**Worship Service to Celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the First Communion of the German Reformed Church**

**October 15, 2025 at various Conference churches (*or for use at other dates at various local church settings*)**

**Prelude**

**\*Greeting**

**Leader:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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

**\*Call to Worship**

We are here to worship the triune God and to celebrate our ancestors in faith. May the Holy Spirit move among us, lifting our voices and our spirits as we come together as one body.

***Amen.***

**\*Opening Hymn:** (*Conference/church choice. Recommended: Holy, Holy, Holy*)

**\*Call to Confession**

In our tradition we are called to examine our faithfulness to God's covenant with us. God, in whose presence we gather, promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and shame. Let us confess our sin to almighty God.

**\*Prayer of Confession**

***Eternal God, whose word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path, we recognize and confess that we have failed to respond fully to your gracious presence in our lives. Through Jesus Christ you have offered us new life, fulfillment, and the freedom to serve you. We confess that we are prone to sin, that our sin binds us with false pride, and that the wrong we do is made worse by the good we leave undone. Reconcile us to you and to all people. God of mercy, forgive all our sin and strengthen us anew for life as you intended; through Jesus Christ our savior. Amen.***

**\*Assurance of Pardon** (E&R)

Hearken now unto the comforting assurance of the grace of God, promised in the gospel to all that repent and believe: as I live, says our Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of sinners, but that sinners turn from their ways and live. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Wherefore, beloved siblings, those of you who have truly turned to God with heartfelt repentance and sincere faith, may assuredly believe that your sins are forgiven. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**\*Gloria Patri** (#759 NCH)

*(Congregation seated)*

**Psalm** (*Conference/church choice*)

***Note: Use any of or all the following scripture passages***

**Scripture Lesson**: *1 Chronicles 29:10, 13, 14b-17*

Then David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly; David said, “Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, forever and ever. And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name…For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. For we are aliens and transients before you, as were all our ancestors; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope.O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. I know, my God, that you search the heart and take pleasure in uprightness; in the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people who are present here offering freely and joyously to you.]

**Scripture Lesson:** *Ephesians 2:19-22*

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone;in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

**Hymn:** (*Conference/church choice. Recommended***:** *The Church’s One Foundation* (#386, NCH)

**Scripture Lesson**: *Matthew 7:24-27*

**24**“Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. **25**The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on rock. **26**And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **27**The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

**Sermon**

**\*UCC Statement of Faith (1981, A Doxology)**

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,

God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being,

create persons in your own image,

and set before each one the way ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness

and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will

declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and

risen Savior, you have come to us

and shared our common lot,

conquering sin and death

and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,

creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,

binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,

tongues, and races.

You call us into your church

to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,

to be your servants in the service of others,

to proclaim the gospel to all the world

and resist the powers of evil,

to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,

to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you

forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,

courage in the struggle for justice and peace,

your presence in trial and rejoicing,

and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

**Call to Prayer**

**Litany of Prayer and Thanksgiving**

NOTE: If using a candelabra, certain sentences may be removed to fit the # of candles you have.

(*After each spoken part, the speaker will light a candle on the candelabra*)

For those gathered here today, from nearby and further away, representing our cities, small towns, rural areas and all manner of life and faith expression,

***We give you thanks, O God.***

For You the giver of life and all creation, for the guiding light of Jesus Christ whose light illumines our paths, for the comfort and direction of the Holy Spirit who moves in our hearts today,

***We give you thanks, O God.***

For the faith and perseverance of the founders and members of Falkner Swamp, Skippack, and White Marsh churches, who in their deep faith carved out places in Penn’s wilderness for the Glory of God and the German Reformed people,

***We give you thanks, O God.***

For Philip Boehm, George Michael Weiss, Michael Schlatter, John Conrad Tempelman, and countless others for their leadership and unfailing response to God’s call. For their unflagging dedication to gathered groups of believers, then and now. And for their commitment to unity,

***We give you thanks, O God.***

For the tenacity, resilience, and faith of all the congregations of our past, who weathered wars here and abroad; stood firm in the face of disasters both natural and human-caused; preached grace and gratitude in the darkest times and continuously celebrated thegoodness of our Great God,

***We give you thanks, O God.***

For the tenacity, resilience, and faith of all the congregations of our present day, who, building on the witness of previous generations, continue to feed the hungry; practice mercy and love of neighbor; walk and talk as advocates for justice, reconciliation, and peace; and follow Jesus who leads us to truth,

***We give you thanks, O God.***

Now draw your people into the future you have called us to, O God.

Inspire us with vision and perseverance, O Holy Spirit.

Lead us on your path of humility and compassion, O Jesus.

***For all the church has received from you for 300 years, we give you thanks, O God.***

**Concluding Prayer:**

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is head of the church; Give us grace to lay to heart the great dangers we are in today by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (E&R)

**\*Special Commissioned Hymn: *“Through the Years, Your Voice has Led Us” (Siciliano)***

**Offering**

Let us present with joy our offerings of commitment and support for the ongoing work of Christ’s church. Now may we give as generously as God has given to us. Our collection this morning/afternoon/evening will go to…(*Conference/church Information)*

**Offertory Anthem** *(Conference/church choice)*

**\*Doxology**

**\*Prayer of Thanksgiving** (E&R)

Most heartily do we thank you, oh Lord, for all your mercies of every kind, and for your loving care over all your creatures. We bless you for the gift of life, for your protection around us, for your guiding hand upholding us, and for the many tokens of your love, especially for the saving knowledge of your son, our Redeemer; And for the living presence of your spirit, our comforter. We thank you for friendship and duty, for good hopes and precious memories, for the joys that cheer us and for the trials that teach us to trust in you. Take from us these gifts and enable us to give ourselves entirely to your will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Communion**

**Invitation**

For 2000 years disciples and seekers have come to the Lord’s Table for sustenance, hope, forgiveness, and new life. Three hundred years ago this week/today, some of those German Reformed believers joined together to be at table for the first time in Penn’s Colony. Served by a German Reformed celebrant, they set the stage for the beginnings of this new church – one built on New-World-solid-ground of God’s goodness, mercy, and grace. Now 300 years later we come to the table together, spiritual descendants of those original believers. Our church practices, theologies, and structures have changed. Yet we still gather as those who cling to and relish God’s goodness to us through Jesus Christ.

Three hundred years ago (or even 75 years ago), communion practices were different than they are today. In this place we practice an open table. Therefore, come to the table, whoever you are, trusting in the overflowing goodness of God. Whether you are hurt or happy, broken or brave, afraid or adventurous, you are welcome here, where God’s goodness is present in bread and cup.

**Communion Prayer**

We give you thanks, holy one, almighty and eternal God, always and everywhere, through Jesus Christ, the only one begotten by you for all time, by whom you made the world and all things.

We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature. We praise you for forming us in your image and for calling us to be your people.

Although we rebelled against your love, you did not abandon us in our sin but sent to us prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation. Above all, we give you thanks for the gift of Jesus, our savior, who is the way, the truth, and the life. In the fullness of time, you came to us and received our nature in the person of Jesus, who in obedience to you, by suffering on the cross, and being raised from the dead, delivered us from the way of sin and death.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit who leads us into truth, defends us in adversity, and gathers us from every nation to unite us in one holy church. Therefore, with the entire company of Saints in heaven and on earth, we worship and glorify you, God most holy.

**Sanctus** (#454 NCH)

For on the night of betrayal Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, and said: “Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way also after supper, Jesus took the cup, and after giving you thanks gave it to them and said: “Drink this all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for you and many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.”

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

***Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.***

**Consecration**

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ’s resurrection, and awaiting Christ’s return in victory. We spread your table with these gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service on behalf of all people.

We ask you to send your Holy Spirit on this bread and wine, on our gifts, and on us. Strengthen your universal church that it may be the champion of peace and justice in all the world. Restore the earth with your grace that is able to make all things new.

Be present with us as we share this meal and throughout all our lives that we may know you as the holy one, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives forever. Amen.

**Lord’s Prayer** (debts)

**Breaking Bread, Pouring Wine**

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

**Agnus Dei** (spoken)

***Jesus, Lamb of God. Have mercy on us.***

***Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.***

***Jesus Redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.***

**Call to the Supper**

The gifts of God for the people of God. And whoever you are and wherever you have been in life before now whatever you have done and whatever you have left undone, you are welcome to this table of love and blessing. Come, for all things are ready. As you come forward, please feel free to dip your fingers in the baptismal font to remind yourself of your baptism.

Ushers will release people from pews to come forward to receive communion. Elements will be brought to those who do not wish or are unable to come forward. The chalice holds wine while the small cups are grape juice. Gluten-free wafers are also available.

**Sharing the Elements**

**Communion Hymn** (*Conference/church choice)*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving** (unison)

***Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world and courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

**\*Closing Hymn (***Conference/church choice. Recommended*: *God of Grace and God of Glory* (#436 NCH)

**\*Commission and Benediction**

**Postlude**

Elements of the service are from the following sources: *Evangelical and Reformed Book of Worship* (with updated language by Rev. C. Call), UCC *Book of Worship*, and personal liturgical writings by Rev. C. Call.