Texts:  Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

Call to Worship

L: In the laughter of children,

  we hear the voice of the Gate of the Way,

  and find our way home.

P: In the lap of a parent,

  God's compassion cradles us

  in the still waters of love.

L: The Shepherd of our lives

  leads us through that door

  into life with him forever.

P: We are baptized with living waters

  which refresh us, restoring us

  to follow Jesus all our days.

L: The Holy Spirit, Keeper of truth,

  is the Light which guides us

  through every shadowed moment.

P: The Breath of life stills our worries

  and fears, as we are lead to that

  peaceful place of God's heart.

Prayer of the Day

Buoyed by your living waters,

we are at peace in seas

of stress and success;

detoured onto those walkways

leading to your joy,

we find our way out of mazes

of meetings and deadlines;

nourished at your picnic

in that garden of grace,

our shredded souls

are anointed by your healing;

you slow us down just enough,

as we try to escape

the very lives we think we want,

so goodness and mercy

can catch up with us

and carry us into your heart.

God in Community, Holy in One,

may you always be with us on our journey,

as we pray as Jesus teaches us, saying,

(The Lord's Prayer)

Call to Reconciliation

Day by day, God would lead us to the places of hope and healing, while moment by moment, we continue to follow sin down all the wrong paths.  Let us confess our lives, as we draw near to the One who would restore us to wholeness.  Join me as we pray together, saying,

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

 The wrong paths to foolish lives and repeated mistakes?  We know all to well where they are, Gate of our lives.  Stirring up the waters with trouble comes all too easy to us, we confess.  And locking the doors of our hearts so we don't have to love others is second nature to us.

 Forgive us, our Goodness and Mercy.  May our hearts overflow with hope for others, as you anoint us with healing oil.  May we share from our abundance with all who hunger for life.  May we follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to the places of service and life with you forever.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

L: Our Comforter leads us to that place where God's Table is spread with forgiveness and overflowing with grace.  Here, we are called to life and love.

P: We will live as God's people: forgiven to serve, blessed to share, loved so we might care.  Thanks be to God.  Amen.

Prayer of Dedication/Offering

As we offer our gifts this day, may we join Mercy and Goodness in being in the lives of all who long for rest, who hunger for hope, who thirst for living waters, and who ache to be part of your community of grace and peace.  In Jesus' name, we pray.  Amen.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

L: May the God of gates be with you!

P: And also with you!

L: God calls us to open our hearts to others,

P: for they are filled to overflowing with grace.

L: Every day, let us rejoice in the Restorer of our lives.

PL: We sing glad songs to the One who leads us.

You watched over creation,

God of patience,

as it emerged out of nothingness:

  meadows where sheep could rest,

  still pools of water teeming with tadpoles,

  paths worn smooth by mountain goats.

You shaped us in your divine likeness,

anointing us with Spirit's breath of life,

so we could wander the garden by your side.

  But that thief, sin, and that bandit, death,

  climbed into Eden by another way,

  and we followed these strangers' voices.

Day by day, you sent prophets to us,

who challenged us to lead God-centered lives,

  but we devoted ourselves to that life

  which is empty and bitter.

So then you sent Jesus,

shaped in human likeness, to us,

so we would know you are with us.

With those who walk your paths,

with those who long to find their way,

we offer glad and generous hearts to you:

P: Holy, holy, holy are you, Guardian of our souls.

  All creation praises you day after day after day.

  Hosanna in the highest!

  Blessed is the One who trusted in you alone.

  Hosanna in the highest!

You alone are holy, Gate of the Way,

and Jesus Christ, your Child, is Shepherd of life.

He kept to the path of righteousness,

  so we might learn how

  to walk in his footsteps.

Knowing our voices, he followed us

  to the gate of death,

  where the keeper let him in,

  locking the gate behind him.

But you came another way

and, knowing your voice,

  Jesus followed you

  out of the tomb,

  receiving life, abundantly,

for all your children.

As we gather in prayer and worship,

as we seek to devote ourselves to following Jesus,

we sing of that mystery known as faith:

P: Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross;

  Christ was raised by you out of death;

  Christ will come, so we might live for righteousness.

You lead us to this Table

where we want for nothing,

for your Spirit transforms

everyday foods into a sacred feast.

Your bread and cup comfort us,

nourishing us so we might be together

in everything with our sisters and brothers.

The broken bread strengthens us

  to provide clean, still waters to all;

  to build shelter for those who sleep rough;

  to feed those who are hungry.

Your grace overflows into us so we may offer

  companionship to those who

    wander shadowed valleys;

  an open gate to those

    longing for a community;

  voices of compassion

    and hope to the oppressed.

When we follow goodness and mercy

to the end of time, we will find you

coming out of the kitchen,

setting dish upon dish of peace and hope

on that great table prepared for all your children,

and we will join our hearts and hands

as we sing praise and wonder to you,

God in Community, Holy in One.  Amen.

Sending

L: Day by day, God will lead us:

P: to those pools of peace where we can

  gather with our friends and strangers.

L: Day by day, Jesus will call us:

P: to give ourselves in service,

  to anoint others with hope.

L: Day by day, the Spirit shows us:

P: the people we might be,

  the community we might become.

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