

## What Gift Can We Bring

What gift can we bring, what present, what token?  
What words can convey it the joy of this day?  
When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,  
what song can we now offer in honor and praise?

Give thanks for the past, for those who had vision,  
who planted and watered so dreams could come true.  
Give thanks for the Now, for study, for worship,  
for mission that bids us turn prayer into deed.

Give thanks for Tomorrow, full of surprises,  
for knowing whatever Tomorrow may bring,  
the Word is our promise always, forever,  
we rest in God's keeping and live in God's love.

This gift we now bring, this present, this token,  
these words can convey it the joy of this day!  
When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,  
this song we now offer in honor and praise.

My father's hands baptized me,  
dripped water over my head  
and said the words,  
*The holy spirit work with in you that having been born of water and  
spirit, you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.*

similar words were said over you.

And you have chosen to live out your baptism here,  
Bill and Bobbie and Jim and Mary Kay and Christine and Ben  
and Sarah and Ellen, and little Amelia,  
are here, most especially,  
because this is a community  
that says in word and deed that  
regardless of our God given sexual orientation and gender identity  
or any of the different ways in which God has formed us  
or how we vote, or what our families look like  
or anything else that distinguishes us

one from another.

each person is God's exquisite creation,  
born of the Spirit  
and an essential part of the body of Christ

You are part of this body,  
We are part of this body,  
held together in the spirit,

Bound only by the bonds you make,  
and the commitment you choose.

We are here,  
to wrestle with the experiences our life is bringing us,  
to comprehend them in the fullness of ancient truth,

We are here to explore the mystery of life itself,  
to delve into the meaning of our scriptures,  
to know who Jesus is,  
What Christ is to us,  
to ask any question that comes to mind,  
and listen to the call upon our own beings

We are here because we seek to get to the  
the core of our own selves  
the mystery that is our own given life,

and to move beyond ourselves  
to live out Jesus' teaching in the world  
in kinship with all creation.  
to bear one another's burdens  
to ease one' another's suffering

to stand with the oppressed, and  
to work together to care for the poor, as Jesus taught us.

We come because we long to be persons  
of love and mercy, grace and compassion  
just and merciful.

We come because we long to be like Jesus  
and to live in the light that is the Christ.

And so we bring our gifts to this place  
We bring our minds and hearts to study together  
to grow in faith and Christian community.

We bring our resources  
the fruit of our labors,  
for we know all things come from God.

We bring our prayers  
our hopes, our love for one another  
offering these, too, to God, as signs of discipleship.

We are here because we are braver together  
we can face the challenges of our own lives  
with others by our sides.

We can open our hearts to the souls God is leading here,  
and to the possibilities that are unfolding.  
in a time of uncertainty,  
Yes, to the future that God is bringing us.

So, as we end this Christian year  
and we receive the love that is flowing

But it flows from us because it flowed to us.

From the waters of creation  
and those of our birth  
and our baptism,

We receive the love that has no end

We remember that we belong to God  
that God is leading us to become who we will  
and into the beyond.

a – l - m