearts to hear you speak to us in a fresh way. Open us up to the message of your love and acceptance of all people. May the seeds of your word take root in our lives so that we might truly become part of your beloved community, which encompasses all your beloved children, wherever they may be. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Ephesians 4:11-1
- Colossians 3:13-14
- Galatians 3:26-28 I Corinthians 12:12-31

Children's Message

Supplies: A box of crayons—well-used, if possible (broken crayons will not be a problem)

Show the boxes of crayons to the children and ask them their favorite color and why. After the children have responded point out that almost all the colors were someone's favorite.

If all the crayon colors did not get "picked" make sure you talk about how that color could be used in a picture. Talk about what you might color with each crayon—blue for sky/bluebird, yellow for sun/daffodil, orange for pumpkin/racecar, green for grass/football field, brown for straw/field, purple for grapes/flower, black for night sky/whale, white for doves/rabbits.

There is a use for every color in the box, right? And how about those that don't have a sharp point—do they still color? Yes. How about the broken crayons—is all their color gone? No, of course not! People are just like this box of crayons. We all look different, we talk different, we think different, we play different—but we all have something special that only we can do—no one else. Maybe you are good at sports, maybe you are a singer, maybe you are the best listener in your class, or you tell really good jokes, maybe you have an extra sensitive heart. We are all different just like this box of crayons, and useful to God.

Let's pray: Thank you God for making each one of us unique and special. Help us to see that everyone you've created all around the world—and in our own neighborhoods have something special to offer our schools, our communities and churches. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Benediction

God has created all of us different for a reason.

Let us look for what the other people in our path have to offer the world.

Let us honor and respect who they are—beloved children of God.
Let us find ways to connect with others rather than focus upon the things
that separate us from each.
And as we go, may God the Creator,
Jesus our Redeemer,
and the Holy Spirit, our Sustainer and Guide, go with us. Amen.