

## Order of Worship

The APCE Annual Event, St. Louis, Missouri  
Thursday, January 25, 2024

### Gathering Music

#### Call to Worship

In the beginning, the Spirit of God swept over the water,  
and the River of Eden nourished the garden.

**Water has been part of our story even before our first breath.**

In the end, we will gather at the River of Life,  
surrounded by trees that will heal the nations.

**From birth to death to life beyond death, water carries us.**

Let us worship God,

**the One whom even the seas and the streams obey.**

### Music

#### Call to Confession

**Prayer of Confession** (inspired by *Liturgies from Below*)

**God of Living Water,**

**We confess the dryness of our lives:**

**the brittle words we have thought and spoken;**

**the relationships that are crumbling;**

**the arid perspectives that center on self;**

**the cracked and jagged edges of our world;**

**the burning sands of injustice;**

**the parched places within our own hearts.**

**Hear our confession, O Christ, and forgive us.**

**Rain down your mercy upon us.**

(Silent prayer)

#### Assurance of God's Grace

#### Sharing the Peace of Christ

May the peace and abundant life of Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

## **Musical Response**

### **Prayer for Illumination (unison)**

**Holy Spirit,  
Come like fresh morning dew,  
like rain after a drought,  
like a river running through our lives.  
We are thirsty – thirsty for you.  
May your Word drench us in new understanding  
and wash us in your grace.  
Amen.**

### **Scripture Reading - Isaiah 35**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of God, for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

**Rev. Melanie Marsh**

**Music**

**Invitation to the Table**

**The Great Thanksgiving**

**Words of Institution**

**Communion of the People**

**Prayer After Communion**

**For the gifts of this table, O God, we give you thanks.  
For the kindness you show in meeting us here, we give you thanks.**

**May all that we have received here  
strengthen us for the living of these days,  
and may we reflect the love we have found here,  
all the days of our lives.**

**Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People and Necrology**

(Following the reading of names for the Necrology.)

We give thanks for the promise of life in our Lord, who said,

**I am the resurrection and the life.**

We give thanks for the promise of the Gospel, which declares,

**Nothing can separate us from the love of God.**

We give thanks for the hope we hold in Jesus Christ, who promised,

**In my Father's house there are many rooms.**

We give thanks for the new day you have created for your children,

**when God will wipe away every tear,**

**and there will be no more mourning,**

**and no more crying,**

**and death will be no more.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**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;**

**and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Offering** You can use this QR code or the one on your table to give



### **Music**

## **Benediction**