PEVA January 2026 Worship Service: "Taste and See that the Lord is Good"

Theme: Spiritual Feeding and the Great Invitation
Scripture: Psalm 34:8, Luke 22:14-23

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

Leader: Come, taste and see that the Lord is good!

People: We come, hungry and thirsty, to the table of grace.

Leader: You who lead others, who prepare feasts for congregations, who break bread in Christ's name—

People: We need to be fed. We need to taste the goodness we proclaim.

Leader: Before we can invite others, we must accept our own invitation.

People: Before we can feed the flock, we must eat from the your grace-filled hand.

All: We come to taste and see that the Lord is good!

Opening Hymn #548 "May God Support You All Your Days" Text: David Gambrell

CALL TO CONFESSION

Beloved servants of Christ, we stand at the threshold of God's banquet hall. We who have spent our lives extending invitations to others must now acknowledge a difficult truth: we often forget to accept the invitation ourselves. We prepare tables for others while our own souls go hungry. We serve living water while dying of thirst.

Before we can be the invitation to the world, we must first say yes to God's invitation to us. Let us confess our resistance, our weariness, our tendency to stand at the door serving rather than sitting at the table being served.

CONFESSION PRAYER (Unison)

Gracious Host,

You have invited us to your table, yet we linger at the door, convinced we must earn our place through service. We confess that we have forgotten how to receive, how to simply sit and be fed.

We have made ministry a burden rather than accepting it as gift. We have become so accustomed to feeding others that we no longer notice our own emptiness. We have confused activity with intimacy, programs with presence, duty with delight.

Forgive us when we decline your invitation, claiming we're too busy preparing the feast. Forgive us when we stand when you ask us to sit, when we serve when you ask us to receive, when we speak when you ask us to taste.

Remind us that we cannot give what we have not received. We cannot invite others to a table where we ourselves have not eaten. Feed us first, O God, that we might feed others from abundance rather than depletion.

Through Christ, who is both Host and Meal, restore us to your table…

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news, beloved! Jesus says to you personally, intimately: "Come. Sit. Rest. Eat. Everything is ready—not because of what you've done, but because of who I am."

God does not need our service before offering us grace. God does not require our ministry before providing our meal. We are invited first as child, not as servant; as guest, not as host.

In Jesus Christ, we are welcomed, fed, and restored.

Come, taste and see that the Lord is good!

We are forgiven. We are fed by God's grace. We are beloved.

Thanks be to God!

THE WORD

Sung Scripture Hymn #520 "Taste and See" Psalm 34

Scripture: Luke 22:14-23

Sermon Title "Put Your Oxygen Mask on First" **Rev. Dr. Chris Carrasco**

Sermon Response "Goodness of God" J. Johnson

OFFERING

DIRECTIONS AND BLESSING BEFORE THE MEAL

Gracious God, you who fed Your people in the wilderness, who multiplied loaves on the hillside, who promised that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied—

We thank You for this table, this food, this fellowship. We acknowledge that every meal is a gift from Your hand, every shared table a reflection of the Great Banquet to come.

We who spend our lives consecrating bread for others now sit to be fed ourselves. We who lift cups in sanctuary and hospital room now come hungry and thirsty to Your table.

Bless this food. Bless this time. But most of all, feed our souls. Let us truly taste Your goodness here—in the food, in the friendship, in the fleeting moments of rest and fellowship.

Remind us as we eat: This is what ministry is for. Not the meetings and the motions, but this—the simple joy of sitting together, being fed, tasting and seeing that You are good.

In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

AT LUNCH

MEAL AND COMMUNION LITURGY (At Lunch Table)

During the Meal (sign on table or on place mat)

Let there be space for unhurried conversation, for laughter, for the simple pleasure of eating together. This is not merely functional—this is formational. Let the meal be what it is: a taste of the goodness we proclaim.

You are invited to reflect and share:

- *Your favorite table growing up*
- *Your favorite food and who made it for you*
- *Your favorite people to sit at table with (these people can be living or the saints that have gone before us)*
- *How your church feeds people physically*
- *How your church feeds people spiritually*

Please stay at your table for we will celebrate communion together near the end of our lunch time.

Transition to Communion

Leader: We have eaten together. We have tasted ordinary food and found it good. Now we turn to another table—the Table of the Lord—which is both utterly ordinary and completely extraordinary.

The same God who blessed this meal blesses the bread and cup. The same Christ who has been present in our fellowship now meets us in these ancient signs. We move from one table to another, from one kind of feeding to another, recognizing that it is all grace, all gift, all taste of God's goodness.

Invitation to the Lord's Table

We who spend our lives consecrating bread for others now receive bread consecrated for us. We who lift cups in sanctuary and hospital room now have the cup lifted to our lips.

This sacrament is God's gift to you—to the pastor who came here exhausted, to the elder who feels inadequate, to the leader who wonders if it's all worth it. Come, not to work, but to receive. Not to serve, but to be served. Not to perform, but to partake.

This is the Lord's Table—not ours to control, but God's to share. Here, the One who prepared the great banquet breaks bread with the weary and heavy-laden, with pastors who have given all and feel they have nothing left.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: May the God of last suppers be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift your hearts to the One who invites you to this Table, calling, "Come, Come!"

People: Thirsty for life and hope, we bring our hearts to this feast.

Leader: God's children, come to the Table of grace.

People: We will feast on the wonders of the God who loves us.

Leader:

Holy God, from the beginning You have prepared a feast for Your people. You spread a table in the wilderness, gave manna from heaven, and promised a banquet on the holy mountain where death would be swallowed up forever.

When we made excuses and turned away from Your invitation, You did not withdraw it. Instead, You sent Your servants into the streets and alleys, calling, "Come, for everything is ready!"

In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, who ate with sinners and outcasts, who fed five thousand on a hillside, who said, "I am the bread of life." He did not wait for us to be worthy—He ate with us while we were yet sinners.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Drink from it, all of you, for the forgiveness of sins."

People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Leader:

Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, fed and sent to feed others.

We have eaten together at this table. We have tasted ordinary goodness. Now let us taste extraordinary grace. Help us remember that this table was given for us, not we for the table. As we taste Your goodness here, open our eyes to see You in all breaking of bread, and give us courage to set tables in unexpected places, inviting all who hunger and thirst.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Words of Institution and Distribution

The bread of life, broken for you.
The cup of salvation, poured out for you.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

[Bread and cup are shared at table]

Hymn #507 "Come to the Table of Grace" Congregation

Prayer After Communion

Leader: Let us pray.

Gracious God, You have fed us at Your table. We have tasted bread and wine, signs of Your body and blood. We have tasted Your goodness, Your grace, Your generous love.

Send us from this place not as those who have completed a ritual, but as those who have been genuinely fed. May the taste of this bread linger. May the memory of this cup sustain us. And may we never forget that before we can feed others, we must first be fed by You.

Through Christ our Lord, ***Amen.***

AFTER LUNCH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (include global, national and local concerns)

God of the Great Banquet,

We have tasted Your goodness at table. You have fed us—not just with food, but with Your presence, Your grace, Your reminder that we are Yours.

We pray now for the courage to remember what we have experienced here. When we return to our churches, our committees, our crises—help us carry with us the taste of this moment. Don't let us forget that ministry flows from being fed, not from feeding ourselves.

We pray for pastors and leaders everywhere who are running on empty, serving from depletion. Feed them. Draw them to tables where they can stop performing and start receiving. Protect them from the lie that they must earn their place at Your table.

We pray for our congregations. May they become communities where leaders are allowed to be human, to be needy, to receive care and not just give it. Break down the barriers between shepherd and sheep that keep us from genuine fellowship.

We pray for those we will go out to serve—those in the highways and hedges, those who have never received an invitation to Your table. Give us wisdom to extend genuine welcome, not just religious obligation. Make us instruments of Your hospitality.

And we pray for ourselves in this moment. Root us deeply in the goodness we have tasted here, that when we go out, we go not as depleted servants but as satisfied guests who simply cannot help but share what we have received.

In the name of Christ, who is both our Host and our sustenance, **Amen.**

Song "Come to the Table" Sidewalk Prophets

COMMISSIONING

Brothers and sisters, you came to this gathering hungry. You have been fed—with bread and wine, with food and fellowship, with grace and goodness. You have tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

Now hear this truth: **You are the invitation.**

Not just bearers of invitations—you ARE the invitation. When people see you, will they see someone who has tasted goodness or someone who is merely distributing crumbs they've never eaten? When they hear you speak, will they hear the voice of someone who knows the Host intimately or someone who merely manages the guest list?

You cannot invite others to a feast you have not attended. You cannot testify to goodness you have not tasted. But you have eaten. You have drunk deeply. You have sat at table and experienced grace.

So go now as living invitations—not because you have perfect words or flawless programs, but because you carry within you the taste of God's goodness. Your life, your presence, your very being can say to a hungry world: "Come. I know where the table is. I know the Host. I have tasted, and it is good."

Go to the highways and hedges, not with guilt or duty, but with the overflow of what you have received. Make room at tables. Pull up chairs. Break bread with the unlikely and the overlooked.

And remember: the world doesn't need more religious professionals. It needs people who have genuinely tasted grace and cannot keep it to themselves.

You have tasted. Now you are the invitation. Go and invite others through your very life.

BENEDICTION

May the God who invites you to the feast satisfy every hunger of your heart.

May Christ, the Bread of Life, strengthen you for the journey ahead.

May the Holy Spirit fill you with joy and courage to extend the great invitation.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, and remember—

Taste and see that the Lord is good! Amen.