

Closing Responses & Blessing

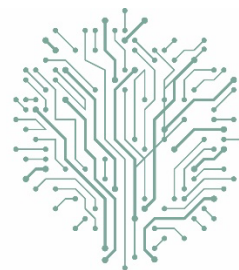
God has invited us to the table of Grace. May we receive the invitation and allow it to change us. Let us go from here ready to live with faith.

Go with the grace of God surrounding you,
the love of Christ guiding you,
and the Holy Spirit strengthening you.

May you live a life that reflects the Kingdom to which you have been invited.

Amen.

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SALT BUSH

UNITING THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY

Worship for the scattered Christian community

Matthew 22: 1-14
The Invitation that Requires Our
Response

Welcome

Welcome to worship. We are glad you are here.

Lighting the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle to remind ourselves of God's grace, which serves as the illuminating light of the world.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the sovereign First Peoples of these lands and waters where we meet, the _____ Nation (of the _____ peoples).

We pay our respects to their elders, past and present, and to all descendants of this/these nations who have cared for this place since creation.

We also honour all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples here today.

Stuart McMillan

Assembly Consultant Covenanting Assembly Resourcing Unit

Music for Reflection

Suggested song:

Grace

Laura Story

<https://open.spotify.com/track/4AJ99UeL45ibxRT7GzMWqS>

Passing the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

The Word around the Bush

Matthew 22: 1-14

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

The Message

From your Scattered Community Minister or another leader within your gathering.

Questions for conversation

- What excuses do we make when God invites us to deeper faith and discipleship?

- What does it mean to accept God’s invitation but also allow God’s grace to change the way we live?
- Who might be missing from our tables, churches, and communities; and how is God calling us to make room for them?

Silence

Please take a moment to find a comfortable position and prepare yourself for five minutes of complete silence. Gently close your eyes and allow yourself to relax, while remaining fully present and aware of your surroundings.

Prayers of Confession and For Others

Faithful God,

You invite us to your table and welcome us with your grace.

We confess that we sometimes ignore your invitation, take your grace for granted, or resist the change you call us to.

Forgive us when our lives do not reflect the love, justice, and mercy of your kingdom.

Renew us and shape us to live as faithful disciples of Christ.

Generous God,

We pray for those who feel forgotten, excluded, or unwelcome; for those who are grieving, unwell, lonely, or carrying burdens unseen by others.

We pray for communities affected by violence, poverty, injustice, and disaster.

May we as your Church make room at the table, extend your welcome, and live out your grace through justice and love.

In Jesus’ name.

Amen.