

# **Seattle Pacific University**

## **Opening Communion and State of the University Address September 24, 2008**

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

**Mark 1:14-15**

**It is Seattle Pacific University’s tradition to begin the academic year renewing our commitments through this service adapted from John Wesley’s “Directions for Renewing Our Covenant With God,” known as the “Covenant Service,” first held on August 11, 1755; and Wesley’s service for Holy Communion of 1784.**

**Organ Prelude**

Leslie Martin

**Welcome and Invocation**

Stephen Newby

**All: Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Hymn #712     *“The Kingdom of God”***

Stephen Newby

**Prayer of Confession and Call to Pilgrimage**

Caenisha Warren

Leader: Members of the Seattle Pacific University community, embark with Christ. Adventure yourselves with God. Cast yourselves upon Christ’s righteousness. Apart from Christ we are exiles from the presence of God and fallen into a land of robbers. Our sins are thieves. If we stay where we are, we perish. Christ will, if we will venture together, bring us to God. Will you say now to God, ‘Lord Jesus, with You I will venture. Bring me to God and bring me into the land of promise. I cast myself upon You’.

**All: We acknowledge our own sin and brokenness. The Spirit of God has awakened us. Lord Jesus, with You we will venture. Lead us wherever You will. We are Yours, O Lord. You alone do we revere. You alone do we serve.**

**Hymn #95     *“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”***

Stephen Newby

**Covenant of Commitment**

Kerry Dearborn

Leader: Christ is the One whom God has appointed and sent into the world to save sinners, redeeming and reconciling the world to God.

**All: If we had come in our own name, You might well have put us back; but since we come at the command of God, reject us not. Lord, help us. Lord, save us.**

Leader: Yield yourselves now to the Lord. As God’s servants, give up the dominion and government of yourselves to Christ.

**All: We are Yours. We worship You. We dedicate ourselves to Your service.**

Leader: In so giving yourselves to God, you affirm that you will be content with the work to which God does appoint you. Christ has many services to be done; some are more easy and honorable, others more difficult and menial. Some are more suitable to our inclinations and interests; others are contrary to both.

**All: Lord Jesus, if You will receive us into Your house, we will not argue over, or take pride in the terms of our service. Make us what You will. Send us where You will. Put us to whatever work You will, Lord, and rank me with whom You will. Let us be employed for You, or laid aside for You, exalted or trodden underfoot for You. Let us be full; let us be**

**empty. Let us have all things; let us have nothing. We freely and heartily resign all to Your pleasure and disposal. Amen.**

Leader: Lay hold on the covenant of God and rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promise. Trust not to your own strength but take hold of God's strength. Having engaged your hearts, opened your mouths, and committed your hands to God, resolve in God's strength never to go back.

**All: O blessed Jesus, we come to You hungry, blind and naked, unworthy to wash the feet of Your servants, much less to be solemnly married to the God of Glory. But because of Your unparalleled love, we do here by the power of the Spirit accept and take You for our Head and Husband, to love, honor and obey You before all others, and this to death. We renounce our own worthiness and take You as our righteousness. We renounce our own wisdom and take You for our only guide. We renounce our own will and take Your will for our law. Amen.**

<b>Scripture Readings:</b>	Revelation 21:1-5	Lindsey Beach
	Isaiah 40:3-5	Nate Berends
	Mark 1:9-10, 14-15	Josh Anway
	Luke 22:24-30	Heather Fink

<b>Meditation</b>	<b>“The Kingdom and the Gospel”</b>	Stephen Newby
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<b>Hymn #552</b>	<b>“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”</b>	Stephen Newby
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<b>Celebration of the Eucharist</b>	Bonnie Brann
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Leader: It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy, Almighty and Everlasting God. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honor and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.**

Leader: We do not come to this Your table, O merciful God, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But You are unchanging in Your mercy, and Your nature is love: grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this Your table that we may receive in spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and life through Christ's shed blood, so that we may live and grow in Christ's likeness, and, being washed and cleansed through Christ's most precious blood, we may evermore live in Christ and Christ in us. *Amen.*

Leader: And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**All: 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 wine. Make them

for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by Christ's 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 the heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. *Amen.*

(At this point, Bonnie recounts the words of institution, instructs the congregation about the process of receiving the elements, and invites the servers to come forward)

**Songs of Reflection during Communion**

Stephen Newby/Chapel Team

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Levi Davenport

**Hymn #45**

*“Come, Thou Fount”*

Stephen Newby

**Intermission**

## Scripture Readings for Opening Communion

(take the stage just after Kerry Dearborn finishes leading the responsive reading)

**LINDSEY BEACH** says:

As we covenant ourselves to God, we remember that God has already established a covenant with the whole creation. God's perfect kingdom of love, justice and reconciliation will come to this place. Now hear these words of promise from Revelation chapter 21:

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

**NATE BERENDS** says:

This is Gospel – Good News for all the earth! And we have been given the sacred mission of carrying this hope to the world. These are the words of the prophet Isaiah:

There is a voice of one calling:

"In the wilderness, prepare  
the way for the LORD;  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God!

Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
and all people will see it together.  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken!"

**JOSH ANWAY** says:

Our Lord Jesus came preaching this message of God's kingdom, and making that kingdom visible to the world in his life, death, and resurrection. Now hear the Gospel, from Mark chapter 1:

Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove... After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

**HEATHER FINK** says:

As the followers of Christ, we have been given the same mission of making God's kingdom visible in our community and in the world. And we do that by following the same path laid for us by Christ himself. Luke chapter 22:

A dispute also arose among his disciples as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me.

**HEATHER FINK** looks up at the congregation and *boldly* proclaims:

**“This is the word of the Lord.”**

(and they respond “Thanks be to God.”)

Then you all go sit down.