

Growing lay leaders Centered in the Spirit

A 3-part worship and education series by Marlene Kropf and Jane Roeschley

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

We all recognize a thriving church when we see one. Sometimes we credit such health to charismatic pastoral leadership, a clear sense of mission, a modern facility, an attractive physical location, or creative programming. A more reliable indicator of vibrant congregational health, however, is often the quality of lay leadership.

Pastors come and go in congregations. And while pastors make unique and vital contributions to congregational life, the long-term thriving of a congregation is dependent upon well-equipped, Spirit-empowered lay leaders. Without a robust theology of the Spirit's gifts in the church, the body of Christ remains infantile. Growth is stunted. Churches can't flourish unless individual members and leaders receive and exercise the Spirit's gifts. We are to "grow up in all ways into Christ" through the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst (Ephesians 4:15).

This guide offers resources for a 3-part worship and education series to strengthen pastoral and lay leadership gifts in congregations. If you already have strong leadership development efforts in place, you may simply want to pick and choose among the resources to expand what is already working well. If, however, your congregation is exhibiting any of the following symptoms, you may want to use the entire resource, including the suggested leadership retreat.

What are some symptoms of a weak or underdeveloped theology of gifts?

- When congregations have difficulty finding people to serve in leadership roles
- When committee or ministry team members fail to show up or carry through with tasks
- When people burn out in leadership ministries
- When pastors are expected to do the work of the church instead of many people's gifts being used
- When individualism is rampant and people insist on their own way or "one way" of doing things
- When people who are natural leaders don't seem to "get" what spiritual leadership is all about
- When the church's ministries seem unfocused, scattered, or ineffective
- When conflict erupts frequently in congregational life
- When the church fails to grow

In the early Christian church new leaders were called forth by God's people and empowered by the Spirit for the work of ministry—preaching, teaching, offering hospitality, caring for the needy, witnessing, and praying (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-25). Despite persecution, a vigorous



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theology of spiritual gifts undergirded the stunning and miraculous growth of that first church.

Somewhere along the way, the church lost sight of its original vision of the Spirit's gifts being given to all members of the body of Christ. Leadership became concentrated in the hands of a few. And today, when many pastors and congregational leaders will reach retirement age during the next decade, we find ourselves asking again: Where will new leaders come from? And how can we prepare and mentor people for leadership? A related question is also important: How will Christians who function as leaders in their daily work settings be equipped for *spiritual* leadership? Beyond the strengths of natural gifts and capacities, what else is needed for ministry in the church?

This 3-part series addresses these important questions for the whole congregation in three different settings: Sunday morning worship, the education hour (for both adults and youth), and a leadership retreat. Based on scripture texts often used on Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12), the series might begin on Pentecost Sunday, or it could also be used at another time of year when the congregation calls new leaders. The worship and education series prepares the way for an annual leadership retreat in which new and experienced leaders reflect together on how their Spirit-gifts can be nurtured and fulfilled for the sake of both the church's internal ministries and its witness and work in the world (for retreat plans, see www.leaderonline.org).

SUGGESTED ORDER OF WORSHIP

Repetition is especially important in a short worship series of three weeks. In order to maintain a clear focus for the series and to build on each week's theme, certain elements of worship are repeated or adapted slightly from week to week.

Each week's service includes the following suggested elements:

Gathering

Opening words from Psalm 104
Gathering songs
Prayer

Praising God

Tapestry of scripture texts
Songs
Prayer of confession with sung response
Offering

Hearing the Word

Children's time
Scripture reading
Sermon

Responding to the Word

Silent meditation
Affirmation of faith with theme song,
"One is the body" SJ 72

Sending

Benediction

Each service begins on a festive note and includes songs and scriptures that praise God for loving us and offering generous gifts to all. Worshippers hear a tapestry of interwoven texts that offer a rich biblical framework for the week's theme. The sermons in the series build on each other, exploring a theology of spiritual gifts and especially the role and purpose of leadership gifts in congregational life. After the sermon a contemplative space is offered for personal reflection and prayer, concluding with an affirmation of faith. Sending words re-name the Spirit's work and bless the congregation to live in the flow of the Spirit's power all week long.

NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP RESOURCES

Visuals

The simplest and most effective worship visual for this series may be a sheer cloth flowing toward a table to suggest the descent and moving presence of the Holy Spirit (choose a red, orange or gold cloth if you use the series during Pentecost; use white or ivory if the series is used at another time of year). The sheer cloth might also be suspended or set out from a wall so as to catch currents of air bringing movement to the visual. If you have someone skilled in metal or wire sculpture, you could hang a mobile with an abstract representation of a dove (or some other symbol for the Spirit) in front of the cloth. A mobile shaped like a labyrinth or spiral might also evoke the subtitle, "Centered in the Spirit." A party supply shop would be a good place to find a foil spiral for hanging in front of the cloth. See www.leaderonline.org for photos and additional banner options.

Permission to photocopy

Subscribers to *Leader* are welcome to photocopy worship materials in this section.

In addition to the sheer cloth or in place of it, consider creating a tablescape each week with displays that illuminate the focus for the week: an overflowing basket of fruit for the first week; symbols of baptism for the second week; and a wire sculpture figure in a posture of praise for the third week (the figure might also be made of foam board, wood, or some other material).

Worship resources

As a way of focusing and interpreting the theme of the series, the weekly worship resources have certain repeated structures. Opening words from Psalm 104 call the congregation to praise God, the Giver of all good gifts. They are followed immediately by robust songs of praise that express our joyful response to God's generosity. Though the structure of the opening prayer is the same each week, the specific theme of each service is incorporated.

The same pattern happens with the prayer of confession and words of sending each week—the structure remains constant while fresh words express the theme of the day. A prayer-song for the series, “Fill now our life, O Lord” (STS 107), completes the prayer of confession each week.

Children's time

Each week the children's time offers a vivid, concrete way of understanding and experiencing the weekly theme. Children experience God's abundant gifts and give thanks for God's provision.

Sermons

Sermons carry the theological freight of the series. They build on each other, first developing a theology of spiritual gifts for all and then exploring the specific role and purpose of leadership gifts in congregational life and for the sake of the church's mission in the world. Though the sermons may draw from all the texts in the tapestry, they focus specifically on a selected text for each week. Following the sermon, a contemplative space is offered for personal reflection and prayer, after which the congregation joins in an affirmation of faith.

Music selections

Both texts and tunes have been chosen to illumine the focus for each week. The gathering songs are meant to be strong and bright, recalling God's greatness and goodness. They establish a celebrative spirit for each week, so don't skimp on singing (include at least three or four songs in the time of gathering). By contrast, the songs that follow the tapestry of scripture texts tend to be more contemplative and lead toward the prayer of confession.

A theme song, “One is the body” (STJ 72), offers a fresh expression of 1 Corinthians 12, a pivotal text for the series. Suggested to be sung as an affirmation of faith after the sermon, it can be presented by a variety of voices and instruments or sung by the congregation. Another effective way to present this song would be to include a flow of choreographed movements. As the song expresses the unity of the body, one or several dancers might visually interpret the text.

Guide for Christian education

A guide for the Christian education hour can be found online at www.leaderonline.org for each week so adults and youth can engage directly with scripture, reflect on congregational practices, and consider the ways spiritual gifts are being called forth and used in the congregation. Church elders or deacons are suggested as leaders for the Christian education hour so they can model spiritual leadership by being prayerful, attentive, discerning, and by effectively guiding discussions. Pastors may want to spend time equipping leaders for these sessions by reviewing the purpose each week and discussing appropriate strategies.

Additional resources for worship planners, preachers, and education leaders

The most important additional resource for the series is *Many Gifts: Calling and Growing Congregational Leaders* by Karen Martens Zimmerly and Elsie Hannah Ruth Rempel (published by Mennonite Church Canada and available at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1012). A more extensive list of books, pamphlets and articles can be found online at www.leaderonline.org.



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Growing Lay Leaders: Centered in the Spirit

A 3-Part Worship and Education Series



Worship #1

Focus statement: Creative Love generously offers gifts to all.

Visual:

Sheer banner; baskets of abundant fruit and/or vegetables on table to signify God's generous gifts
(see Children's time for additional ideas)

GATHERING

Opening words: Psalm 104:24, 27-28, 33-34

Leader: How manifold are your works, O God!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures—
these all look to you to give them their food in due season.
When you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, we are filled with good things.

ALL: *We will sing to the Lord as long as we live;
we will sing to the Lord with our whole being.
May our meditations be pleasing to God,
for we rejoice in the Lord.*

Gathering songs:

HWB 46	<i>I sing the mighty power of God</i>	STJ 12	<i>Cantai ao Senhor (O sing to the Lord)</i>
HWB 112	<i>O Lord, our Lord, how majestic</i>	STS 94	<i>Sitha bonga (We sing praises)</i>

Prayer:

Generous God, ever-creating God,
our hearts overflow in gladness
when we remember all your gifts to us.
With all your people everywhere
we offer thanks and praise.
Do not let us forget your goodness;
save us from illusions of self-sufficiency;
and make us grateful
all the days of our lives.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAISING GOD

Tapestry of texts: (Psalm 104:28; Numbers 11:24-30; John 16:13-15; Acts 2:1-4; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 12)

- 1: When you open your hand, we are *all* filled with good things.
- 2: Moses gathered seventy elders of the people
and placed them all around the tent.

The Lord came down in a cloud
and took some of the spirit that was on him
and put it on the seventy elders.

And Moses said:
Would that *all* the Lord's people were prophets,
and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!

3: Jesus said:
When the Spirit of truth comes,
the Spirit will guide you into *all* the truth.
All that the Father has is mine.
For this reason I said that he will take what is mine
and declare it to you.

4: When the Day of Pentecost had come,
they were *all* together in one place.
And *all* of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

5: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God
who activates *all* of them in everyone.

ALL: *For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

(Pause)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Songs:

STJ 34 *Loving Spirit*

HWB 616 *Children of the heavenly Father*

Confession

Prayer:

God, as your beloved children,
we sometimes forget that all we are and have
comes from you.
Too often we hoard your gifts,
afraid to share them with the same generosity you show us.
Open our hands and our hearts, we pray,
so that whether we work or worship,
our words and actions will reflect your love and grace.
Make us holy; make us whole. Amen.

Sung response: STS 107 *Fill now our life, O Lord*

Offering

HEARING THE WORD

Children's time:

You will need some packages of seeds or small garden plants; a 3'x3' grow bed (see www.gardeners.com)
or a 3'x3' box; 50 lbs. of potatoes or a similar quantity of other garden or orchard produce (apples, pears,

cucumbers, melons, tomatoes, peppers, etc.); and, if you choose, a small clay pot with several bean seeds for each child (these can be arranged on a table as part of the worship visuals).

Talk about the generosity of God's gifts in the abundant world of nature—how one seed produces many, many fruits and how there are more seeds than we ever need. Show the children how much produce can be grown in one small 3'x3' plot: 162 lbs. of tomatoes, or 53 lbs. of potatoes; or 50 lbs. of melons; or 100 sweet peppers! Give each a child a small clay pot and plant several bean seeds in each pot (if your space can handle it, pour a little water from a watering can into each pot). Offer a prayer of thanks for God's generous gifts.

Scripture reading: Joel 2:23-29

Sermon: Gifts poured out from God's loving hands

This sermon lays the theological foundation for the 3-week series. It establishes a biblical context for understanding that gifts are rooted in God's abundant, creative love. Sometimes we mistakenly think of the gifts of the Spirit as a way to get God's work done in the world. To be sure, the gifts do accomplish God's work. But that is not their fundamental purpose.

The gifts of the Spirit originate in the overflowing love and generosity of the Trinity. They bless and empower the body of Christ—individuals as well as the community—to embody and express/proclaim God's generous love in the world. That flow of love heals, restores, and renews all that is broken, distorted, or unwhole. In response, we offer praise and love to God as we become more and more united with God and God's creative purposes.

Though the gifts of leadership are essential in the church, the prophet Joel emphasizes that God's Spirit is poured out on *all* people—young and old, male and female, slaves and free. Today's sermon celebrates the abundant generosity of the Spirit that empowers the whole church for joyful praise, authentic witness, and fruitful service.

The preacher can include a story from the congregation's life that illustrates how the gifts of all are needed for the fulfillment of the church's call to mission in this particular place and time (see www.leaderonline.org for a sample story).

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Silent meditation with guiding questions:

- a) How have my gifts contributed to the life and growth of this congregation?
- b) In what ways do I see evidence of God's abundance in the gifts expressed in this congregation?

Affirmation of faith

Song and movement: STJ 72 *One is the body*

[During this song several dancers might portray the flow of the Spirit. On the first Sunday, the congregation simply listens to the musicians and watches the dance:

- instruments play a stanza
- stanza one is sung by ensemble
- instruments repeat a stanza]

SENDING

Benediction:

The Spirit's gifts inspire us to live generously!
We join the flow of God's healing love to the world.
Serve the Lord with your whole being!

Worship #2



Focus statement: The Body of Christ is given leadership gifts for growing into Love.

Visual:

Sheer banner; symbols of baptism on table to signify receiving the gifts of the Spirit in our baptism

GATHERING

Opening words: Psalm 104:24, 27-28, 33-34

Leader: How manifold are your works, O God!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures—
these all look to you to give them their food in due season.
When you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, we are filled with good things.

ALL: *We will sing to the Lord as long as we live;
we will sing to the Lord with our whole being.
May our meditations be pleasing to God,
for we rejoice in the Lord.*

Gathering songs:

STJ 16	<i>Praise with joy the world's Creator</i>	STS 113	<i>I will stand in the congregation</i>
HWB 14	<i>Come we that love the Lord</i>	STJ 10	<i>Spirit working in creation</i>
HWB 83	<i>With happy voices singing</i>		

Prayer:

Generous God, loving God,
our hearts overflow in gladness
when we remember all your gifts to us.
With all your people everywhere
we offer thanks and praise.
Do not let us forget how much you love us;
save us from doubting that you are always with us;
keep us strong and true,
faithful to you and to one another.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAISING GOD

Tapstry of texts: (John 20:19-22; Acts 2:1-4; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 12)

- 1: When it was evening on that day,
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
- 2: Peace be with you.
- 1: After Jesus said this,
he showed them his hands and his side.

- Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
 Jesus said to them again,
- 2: Peace be with you.
 As the Father has sent me,
 so I send you.
- 1: When he had said this,
 Jesus breathed on them and said to them,
- 2: Receive the Holy Spirit.
(Pause)
- 3: When the Day of Pentecost had come,
 they were *all* together in one place.
 And *all* of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 1: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
 2: and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
 3: and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God
 who activates *all* of them in everyone.
- ALL:*** ***For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—
 and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
 (Pause)
 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.***

Songs:

STS 79 *Holy Spirit, come to us* STJ 82 *Water has held us*

Confession

Prayer:

God, as your beloved children,
 we sometimes forget that all we are and have
 comes from you.
 Too often we cling selfishly to your love,
 afraid to love others as freely and fully as you love us.
 Open our hands and our hearts, we pray,
 so that whether we work or worship,
 our words and actions will reflect your love and grace.
 Make us holy; make us whole. Amen.

Sung response: STS 107 *Fill now our life, O Lord*

Offering

HEARING THE WORD

Children's time:

You will need photos or a model of the human body. Talk with children about the amazing human body and especially how all parts work together. You might use an example of an ordinary daily activity—such as riding a bicycle or swimming—and ask children to name all the parts of the body that are needed to accomplish the activity. Or you might invite several children to form a human pyramid as a demonstration of the way they can use their bodies to work together (be sure to ask other adults to assist if you choose this activity).

Encourage the children to listen carefully to the scripture that will be read from Ephesians to hear how the body of Christ is like our human bodies. Offer a prayer of thanks for the wonderful gift of our bodies.

Scripture reading: Ephesians 4:4-7, 11-16

Sermon: Gifts for leading the body of Christ

This sermon connects the generous, creative, loving work of God in the natural world to the Spirit's abundant gifts to the body of Christ. In our baptism, each of us is anointed by the Spirit and given gifts for loving and honoring Christ in the ministries of the church. More specifically, this sermon builds a bridge between the idea of Spirit-gifts given to all and the indispensable gifts of leadership needed for the body to thrive.

Though the body needs many gifts to express/proclaim God's love and to do God's work in the world (gifts which reflect the character and nature of Jesus), the church also needs the particular gifts of leaders to guide and equip the body for ministry.

One way of understanding the variety of spiritual gifts needed in the body of Christ is to consider three kinds of gifts: *natural or working gifts, waiting or potential gifts, and supernatural or surprising gifts.*

- 1 We see *natural or working gifts* at work in the church when someone's natural talents or skills are used as part of the ministry and mission of the church. Offer some examples from your own setting, or invite people to tell their own stories (for an example, see www.leaderonline.org).
- 2 We see *waiting or potential gifts* at work when someone in the congregation has a desire to receive a call to leadership in the congregation. You can tell the stories of people in your own congregation who had such desires and how they were fulfilled (for an example, see www.leaderonline.org).
- 3 We see *supernatural or surprising gifts* at work when someone in the congregation receives an unexpected Spirit-gift in response to a need in the congregation or in the world. Again, you can supply examples from your own setting (for an example, see www.leaderonline.org).

Though the Spirit-gifts needed for the body to thrive can emerge from any one of these three sources, the specific gifts of spiritual leadership are more than natural leadership. Leaders receive a call from God, from the congregation, and from within themselves to offer their gifts for the sake of the congregation and its ministries and witness. Such leaders demonstrate a hunger for God and a capacity to discern the ways and purposes of God. As servant leaders, they use methods congruent with Jesus' teaching. Their service is fruitful, bringing glory to God and leading the body to loving maturity in Christ.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Silent meditation with guiding questions:

How do leadership gifts in our congregation help us experience and express God's love? To each other? To the world beyond us?

Affirmation of faith

Song and movement: STJ 72 *One is the body*

[On the second Sunday as several dancers portray the flow of the Spirit, the congregation listens to one stanza played on instruments, and then hears stanzas 2 and 3 sung by an ensemble, followed by a repeated instrumental stanza.]

SENDING

Benediction:

The Spirit's gifts inspire us to grow in love!
We join the flow of God's healing and hope in the world.
Serve the Lord with your whole being!

Worship #3



Focus statement: Spirit gifts inspire praise, uniting us with Overflowing Love.

Visual:

Sheer banner; figures on table in postures of praise to signify that the ultimate purpose of spiritual gifts is honor and praise of God

GATHERING

Opening words: Psalm 104:24, 27-28, 33-34

Leader: How manifold are your works, O God!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures—
these all look to you to give them their food in due season.
When you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, we are filled with good things.

ALL: *We will sing to the Lord as long as we live;
we will sing to the Lord with our whole being.
May our meditations be pleasing to God,
for we rejoice in the Lord.*

Gathering songs:

STJ 112	<i>I owe my Lord a morning song</i>	STJ 15	<i>Santo (Holy)</i>
HWB 68	<i>O come, loud anthems let us sing</i>	STJ 88	<i>Haleluya! Pelo tsa rona</i> <i>(Hallelujah! We sing your praises!)</i>
HWB 76	<i>Je louerai l'Eternel</i> <i>(Praise, I will praise you, Lord)</i>		

Prayer:

Generous God, God-who-dwells-in-loving-community,
our hearts overflow in gladness
when we remember all your gifts to us.
With all your people everywhere
we offer thanks and praise.
Do not let us forget your love flowing forth from the Trinity;
save us from hurtful conflict and disunity,
and make us people of praise who proclaim your goodness in the world.
We pray in Jesus' name. AMEN

PRAISING GOD

Tapestry of texts: (John 15:26-27, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 4:33, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 1:14-16)

- 1: Jesus said:
When the Advocate comes, whom I will send from the Father,
the Advocate will testify on my behalf.
You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.
- 2: When the day of Pentecost had come,
all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
- 3: and began to speak in other languages,
as the Spirit gave them ability.

ALL: *With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

- 1: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
2: and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
3: and there are varieties of activities,

ALL: *but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*

- 1: You are a chosen race,
a royal priesthood,
2: a holy nation,
3: God's own people,

ALL: *in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of the One who called you out of darkness into marvelous light.*

- 1: In Christ you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,
2: and had believed in him,
3: were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit;

ALL: *This is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of God's glory.*

Songs:

STS 109 *Blessing and honor*

STS 110 *Alleluia, Gracious Jesus!*

HEARING THE WORD

Children's time:

Focus on the complementary nature of work and music. Tell a story about someone who sings or whistles at work. This combination happens, too, in worship when we sing. Worship is “the work of the people,” so part of our “work” in worship is singing. Singing helps us pray and helps form us to be more like Jesus so we can join God in God's overflowing love to the world. Conclude with a song of praise the children know well.

Scripture reading: Ephesians 1:1-14

Sermon: Gifts for the praise of God's glory

This sermon completes the 3-part series and focuses on the fulfillment of the church's growth in God's love that leads to ultimate communion and praise. This sermon holds together both the missional identity of the church and its co-union with God in praise. These are both the character and the call of the church. The spiritual gifts at work in the church lead the church to God in praise and into communion with God's flow of healing, hope and love to the world.

Acts tells the story of Pentecost and the Spirit's coming to the church. Ephesians presents the church's theological reflection upon that event and on its Spirit formation, identity and call.

Ephesians 1:1-14 can be read as a passage of proclamation of praise. Note the “bookends” of praising proclamation (verses 3, 14b). Recall how often in Scriptures the utterance, proclamation, testimony, and singing of praise is recorded. The church's identity and call is praising God—an identity that expands beyond this world to cosmic significance. The spiritual gifts and spiritual leadership of the church are ultimately for this end: Praise! Seeing God in the spiritual gifts given, and seeing God at work through spiritual gifts

empowered in the church, inspires utterances of testimony, proclamation and praise. Our praise is both gift and response to God.

A communion service concludes this series, with spoken elements crafted from the conclusion of Ephesians 1 (1:15-23). Communion enacts the praiseworthy fullness of the body's spiritual union with divine love and with one another. We enter into communion as an act of affirming our co-union with and praise of God.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Silent meditation with guiding questions:

Very often when we approach communion, we find ourselves remembering the suffering and self-giving death of Jesus. Communion is also a sign of our spiritual union with God in Jesus, inspiring an overflow of love, thanks and praise. How might participation in communion be different for you today if you received this nourishment as a gift to inspire praise?

Affirmation of faith

Song and movement: STJ 72 *One is the body*

[congregation sings all stanzas]

Communion service:

Opening words: (adapted from Ephesians 1:15-19)

Ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus
and your love for all his people,
I have not stopped giving thanks for you,
remembering you in my prayers.

I keep asking that you know God better.

I pray that the eyes of your hearts may be enlightened
with God's gift of hope in your being called,
with God's gift of a rich spiritual inheritance,
and with God's gift of an incomparably great power
to those who believe.

Prayer: (adapted from Ephesians 1:19-23)

Leader: Giving God, all-praiseworthy God,
the gift of your power to those who believe
is the same as the mighty strength
that raised Christ from the dead
and seated Christ at your right hand in the heavenly realms,

All: for the praise of your glory!

Leader: We try, but we run out of titles and names for your greatness,
your goodness, your power and strength;

All: for the praise of your glory!

Leader: Just as you have placed all things under Christ,
may we now, as Christ's body gathered,
partake, be nourished and be blessed
by the One who fills us in every way;

All: for the praise of your glory!

*Bread/Cup: Receive this bread ... for the praise of God's glory.
Receive this cup ... for the praise of God's glory.*

Suggested song during communion: STJ 109 *"There is more love somewhere"*

Closing words: (adapted from Ephesians 1:22-23)

And God placed all things under Christ's feet,
and appointed Christ head over everything
for you, the church,—Christ's body—
and fills you—fills everything—in every way.
Praise to God's glory! Amen.

SENDING

Sending song:

HWB 106, 285 *All hail the power of Jesus' name*

Benediction:

The Spirit's gifts inspire our praise.
We join the flow of God's healing love to the world.
Serve the Lord with your whole being!