

## Worship Service: COMMUNITY

**Welcome:** Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith on this beautiful day. My name is \_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Today we'll be looking at the idea and value of **community**. What is your definition of community? Do you think this is a community?

I believe our community isn't limited to the people you see here. It includes but is not limited to our families, friends, caregivers, other people of faith; really anyone you can think of with whom you have something in common. We are also part of a world community of people, of living creatures.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening Prayer:** Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and especially forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

### Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

**Statement of Faith:** Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup>He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

## **Hymns:**

**For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 2**

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us, p. 3**

**Amazing Grace, p. 4**

**First reading:** Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

Background: According to Jewish law, every seventh year the Lord decreed that all debts should be forgiven, all loans cancelled, that his people would lend but not borrow, that slaves would be released with provision, and that the Lord himself would take care of them and bless them.

<sup>7</sup> “If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, <sup>8</sup> but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. <sup>9</sup> Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin. <sup>10</sup> You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. <sup>11</sup> For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’ ... <sup>15</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

## **Hymns:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 5**

**Jesus Loves Me, p. 6**

**Second reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 (various)

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ ....

<sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

<sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ... But God has so composed the body, ... that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

### **Hymns:**

**Softy and Tenderly, p. 7**

**Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 8**

**Interactive Homily:** Let’s talk more about community.

- Who here has ever taken care of someone? How did you do that? (a child, a spouse, a friend)
- Who here has had a job that they did all by themselves? Who worked with a group?
- Is it different when you take care of someone else alone versus with others? How does that work?
- How do you feel when you care for someone or work on a task alone? (satisfied; valuable; tired!) How about when you do it with others?
- What, then, creates community?

It’s both fantastic and humbling to think that there are people around the world doing exactly what we’re doing – gathering to worship God – in their own way and with their own words, but with the same meaning. This, for me, is a great example of community!

... Let’s take a moment to silently pray and reflect on God’s gift of community.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us say the Lord’s prayer together:

**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 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, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

## Hymns:

**This is My Father's World, p. 9**

**It is Well with My Soul, p. 10**

**Standing on the Promises, p. 11**

## **Third Reading:** A Lighthearted Story about Community<sup>1</sup> 😊

[If possible, print color pictures of the Ice Age characters so people can see how different they are from one another!]

In the animated movie “Ice Age,” when saber-tooth tigers attack a tribe of nomads, a mother and her baby attempt to outrun the man-eating beasts but are cornered at a raging waterfall. The little boy is discovered by a woolly mammoth named Manfred, a sloth name Sid, and a saber-tooth tiger named Diego. These three unlikely companions unite on a common mission to return the baby to his father.

As the trio treks through a mountainous terrain of ice and snow carrying the baby, at one point the mammoth, sloth, and tiger realize they're on an erupting volcano. The heat of the lava melts the glacier bridges atop the ice fields, separating Diego (the tiger) from the others. Isolated on a quickly melting island of ice, Diego jumps to reach the others, but falls short. Dangling from the edge of the ice field, his grip falters, and he falls. Manfred (the woolly mammoth), unwilling to let Diego perish, leaps into a chasm after him and tosses the tiger up to safety. Diego, realizing the danger involved in the rescue, is moved by Manfred's compassion, courage, and sacrifice.

“Why did you do that?” he asks. “You could have died trying to save me.” Humbly, the mammoth responds, “That’s what you do when you’re part of a herd. You look after each other.” Amazed at the convergence of circumstances that has brought these three together, Sid (the sloth) muses aloud. “I don’t know about you guys, but we are one strange herd.”

## Hymns:

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, p. 12**

**Shall We Gather at the River, p. 13**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/reading-sermons/ingredients-true-community>

## **Fourth Reading: Quotes on Community**

“One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.” – Jean Vanier

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. –Hebrews 10:24-25

“We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.” –Dorothy Day, Catholic social activist

### **Hymns:**

**Blest Be the Tie that Binds, p. 14**

**I Need Thee Every Hour, p. 15**

**Closing Blessing:** (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Doxology, p. 23**