# Worship Planning

# Creation Time in the Season of Pentecost

## What Is Creation Saying to Us?

# Fifth Sunday, World communion Sunday, Year C: Sustain Me!

Texts (non-lectionary): Lamentations 1:1–6, 3:19–26; Habakkuk 1:1–4, 2:1–4; Psalm 37:1–9 ; 2 Timothy 1:1–14; Luke 17:5–10

Submitted by Miriam Spies; Communion Liturgy by Alydia Smith

**Preparation**

*Have a loaf of bread baking during the service. The bread would be brought forward during the offering. The purpose would be to surround the worship space with the experience of yeast rising, bread forming, and the smell of bread baking. It would require someone being there early to prepare and then take care of the baking during the service.*

*Note that a communion liturgy follows the Lord’s Prayer for those who wish to share in the Eucharist.*

**Gathering**

**Call to Worship**

We gather to celebrate God’s world.

**We gather to rejoice in this abundant love.**

We gather to eat and remember.
**Come let us worship.**

**Gathering Prayer**

God,

we give thanks for the beauty that surrounds us.

We sense the smell of the food that sustains us.

We feel hugs and greetings that nurture us.

We hear laughter and song that nourish us.

Remind us to listen to your world, the moans and joys.

Teach us to care for and treasure your body, your world, as we do our own.

We pray in Jesus’ name, who offers us the bread of life, Amen.

**Opening Hymn**

“This Is God’s Wondrous World” (VU 296)

“All Who Are Thirsty” (MV 4)

**Welcome**

A warm welcome to you on this World Communion Sunday. We come to worship the one who sustains us and sustains the whole world. As we gather, we listen to where creation is yearning to be cared for, where people are waiting longingly for God’s grace, and where Jesus is calling us to serve with him so all peoples are nourished and sustained.

**Listening**

**Children’s Time**

(*Bring the fresh bread forward. Ask the children to describe what they see and smell. Ask them “When do you eat bread?” and then ask them “Why do we share bread together?” Explore how we are fed by being together, remembering who Jesus calls us to be. You might discuss where the bread came from and who made it, including where the ingredients were gathered. Talk about how God offers love through creation.*)

**Invitation to Listen**

“Gather Us In” (MV 7) or “We Will Take What You Offer” (MV 196)

**Hebrew Scripture**

Lamentations 1:1–6, 3:19-26

**Hymn**

“Mother Earth, Our Mother Birthing” (MV 39)

**Psalm**

Psalm 37:1–9 (responsively using VU 763)

**Epistle Reading**

Luke 17:5–10

**Reflection Suggestions**

Focus Theme: Sustain Me!

How do we sustain creation through discipleship? Luke's Jesus indeed makes extraordinary demands of his disciples, yet sometimes discipleship requires ordinary and daily practices of fidelity and service.

Luke writes about how even faith the size of a mustard seed can be transformed. Perhaps our thoughts, feelings, and actions are transformed wholly by God’s presence and work in our midst. What does being a servant of God look like? How are we invited to share in the banquet? Since God’s life is immeasurable, its generosity eludes any of our attempts to manipulate it—either as a power we can control or as a means for justifying or rewarding ourselves. This is why we are those to whom nothing is owed (Luke 17:10). We serve in the banquet of God’s kingdom simply because of who we are, or more importantly, because of the one to whom we belong. As Jesus observes, “For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27; cf. Matthew 20:24–28 and Mark 10:41–45). When we serve communion to each other around the world, what are we offering? What are we receiving?

In 2 Timothy 1:9, Paul affirms that God "saved us and called us... not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace," and he notes that whatever the laying-on of hands signifies, it comes to Timothy as a gift from God.

In our psalm, verse 7 begins with not only "Be still" (or be silent), but "Be still before the Lord." How do we stand in awe of God, speechless in the face of the breadth of God’s grace? God is doing something in the world. Further, “wait patiently” (second line of verse 7) does not do justice to the second Hebrew imperative in the verse. The verb would be better translated by "wait longingly." This nuance adds a more dynamic component to the waiting, again implying that God is at work now. How can we wait longingly? How can we witness God at work?

Christians, too, are called to be doing something. First and foremost, as mentioned above, this means trusting God and knowing that God is at work in the world. As a result, the faithful are called to "do good" (verse 3), "take delight in the Lord" (verse 4), and "commit your way to the Lord" (verse 5). How do we act knowing who and whose we are?

Looking at the passage from Lamentations, we might ask, “How do we authentically love and sustain the world?” By empathetically weeping with those who hurt far away and with those who suffer in our own contexts, we may come to love them. And if we come authentically to love them, our eyes might even be opened to see that the Lord to whom we cry out together is already there—wherever he is—among the broken and suffering in our world.

***Questions to Offer for Reflection***

* How are you sustained in your relationship with God?
* What does it mean to wait longingly?
* What is required of discipleship?
* How do we sustain relationships with others and with creation?

**Song of Response**

“Bread of the World” (VU 461)

“Come, Now, You Blessed” (VU 592)

“When We Gather at the Table” (MV 198)

**Responding**

**Gathering Our Gifts**

We are so blessed through the gifts of all peoples and all creation. We pause now to offer our lives and hearts, with gratitude for the presence of God in the world.

**Offering Doxology**

“You Nourish Us” (VU 545)

**Prayer of Dedication**

Take these gifts to sustain your work in the world, O God.

Take our hands in service with the teachings of Jesus.

Take our hearts that we might nourish creation as the Body of Christ, living and growing.

**Song**

“Lord, Listen to your children praying” (VU 400) or

“I am the bread of life” (MV 201) (can be used throughout the Prayers of the People)

**Prayers of the People**

Generous God,

We look at how you sustain and nurture the world,

 and we are awed at the beauty.

We see the love of friend and neighbour,

 discovering it is your love we receive.

We hear the sounds of creation, birds, children, music, laughter,

 and it fills us with much joy.

Thank you for the wonder that surrounds us and stirs our hearts.

Ever-present God,

we thank you for offering the Bread of Life.

 How it sustains and nurtures your children!

We listen to the call of the mustard seed,

 the call to offer service in all we do.

Help us hear the call of the world,

 that we all may serve and eat together.

We pray for the places in our world that are broken.

We hear the cries of people who are suffering.

We feel the hearts that ache for justice.

Be with all peoples working to sustain the beauty and health of the world.

Nurturing God,

your land is abundant with stories and peoples.

Thank you for the richness of creation,

 from the mountains to the sea,

 for the first peoples of the land and all who now call it home.

Remind us to listen to the wisdom of all stories;

 they fill us and sustain our lives together.

Let every soul be fed by your Presence.

Loving God,

we pray for your church.

Continue to guide us in our discipleship.

Challenge us to serve; sustain us by your love.

Be with those who suffer in body, mind, and spirit.

Strengthen them.

Help us to live more wholly as the Body of Christ in the world.

Holy God,

we know you feel the words on our hearts before they touch our lips.

Continue to be with us through creation, love, and witness.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who taught us to pray, saying…

**The Lord’s Prayer**

A Paraphrase (VU page 916)

Communion Liturgy

God be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts;

**We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to God!

**It is right to give God our thanks and praise!**

Though creation sometimes weeps,

**we wait lovingly for you, God.**

For you created the heavens, earth, and all that is in them:

you cast sunbeams, open flowers, and feed insects.

You are beyond the galaxies, under the oceans, and inside each grain of wheat.

You could sustain all of your creation,

**but you will not, without us.**

Thank you for the wonders of creation and for your great trust in us.

Though humanity sometimes weeps,

**we wait lovingly for you, God.**

For you smiled on an outcasted Hagar, blessing her descendants,

you guided the doubtful Israelites, leading them to freedom,

you spoke through the Judges and the Prophets, providing words of wisdom,

you lived among us as a teacher, healer, and friend, giving us a sacred path to follow.

You could have made us self-sustaining,

**but you did not, your love sustains us.**

Thank you for the worldwide fellowship of disciples,

 who faithfully attempt to share your love with all of creation.

**Sanctus** (*sung*)

“Holy, Holy, Holy” (see VU 944 for Spanish translation)

In Jesus, love incarnate,

you provide all we need for each day:

his words comfort the weary;

his actions challenge the contented;

his touch heals the sick;

his presence feeds the deepest hunger in our souls.

In Jesus and in his feast

you provide for us the sustenance we need to respond to the cries of creation.

 The bread of life

 **nourishes our deprived bodies.**

The cup of blessings

 **revives our thirsty souls.**

The gathered community

 **strengthens our growing faith.**

**Memorial Acclamation** (*sung*)

“Christ has died” (MV 207)

***.***

Though the church sometimes weeps,

**we wait lovingly for you, God.**

For centuries Christians of different customs have gathered to commune with you and each other through the sharing of this feast.

**In their partaking you have been with them,**

**just as you are with us now.**

And so we join with our siblings around the world by remembering that

on the night in which Jesus was betrayed,

he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

“Take eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper Jesus took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people

for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

God, we remember and give thanks for your son,

and we ask that you bless and pour your spirit on these simple things, bread and wine:

**Make this broken bread whole in our taking.**

**Make this full cup overflow in our sharing.**

With these elements nourish and sustain us,

our way, our truth, our life;

our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sustainer.

Praise be to you, now, tomorrow, and forever.

**“Amen”** (*sung*) (MV 225)

**Closing Hymn**

“For the Fruit of All Creation” (VU 227)

“Let All Things Now Living” (VU 242)

“I See a New Heaven” (VU 713)

**Sending Forth and Blessing**

We have seen, smelled, and tasted the grace God offers to all peoples! Go into the world knowing your faith of ordinary acts works to transform God’s extraordinary world. Go into the world waiting longingly to see God moving and growing. Go into the world ready to be sustained and eager to offer the treasure within you.

May the grace of God’s abundance surround you,

the gift of Jesus’ service inspire you,

and the movement of the Spirit stir within you. Amen.