

Agape Meal for Unity and Diversity
SCM Scotland Gathering
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Opening Prayer

God of endless variety,
through Christ your Son
you made yourself known
in the breaking of bread.
You have called us
from many different places
from many different histories
with many different expressions of our faith
to this, your table.
As we enter this time of fellowship and meditation,
help us be attentive to one another:
to our differences,
to our similarities,
and to the ways we may work together
as members of your Body, the church.

Amen.

Reading and Meditation: Galatians 3:27-28

²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

When have you felt at one with others in a community? What was that like?

Were there any particular circumstances that made that possible?

What did you learn, or what can we learn, from that experience?

Reading and Meditation: Genesis 11:1-9

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ²And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.' ⁵The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. ⁶And the Lord said, 'Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' ⁸So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Have you ever felt like unity was impossible, or felt confused, frustrated, or overwhelmed by a sense of difference from others? What did that feel like?

Did anything specific happen to make you feel that way?

How did you respond to the situation, and what (if anything) happened next?

What did you learn, or what can we learn, from that experience?

Reading and Meditation: Acts 2:1-12

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'

Passing of the Bread

As you take a piece of bread, share a few words about what unity and diversity in the body of Christ mean to you. You may wish to share or reference a poem, quotation, story, song, piece of art, or something else to illustrate this.

Closing Prayer

Creator God,
you became a stranger in Christ Jesus
so that we may be one in him.

We thank you for the beautiful diversity of your creation, which we have celebrated and contemplated through scripture and witnessed in the stories, experiences, and thoughts that have been shared at this table.

Lead us from this place with the humility and wisdom to know when to speak and when to listen, when to challenge and when to be challenged, when to relate to another's experience and when to admit that we don't understand.

Help us always to pursue unity, not by silencing each other with easy platitudes about sameness, but by welcoming the stranger and celebrating the different voices and gifts we all may contribute to the work of your Kingdom.

Amen.