

# SACRED SAUNTER

## AN OUTDOOR EUCHARIST



“Hiking—I don’t like either the word or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains [and trees]—not hike! Do you know the origin of the word ‘saunter’?”

It’s a beautiful word. Away back in the Middle Ages people used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, ‘A la sainte terre,’ ‘To the Holy Land.’ And so they became known as sainte-terre-ers or saunterers. Now these mountains [and trees] are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not ‘hike’ through them.”

~John Muir

# CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## EUREKA, CALIFORNIA

### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

#### OPENING ACCLAMATION

Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

*All*     **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

*All say together*

**Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

#### COLLECT OF THE DAY

*Celebrant*             The Lord be with you.

*People*                 **And also with you.**

*Celebrant*             Let us pray.

*Celebrant*

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

#### THE LESSONS

*One or two Lessons, as appointed, are read. After the reading the Reader says*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.  
*People*    **Thanks be to God.**

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

*Before the Gospel*

*Gospeller*            The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ  
                                 according to \_\_\_\_\_.  
*People*                    **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

*After the Gospel*

*Gospeller*            The Gospel of our Savior.  
*People*                    **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## REFLECTION

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;  
**That we all may be one.**

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve  
you;  
**That your Name may be glorified by all people.**

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;  
**That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and  
Sacraments.**

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

**That there may be justice and peace on the earth.**

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

**That our works may find favor in your sight.**

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

**That they may be delivered from their distress.**

Give to the departed eternal rest.

**Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

**May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

*Please add your own intercessions and thanksgivings*

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth:  
Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to  
do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

*Celebrant*            The peace of Christ be always with you.

*People*              **And also with you.**

## THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*The Celebrant says*

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

Celebrant  
People

All things come of thee, O Lord.  
And of thine own have we given thee.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures  
here be low. Praise God above ye heav'nly host. Praise  
Fa ther Son, and Ho ly Ghost. A MEN!

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. The first system contains measures 1-4, the second system contains measures 5-8, and the third system contains measures 9-12. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the vocal line. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

GREAT THANKSGIVING *The people remain standing.*

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Celebrant*

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

*Celebrant and People*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth  
are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one  
who comes in the  
name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Celebrant continues*

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin, brought us into your life, reconciled us to you, and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said: "Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

*Celebrant and People*

**Dying, you destroyed our death.  
Rising, you restored our life.  
Christ Jesus, come in glory!**

*The Celebrant continues*

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with [blessed \_\_\_\_\_, and] all your people into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

*Celebrant and People*

**Blessed are you now and for ever. AMEN.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*The Celebrant then continues*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*People and Celebrant*

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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD

*A period of silence is kept. In Lent alleluia is omitted.*

*Celebrant* [Alleluia.] Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;  
*People* **Therefore let us keep the feast. [Alleluia.]**

## AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
**have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
**have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
**grant us peace.**

*The Celebrant says*

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

## COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

*All who seek God and are drawn to Christ are invited to the Lord's Table. To receive communion, hold out your hands one on top of the other and the minister will give you the bread. You may eat the bread and then drink from the large cup (use your hand to guide the cup) or dip the bread into the grape juice. If you do not wish to receive the grape juice, cross your arms over your chest, the minister will still say the words of administration. If you would like to receive God's blessing, cross your arms over your chest and the priest will bless you.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*After Communion, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray.

*The Celebrant and People together say*

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,  
you have graciously accepted us as living members  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,  
and you have fed us with spiritual food  
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.**

Send us now into the world in peace,  
and grant us strength and courage  
to love and serve you  
with gladness and singleness of heart;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CELTIC BLESSING

*Celebrant*            May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be  
always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, and  
rains fall soft upon your fields. And may God hold you lovingly in  
the palm of his hand. And the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer,  
and Sustainer, be among you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

*In Lent alleluia is omitted.*

*Deacon*            Go in peace to glorify God, follow Jesus Christ, and  
serve all people through the power of the Holy  
Spirit. [Alleluia.]  
*People*            **Thanks be to God.** [Alleluia.]

Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a  
great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above  
you! Look below you! Note it; read it. God, who you want to  
discover, never wrote that book with ink; instead He set before your  
eyes the things that he has made. Can you ask for a louder voice  
than that?

—Augustine of Hippo

I don't think it is enough appreciated how much an outdoor book  
the Bible is. It is a hypaethral book, such as Thoreau talked about—  
a book open to the sky. It is best read and understood outdoors,  
and the farther outdoors the better.

—Wendell Berry

Sacred writings are bound in two volumes—that of creation and that  
of Holy Scripture.  
—Thomas Aquinas

God is wholly present in all creation, in every corner, behind you  
and before you. Do you think God is sleeping on a pillow in  
heaven? God is watching over you and protecting you.  
—Martin Luther

### Some Words on *Shinrin-Yoku* (Forest Bathing)

Our Japanese brothers and sisters have identified sicknesses that we all can understand with words like *tsukin-jigoku* which means “commuter hell” and *karoshi* which means “death by work,” a word that is especially sobering in light of Japan’s high suicide rate. Aware of these sicknesses, the Japanese have sought wisdom and healing and a change of heart from within their Shinto and Buddhist practices. The practice they encourage as preventive medicine for society’s sicknesses is *shinrin-yoku*, which means “forest bathing” and it involves letting nature enter your body through all five senses.

Scientists in Japan have been doing research on the many benefits of *shinrin-yoku*. Psychological and neurological research suggests that spending time in nature improves cognition, relieves anxiety and depression, and even boosts empathy. Studies have also shown that time in nature (even only 20 minutes) lowers blood pressure and boosts levels of healthy white blood cells and anticancer proteins for at least seven days afterward. According to many Japanese scientists, nature is a “miracle drug.”

Jesus taught his followers to look at the lilies of the field and the birds of the air and to discover peace, health, and wholeness in the natural world (Matthew 6:25-34). Although Jesus was not surrounded by forests, I imagine he would encourage *shinrin-yoku*, forest-bathing, as a way to connect with God, with others, and with the earth; and as a way to connect with him, the divine physician who is eager to heal all those struggling with physical, psychological, and spiritual sicknesses. As we saunter, I invite us to be open and receptive to Christ’s healing presence in these trees, in the air, in the sounds, and in each other.



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Associate Priest

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