Great Thanksgiving

This liturgy is ideal for use within The Gospel and Race Worship Series or any other worship series celebrating community and bridging across difference.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: Almighty God,
To you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid.
You are a God of love, a God who speaks across divisions and brings us together as one.
You are a God of grace, calling us to see through the eyes of others.
You are the God of all, the God who took a multitude of people from across the globe, knitting together their stories and revealing Your presence in the lives of generations before us and generations to come.
You call us to look at those we call strangers and consider them as You see them.
You prod us into reaching out towards those who seem to be outsiders, and You reveal your Son’s face in their experiences.
You invite us to be like the Samaritan, you invite us to consider what it feels like to be the woman at the well, you show us what it means to call our enemies our sisters and brothers.
Because You are God, and because you came to save us all, we praise you, joining our voices together and with all of the company of heaven and earth, as we speak our endless praise, saying:
People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Leader: All praise and glory is yours, God of us all, because of your willingness to be patient when we push away the stranger. You gave your only Son Jesus Christ to us and to the world. Jesus was born into a diverse community and lived among the people. He spoke, preached, healed and taught followers from all walks of life including those who would not have called him friend. Including those who we may not call friend.

On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread in a gesture so familiar to his community, and he helped his followers see with new eyes and hear with new ears. Jesus shared the bread with everyone, saying, “Take, eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

As the disciples continued to watch and listen, he took the cup, and shared it with all, saying, “Drink with me all of you, for this is my blood poured out for you and for the whole world.”

God, we confess that we struggle with the thought that this table is truly for all – and for us, as well. And yet, Your Son took something ordinary and made it extraordinary. So in response to this truth, Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.
Leader: Now as those called and led by God, let us pray together:

People: Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name.
      Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
      Give us this day our daily bread.
      And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
      And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
      For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reaffirmation of Baptism

This reaffirmation ritual is appropriate for use within The Gospel and Race series or any other worship series celebrating community and bridging across difference. Please note that acts of reaffirmation are not acts of rebaptism. This can be explained to the gathered community as an introduction to the worship service.

Leader: Friends in Christ, through the Sacrament of baptism we are welcomed into Christ's church. We are incorporated into God’s mighty acts of salvation and given new birth by water and the spirit. All of this is offered to us without price, as God's gift. This gift is available to all – all nations, all peoples, all communities, all races.

Through this reaffirmation of our faith, we renew the covenant declared at our baptism, name what God is doing for us, and reaffirm our commitment to the Church.

(If possible, have a pitcher of water being poured into the baptismal pool, font, bowl or basin while the liturgy is shared.)

People: Through the sacrament of baptism, God’s Spirit has been poured out upon water, water poured over and immersing us, water that flows freely for all who will receive it, water from the streams of God’s saving power and justice, water that unifies across difference, water that tells the stories of all people, brought together by the grace of Jesus Christ.

People: Today we come to the waters, to renew our commitments in each other’s presence to Christ who has raised us, the Spirit who has unified us, and the Creator who is making all things new.
Invite the congregation to come forward to the water for a reaffirmation of baptism. You may offer possibilities for ways persons may use the water, including:

- Using the water to make the sign of the cross on their own forehead
- Touching or scooping the water from the font and letting it fall back into the font
- Allowing the pastor or deacon to use a branch to sprinkle water towards the congregation

Leader: Let us rejoice in the faithfulness of our covenant God.

People: We give thanks for all that God has already done in our lives.
As members of this congregation and the body of Christ
we remember that we are unified by Christ
and recommit to living together in faith
by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness
that in all things God may be glorified, and we may be one in Christ.
Amen.

Leader: The God of all grace,
who has called us into life together with Christ and with each other
empower and sustain you
by the unifying power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Signs of peace may be exchanged.