



Liturgy: Share the light



Worship resources for the 2024 One Great Hour of Sharing

Call to Worship

ONE: Share the light

ALL: like a city on a hill.

ONE: Shine the light

ALL: for the world to see.

ONE: Be the light

ALL: so that our neighbors can find their way.

ONE: You are the light

ALL: and it will not be extinguished.

ONE: Do not hide your light.

ALL: We will share the light.

Prayer of Invocation

Your first word of creation, O God, was “Let there be light” and there was.

Jesus entered as the light of the world and then called us to become light-bearers in our lives. As we approach this time of worship on this special day where we highlight One Great Hour of Sharing, may we shine our light here in this place as well as in the world to which you have called us to live. It can be so easy to get caught up in our own lives that we forget the simple act of illuminating the world around us with our love, compassion, acts of service, justice and advocacy and kind words to others. Show us the paths where we might follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Litany or Responsive Reading

ONE: “This little light of mine,

ALL: I’m gonna let it shine.”

ONE: “Hide it under a bushel?”

ALL: “No! I’m gonna let it shine.”

ONE: “You are the light of the world.”

ALL: A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

ONE: When the opportunity comes,

ALL: I will shine.

ONE: When another is in need,

ALL: I will respond.

ONE: Let’s go public.

ALL: Light-bearers we are.

ONE: Generosity is our standard.

ALL: Love is our ethic.

Invitation to communion

“May we be a shining light to the nations
A shining light to the peoples of the earth
Till the whole world sees the glory of Your name.
May Your pure light shine through us.”

These lyrics were written by Chris Christensen, the son of a missionary, who lived on three continents before he entered college. After college, he went back and forth between Africa, Europe and North America. While in the US in the early 1980s on his way to a conference, he penned his “Song for the Nations.”

Notice his use of plural words—nations, peoples, whole world, us. Because of his experiences, Chris had that God’s messages of grace, mercy and compassion are universal—they can go anywhere and be recognized without much explanation.

The sacrament (or time) of Holy Communion is very much like that. In these simple elements of bread and wine and through an invitation from Christ to this table, we realize that all nations and peoples—yes, the whole world— are invited to dine with us here.

Like many of us, Christensen would have seen many of the places where One Great Hour of Sharing goes. Through the graciousness of generous people from around the world, the light of Christ shines through us as the hungry are fed, the homeless find shelter, and people are empowered to do more than they could have imagined. The light shines.

At this table, we share in the fellowship of one another and with Christ. We are filled again, so that we might go out and share with others. At the table, we hear Christ saying to us, “Share.” Share the food. Share the bounty. Share the light. Share with the nations, the peoples, the world. Come, now, as Christ shares the best with us.

Communion Prayer

From the beginning of creation, God, you have brought forth light into the world. Your first act of creation—"Let there be light," and there was light. In every way since that time, you have shared generous gifts with us and yet we did not always receive them.

We left the lush garden to toil in the world. We rebelled against your love and began to hoard the gifts you gave us. During the exodus, you sent manna and we wanted more. You called forth water from a rock and we still complained. You sent leaders, kings, judges and prophets. All of them shared ways for us to be in relationship with you and each other and we ignored them. We chose our own path.

Eventually you sent your son, Jesus, who called himself the light of the world and called us to join him in sharing the light with all we encounter. After his death and resurrection, you sent the Spirit to illuminate our lives so that we could continue to bear the light of Christ into the world for ages to come.

Sharing that light still today, we boldly proclaim this truth which we believe, live and proclaim: *Continue with the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) or another confession of faith.*

Invitation to the offering

"Rain-diamonds, this winter morning, embellish the tangle of unpruned pear-tree twigs; each solitaire, placed, it appears, with considered judgement, bears the light beneath the rifted clouds – the indivisible shared out in endless abundance."

English poet Denise Levertov reminds us that light is shared in endless abundance. Today, through our special offering to One Great Hour of Sharing, we have the opportunity to share light in endless abundance in places near and far.

Our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing support the ministries of the Church of the Brethren that share the light. Our gifts provide opportunities for people from all walks of life to find the hope of Jesus through provisions on their table or a community of care.

We cannot be in all of these places ourselves or even see them with our own eyes, but through our generous tithes, offerings and special gifts, we can share abundant light. In that spirit, let us share now!

Prayer of dedication

Generous God,

We offer these gifts in the spirit of light and with a heart full of gratitude for what we've been given. These offerings are one way of showing our commitment to sharing with those who are in need, neighbors near and far, whom we are unlikely to meet. Let us not hide our light under a bucket but shine it for all to see. Bless the gifts, just as you have us, with an extra measure of your grace. In Christ's name, Amen.

Charge and benediction

Encourage those in your congregations to shine the lights on their cell phones during the benediction.

ONE: You are the people called into God's own household.

ALL: We are children of light, living together,

ONE: Grounded in loving connection to each other and all creation.

ALL: We are co-creators with God,

ONE: Bringing peace, harmony, unity, compassion, care, love—shalom—right now.

ALL: We leave to share the light and love of Christ everywhere we go.