

Sacraments

Visible signs of God's Invisible Grace

Communion at Land of the Sky UCC

We gather around the table of Jesus Christ to remember how he gathered with friends on the night of betrayal and desertion, on the eve of his death. We gather as the body of Christ, trusting that as we break bread with friends and strangers, our eyes will open anew to the risen Christ in our midst. We come not to express an opinion or to make a statement, but because each of us stand in need of God's mercy and long to be filled with the love made known in Jesus Christ.

At Land of the Sky UCC, we celebrate an open table. At an open table, all are welcome to break bread together—confessed or not, baptized or not, the young and elders alike. If Judas was welcomed by Jesus to God's table, then all of us are welcome. We come hungry, trusting that God will do the rest. As an open and affirming congregation (ONA), we reflect the extravagant welcome of Jesus by especially welcoming at our table all of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) sisters and brothers, many of whom have been excluded from the table simply for being themselves. At the table we also intentionally remember the disinherited, the poor, the sick, and those living on life's margins—all those whom Jesus loved, but who the world counts as last and least. We affirm that in God's kingdom, the first will be last and the last will be first.

At the table we reaffirm our baptism, God's "Yes!" upon our lives and practice living out of God's extravagant grace. We also give voice to our common hope that one day all will feast together at God's abundant banquet table—reconciled and made whole. And so we break bread together to make manifest the alternate reality of God's realm.

We celebrate communion on the first Sunday of every month by the ancient practice of intinction—coming forward to tear a piece of bread from the common loaf and dip it in the cup. Gluten free bread is available, as well as juice for our children and those in recovery. Healing prayer is often offered for those who would like to receive it. On communion Sundays, we share the feast and expand the table of Jesus Christ into the world by collecting non-perishable food items for MANNA Food bank. We hope that you will join us as we gather at Christ's table to taste and see that God is good.

Baptism at Land of the Sky UCC

At Land of the Sky UCC, we proclaim that God's "Yes!" is upon us even as we are born into this world. To affirm God's ever-present grace, we present children to the community of faith (signified by some as "infant baptism," by others as "blessing" or "dedication"). In this act, the community enfolds the young and utters the truth of God's grace in their lives long before they are able to reciprocate. Then, once an age of accountability is reached, we challenge them to intentionally live out of God's "Yes!" We invite them to embrace the community of faith and

walk in the Way of Jesus (signified by some in the confirmation process, by others through their baptism).

In our faith tradition, baptism provokes the paradox that we are chosen by God and also have the joy of choosing God. God is the one who initiates grace and reconciliation, and the awareness of being embraced by God is essential for the spiritual journey, particularly walking in the Way of Jesus.

Those desiring to signify the initiation of the faith journey may, after discussion with the pastor, choose baptism for themselves and/or their child. We encourage the parents (or legal guardians) of all children to allow the congregation to baptize, or to bless, their young ones as an indicator of covenant responsibility for the community's role in the forming of faith. And yet, we trust that baptized or not, dedicated or not, God's grace is already upon us.

As a community of faith that celebrates the spiritual truth that we don't all have to believe uniformly to be in relationship with one another as the body of Christ, there is no "test of faith" for joining our community. Instead, we invite testimonies of what God is doing in your life. Because we know that people come to the path of the spiritual walk from many different directions and for a variety of purposes, we do not require baptism to partner in our community. Instead, we talk about it, help with discernment around it, and celebrate when people freely choose to baptize their children or to be baptized themselves. God's grace is wide, it is a privilege to wade into the water with you!

Words Matter

Scripture

Taken Seriously, Not Literally

We believe that translations matter and encourage using the: NRSV, Common English Bible, or Inclusive Bible

Expansive Language

You will experience expansive language in our community found throughout the liturgy. We pay attention to language in prayers, scripture and music.

Music is a central way that we communicate in worship. The gift of music is a treasure and we are so grateful for the many ways people share and expand our worship experience. We come from many different faith traditions and there is much of our past that helps shape who we are and what we hope to be. The words we speak and sing matter to helping people understand what we claim and believe. To that end, we are careful to make music decisions in line with the values we proclaim to live justly, love abundantly, and walk humbly in the ways of Jesus.