



Order of service

Easter Sunday

April 12, 2020

Call to worship *(based on Psalm 118, selected verses)*

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

The Lord is my strength and my song;
God has become my salvation.

I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

Call to confession

God loves us with an everlasting love. In faith and trust, we boldly confess our sin to God and before one another.

Prayer of confession

Loving God, our mourning is deep and our joy too long absent. Our wilderness journey has been long and chaotic, punctuated with fear and marked by confusion. We confess that throughout this season of Lent and Holy Week, we have doubted your promises of peace and care. We capitulated to the evil all around us, unable to imagine that you could be doing a good, new thing in the middle of suffering. Forgive us for dwelling in Holy Saturday when we should have run to the tomb to discover that Easter Sunday will not be stopped. Quell our fear, embolden our witness, show us the way to Galilee where the Risen Christ will meet us. *(Silent prayer)*

Assurance of pardon

Friends, remember that Jesus told us on the third day he would be raised from the dead. Remember the words of forgiveness he spoke from the cross. Remember that he is Word made flesh and that Word is one of grace upon grace. Remember, know we are forgiven and be at peace.



Prayer for illumination

Lord, often we fail to recognize you because our expectations blind us to your near presence. Open our eyes, silence our fears, help us to see you in the word read and proclaimed, and then empower us to go and tell others the good news.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(from A Brief Statement of Faith, section 11.2)*

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

Call for the offering

God has held nothing back from us, not even God's own son. On this day of resurrection when we celebrate that Christ is risen, we respond with joy, showing our gratitude for God's saving grace through the gifts of God's tithes and our offerings. Let us worship God with our morning's offering.

Prayer of dedication

Lord God, you do love us with a tenacious and everlasting love. We can never earn such favor, deserve such mercy, or repay such grace. We give back to you with joy a portion of what you have entrusted to us. Take these resources as a sign of our gratitude, bless them and use them to spread the good news that Jesus Christ is risen and redemption has been won. Amen.

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Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, your promises are sure, your love unrelenting, your power unmatched. We bow before you, humbled by your grace, awed by your mercy, rejoicing in your kindness. We do not pretend to understand the mystery of resurrection, but we cannot help but recognize our risen Lord among us, present in our suffering, visible in new creation, made known to us in the breaking of the bread.

Gracious Lord, we cannot meet you on the outskirts of the graveyard and not fall on our knees and worship. You suffered and died to forgive us. You became incarnate to show us God's love for us. You healed and fed, taught and preached, prayed and ate with sinners to show us God's will for us. You went to the tomb and were raised from the dead to defeat evil and bring life eternal for the sake of the world. Hear our praise as we shout alleluia and tell all the earth of your glorious resurrection.

You call us by name, Lord of all. Hearing our weeping, you refuse to leave us alone in our grief. Trusting your compassion, we share our deepest hopes and our greatest fears. We lift up to your light those crying in the night. We give thanks for those who have fallen ill and then recovered. Comfort the many who mourn, families unable to hold funerals, doctors and nurses confronted constantly with death, people longing to touch those isolated by this pandemic. We remember your call to care for the least of these and ask that you would give us the wisdom to serve in ways that show your love for all people. When we cannot physically be present, send your Spirit as we send our notes, make our calls and do all we can to visit those in prison, house those without shelter and heal the sick. Help us to feed those who hunger physically, spiritually or emotionally. May your body, the Church, be united in our caring, radical in our generosity, and stalwart in our advocacy.

As this public health crisis lingers in the spring and likely drags into the summer, grant us courage for the living of these days. When our patience is slim and our frustration is misdirected, gently correct us. When we hurt those closest to us and fail to be our best selves, forgive us and remind us to forgive others.

When this season of isolation and sickness comes to an end, do not let us forget the lessons this forced physical distancing have taught us. Take this trying time, these struggles and hardships, and use them for good in ways we cannot now envision, but that you have the power and will to enact.

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On this day of resurrection, filled with fear and joy, we worship, we sing, we weep, we give thanks, and most of all, we marvel at your unwillingness to leave us to the consequences of our actions, your tenacious desire to be in relationship with us and your amazing grace through which you have saved us. We make our prayer in the name of the one who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father...*

Charge and benediction

Go and tell what you have seen and know: Jesus Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and remain with you always.

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Liturgy written by Jill Duffield and provided for free distribution.

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