

For the final ritual of this paper, a different approach was wanted – something that had a deep connection to both Earth based traditions and Christian traditions. To meet this goal, I selected a Eucharistic ritual – a thanksgiving ritual for the early harvest [Lammas]. Similarly, in the Christian tradition, this ritual is named Eucharist because it functions as Thanksgiving to God. In this ritual, I've offset the narrative of Christian liberation through the Cross event with the ongoing narrative of the liberation of transgender people.

The book *Transgendering Faith* contains a section of prayers rituals for broad use, written by cisgender people for the celebration of transgender people. While an admirable goal, we must remember the words of Audre Lorde – that the tools of the oppressor will not liberate the oppressed. Therefore, this ritual is offered as a way for people – of many and no genders – to celebrate the specific giftedness of gender variant, agender and transgender people. This ritual takes the standard Eucharistic liturgy – alters it to celebrate the gender expansiveness of God – notably removing the word Lord throughout, and also paying attention to the other gendered images and reimagining them in new and different ways. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, the salvation history which the celebrant retells through the ritual is replaced with the narrative of transgender or gender variant people, or people who share experiences in common with transgender or gender variant people. After the ritual, this paper will explore that more theologically.

## Ritual - Eucharist

**Symbols:** Bread, Wine, Plates, Goblets.

**Stories:** The Story of Transgender and Christian liberation, starting with Abraham and ending with the Ethiopian Eunuch.

### Words:

May God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to our God.**

Let us give thanks to the Mighty One our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you almighty and transforming God through our way-shower, Jesus Christ, who overcame death and showed us the path to life everlasting. So, with the church on earth and the fullness of heaven, we praise you and join the unending song:

**Holy, Holy, Holy One, God of mighty power. Heaven and Earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Our God. Hosanna in the Highest.**

Blessed are You, Ruler of Space and time.

Your gift for transforming is beyond measure.

You are faithful beyond ourselves.

We praise you for second chances:

For saving Ninevah and transforming Your prophet Jonah.

For saving your people in exile and bringing them home again.

For saving Lazarus and calling him out of the tomb of death and despair.

We bless you for the stories of naming:

For Saul, who you called as an apostle, and whose name you changed to Paul.

For Sarai, who had children at an advanced age, and whose name you changed to Sarah.  
For Simon, who called your Beloved One Messiah, and whose name you changed to Peter.

We give you thanks for the witness of trans and gender non-conforming beloveds:

For Joseph, who was gifted with a princess dress, showing us boldness in the face of oppression.

For the Ethiopian Eunuch, who defying gender assignment requested baptism and opened wider the church.

For the gender non-conforming person who showed the disciples where to have their last meal with Jesus.

There, on that night and in that place, the Beloved One took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to the disciples saying take and eat: This is my body, given for you. Do this whenever you remember me.

Again, the Beloved One took the cup and gave thanks and passed it around to everyone saying: This cup makes a new agreement in my blood shed for you and for all people, my loved ones. Do this whenever you remember me.

[With these gifts of bread and wine [and juice] we remember the Beloved one's overcoming death, showing us the way to life everlasting, as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.]**

O holy one, Pour out your love on these gifts, and unite all of those who receive this your food - from Jesus Christ, whom we honor with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. **Amen.**

Joined into community by God's love, let us pray as Jesus taught us, in the many words and languages we have been blessed with:

[The Prayer]

Come to the Banquet, for all is now ready.

At first glance, this Eucharist looks similar to other Eucharists, but upon deeper exploration, the differences become obvious. We give our thanks to the *Mighty One* our God, instead of The Lord our God. Similarly, Jesus becomes the beloved one. These changes seem insignificant individually facilitate a gender expansive understanding of God. This expanded understanding of God helps to facilitate an expanded understanding of humankind. Thus, this ritual could be an introductory ritual to a community seeking to welcome someone who was transitioning. Similarly, this ritual could be used in collaboration with the Baptism-type ritual to create an entire worship service.

This ritual then has the dual purpose of introducing cisgender people into the narrative of transgender and gender variant people in the Bible; and celebrating with transgender people the narratives of our own in the Bible and the ways in which God transforms us and other humans in the process of life. Therefore, Unlike the other two rituals, this Eucharistic ritual Matches the designation of celebration ritual that would often be placed on it. The biggest change that is unexpected in this ritual is the different light in which Salvation history is viewed.

In addition to being a celebration ritual call mom heading to the Grimes paradigm from *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, this ritual might also be classified as a Liturgy. That is, it asks the question “Who do we celebrate?” and answers without reservation “transgender and gender non-conforming people.” This celebration also utilizes reverence and being as qualities of celebration, that is – by engaging opposites

Theologically, this ritual makes a huge jump from traditional eucharistic standpoints, and replaces Salvation history With the stories and experiences common to transgender people. While this is untraditional this paper argues that it is essential to reframe Salvation history in

light of the particularities that each of us brings. This paper is written by a Fat, femme, transgender, white person. My research and perspectives demonstrate my affinity to these groups. If I cannot experience salvation and celebration as a fat, femme, transgender person can I experience salvation and celebration at all? Similarly James Cone wrote: **[Quote from Black Theology of Liberation.]**

Therefore in conclusion this eucharistic Ritual celebrates the life, stories, and the experiences of transgender people. In a cisgender centric society, the church is called to celebrate people who step outside of the box and who experience oppression at the hands of those in power. This ritual provides an entryway into that celebration.