

Pax Christi Michigan – 27th Annual State Conference
A PRAYER SERVICE OF THE INCLUSIVE TABLE
MORNING PRAYER SERVICE

Leader 1:

Please Stand

We come in prayer to give thanks and praise. We make a commitment to God and to each other that we will seek to move forward in the ministry and challenge of eradicating racism and creating a more inclusive church and world.

Leader 2:

Before us is set a table. It is symbolic of our lives together and the common work and ministry to which we are called. It is a place prepared for all. Let us seek in prayer the strength to make room for all God's children.

Leader 1:

Joining us today at our table will be representatives of different cultures. They will bring symbols of their cultures to our common table. We invite you to sing together our song of hope for an inclusive world – "All Are Welcome".

All SING: All Are Welcome

*Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live.
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:*

Refrain: All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.

*Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true.
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace,
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus;*

Refrain: All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.

*Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat;
a banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space,
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us;*

Refrain: All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.

*Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone,
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bears the image of God's face;
let us bring and end to fear and danger:*

Refrain: All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.

*Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace.
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:*

Refrain: All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.

Leader 2:

Let us Pray:

Almighty, ever-loving God, your care extends beyond the boundaries of race and nation to the hearts of all who live. May the walls, which prejudice raises between us, crumble beneath the shadow of your outstretched arms. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Leader 1:

Please be Seated

We ask God's blessing as we seek to prepare a table that has room for all of us. Please sing the refrain of our song "All Are Welcome" after each gift bearer places their offering on the table. I invite the first representative to come forward now.

Leader 2:

(Native American enters carrying the cloth to the table).

We represent all Native American and indigenous people from this continent and around Mother Earth. We bring the gift of woven cloth as a symbol of our ancient and creative artistry and culture. It is also a symbol of our historical willingness to set the table of welcome for strangers in our land. We offer our gifts of spiritual wisdom, stewardship for the earth, storytelling and peacemaking. Native American traditions provide holistic principles that can benefit our contemporary technological society. We are beginning to understand the importance of Native American traditions that respect nature and the circle of life. All power comes from the earth, the sky and the water. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 1:

(Arab and Middle Eastern representative enters carrying blessing cup to the table)

We represent all Arab and Middle Eastern women, men and children. We bring the gift of a blessing cup as a symbol of our thirst for peace and justice. We offer the gifts of our ancient stories and sacred traditions from the Holy Lands of Abraham and Sarah. The Islamic world extends around the earth. The United States is part of the Muslim World. Dearborn, Michigan, has one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the country. Chicago with its seventy mosques and half a million Muslims is part of the Muslim world. There are 7 million Muslims living in the United States today. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 2:

(African American enters carrying lighted candle to the table).

We represent the richness of African-American peoples who bring the gifts of magnificent artistic expression and wisdom traditions passed down through vibrant family systems. We offer the stories of strong churches, resilience and the dream of civil rights symbolized in the light of this candle. African-American families give us the example of strong kinship bonds, strong commitment to religious values and a humanistic orientation to perceiving the world and relationships. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 1:

(Indo American and Asian American enter carrying basket to the table).

We represent all Asian Americans who bring ancient gifts of science and healing, philosophy and art, preserved through a rich multi-generational family system. We bring a basket in which we place the gift of our traditions which ensure honor for our teachers and elders. Asian Americans consist of at least a dozen distinct groups, with extremely diverse culture. Currently the largest groups in the United States are Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, as well as those from other Asian societies. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 2:

(Latino American enters carrying lighted candle to the table)

We represent all Latino Americans. We offer the gift of our reverence for faith and family. The symbol of this candle represents the light of our strong traditions. While mainstream society embraces the values of competition and individualism, we value relationships and respect. Family relationships take priority above all else. In today's society where everything is depersonalized, respect and meaningful relationships is a rare commodity. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 1:

(European enters carrying platter to the table).

We represent our ancestors from the many cultures of Europe. Each in their own time knew the struggle of being the stranger and the suspect. This platter represents a flat surface, leveling the playing field so that all people are equal. With this platter we welcome all to an inclusive meal and set the table of welcome. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 2:

(Representative carries bowl of ribbons to the table).

We represent all people who yearn for acceptance. Our gift is that of enduring hope symbolized in the spring green color of these ribbons that will be shared as a memento of our gathering today. Our challenge is to recognize the dignity of all people regardless of race or culture, class or gender, ability or disability. We come to the table.

ALL SING: *All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.*

Leader 1:

We celebrate the Inclusive Table.

A table that is open to all.

The table that has a place for all of our ethnic groups.

The table for all our peoples, no matter how rich or poor.

The table that has a place for all our neighborhoods.

The table that has room for all of us.

Christo Rey Musicians

Ven y Sigueme

Ven y sigueme , deja lo que tienes ,
reparte ya tus bienes , no mires para atras
Ven y sigueme , que mi yugo es bueno
Y mi carga liviana , nueva vida en mi tendras

Por nombre me has llamado
tu me invitas , Jesus ,
a seguirte los pasos
por tus senderos de paz y luz

Me ofreces agua viva ,
mi sed conoces bien
Senor , dador de vida ,
renueva mi Corazon tambien .

Senor , he decidido
contigo caminar ,
tu fuerza necesito
para seguirte sin regresar .

English Translation

Come and Follow Me

*Come and follow me, leave what you have,
Share your wealth, don't look back
Come and follow me, my cross is light
And my burden eased, you'll have new life in me.*

*By name you called me
You invite me, Jesus,
To follow your steps
through your paths of peace and light.*

*You offer me the water of life
My thirst you know well
Lord, giver of life
renew my heart also.*

*Lord, I have decided
To walk with you
I need your strength
to follow you without turning back.*

Leader 2:

Please Stand

Let us come and follow him, as we listen to the Word of God.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right, come you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

Then the righteous will answer him and say, Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply. Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. (*Matthew 31:40*).

The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Praise To You Lord Jesus Christ !

Leader 1

Our morning prayer service has ended, united in spirit as sisters and brothers around the inclusive table, I invite us to sing together the last verse of "All Are Welcome".

ALL SING:

*Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace.
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:*

Refrain: All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place.

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End of Morning Prayer Service

References

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