

## **“Saints and Sinners” Chapel Service**

Steve Collins and I shared the chapel service at college last wednesday. trying to plan via email and last minute conversations was a challenge, so we kind of threw it together in the last 24 hours.

*This time is an open time  
where past, present and future cross paths  
a cosmic intersection of our stories with God's Story  
a time of finding  
This table is an open table  
where we may become less than strangers  
and more than friends  
where community tastes true communion  
a table of belonging  
This word is an open promise  
of earth and heaven glimpsed as one  
of hopes unravelled and rewoven  
into a tapestry of peace, joy and love  
a word of remaking  
This day is an open future  
where we may embrace the uncertainty of tomorrow  
without foresight or fear  
finding in each moment a whisper of grace  
a day of discovering  
God of Creation, be present at this time  
Christ our Companion, welcome us at this table  
Spirit sustainer, breathe words of life  
We worship you.  
Amen.*

we started the service with the white lady video from geoff boyce and brian eno music, and a paraphrase of John 1 that I've written. I've used them before but not at college chapel, and it fitted our theme of jesus being an unexpected companion, so to speak.

we used mark 10:32-45, an extended version of the lectionary gospel for the coming sunday. sarah performed a telling of it wonderfully.

steve invited people to think about their hopes for ministry in the future and write them on post-it notes, then discuss them. he offered a short reflection about our hopes being ephemeral, like the post-it notes.

we had placed chairs around the walls, each with a photo of a face on either side (I collect lots of pics from books and magazines). I invited people to take a seat on one of the chairs around the room, and led people in a reflection about

- whether we give jesus a makeover into someone whom we're happy to sit with
- if we hope to be sitting with jesus, where do we find him sitting
- how the people with whom we sit shape our ministry

we invited people to name the people or situations that they were sitting beside as a prayer for others, then asked people to bring a photo to the communion table as a sign that all are welcome.

*Today we will drink the cup and eat the bread  
of Christ's suffering and death  
but the invitations to sit at his right and left hand  
are already in the post.*

*James and John assumed that they deserved it  
We assume that someone else deserves it  
but no-one deserves it at all  
It's just that someone really needs it  
someone truly poor in spirit  
scrambling for crumbs of hope.*

*God of Community  
we give you thanks  
for you are always fashioning us into your people  
your saving story tells of rulers and slaves  
believers and doubters  
insiders and outsiders  
oppressors and oppressed  
all reconciled in the saving mystery  
of Christ's life, death and resurrection  
all united under the umbrella of the Spirit  
We are always a company of sinners  
and a communion of saints  
broken and blessed*

*On the night that Christ was betrayed,  
John sat on his right hand and Judas on his left  
beloved and betrayer sat at his right and left hands.  
And Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, saying,  
"This is my body, broken for you.  
Remember me whenever you eat it."*

*Later he took wine and said to them,  
"This is my blood, shed to bring you and many others back to God. Remember me  
whenever you drink it."*

*In this place where heaven and earth meet  
under the rainbow of God's promise,  
in this sharing of bread and wine  
future hope becomes reality now  
So bring your scorched earth  
bring your harvest  
bring your open sky  
bring your restless guilty waters  
bring your swift unbending road  
bring your urgent inner city  
to the table where your host says  
'I make all things new'*

[words by steve and a bit from craig. we used cheryl and mike's [wine bottle labels](#) on the communion wine, and they certainly helped shape the liturgy.]

the communion table had theological textbooks and current magazines on it - a kind of 'word in the world' all mixed up - people could have read that in a number of ways

we used magnetic poetry to make blessings to say to one another.