



Order of Worship

8th Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2020

Call to worship *(Psalm 105:1-4)*

O give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name,
make known the Lord's deeds among the peoples.

Sing to the Lord, sing praises to God;
tell of all the Lord's wonderful works.

Glory in God's holy name; let the hearts of
those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Seek the Lord and God's strength;
seek the Lord's presence continually.

Call to confession

Happy are those who fear the Lord, who walk in God's ways. We come to this time of confession, seeking to walk in God's ways, aware that we often take other paths that do not lead to abundant life. We trust God's mercy and promise to forgive as we name aloud the ways in which we have fallen short and failed to follow Jesus Christ.

Prayer of confession

Lord, you search our hearts and see the places where they are hardened and resistant to your will. In this time of much upheaval and pain, we frequently turn away from those in need, seeking our own security instead of the well-being of all creation. We let petty differences separate us from one another. We allow self-interest to overwhelm your commandment to love our neighbors. We fail to see your image evident in every person. Forgive us, we pray, and in your mercy redirect us so that we can once again walk in your ways. Amen.



Assurance of pardon (*Romans 8:33-34*)

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Friends, believe the good news, through Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Scripture

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith (*The Confession of 1967, sections 9:31-33*)

To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as God's reconciling community. This community, the church universal, is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation and shares God's labor of healing the enmities which separate people from God and from each other. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. The church maintains continuity with the apostles and with Israel by faithful obedience to his call.

The life, death, resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ has set the pattern for the church's mission. His human life involves the church in the common life of all people. His service to people commits the church to work for every form of human well-being. His suffering makes the church sensitive to all human suffering so that it sees the face of Christ in the faces of persons in every kind of need. His crucifixion discloses to the church God's judgment on the inhumanity that marks human relations and the awful consequences of the church's own complicity in injustice. In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming, the church sees the promise of God's renewal of human life in society and of God's victory over all wrong.

The church follows this pattern in the form of its life and in the method of its action. So to live and serve is to confess Christ as Lord.

Call for the offering

Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed: small, but able to produce huge trees that shelter and nurture the world. He tells us the even mustard-seed-sized faith has the power to move mountains. Confident that Jesus is true to his word, we offer to God our gifts, big or small, trusting that they will be used in ways beyond all we could ever hope or imagine.



Prayer of dedication

God of seeds and yeast, hidden treasure and fishing nets, we offer you these our gifts as a sign of our commitment to you and your ways in this world. Give us confident faith that believes you are at work right now bringing forth growth in and around us, growth that will in turn bring forth new life. Bless this offering that it might be the leaven that creates the bread of life and the treasure that enables others to know of your love. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Lord, we come to this time of prayer with old wounds and new hopes. We come to you bringing new anxieties and old dreams, yearning for new creation and your vision. We look to you for guidance, for solace, for challenge and for stamina. The paths we travel in this time feel treacherous and daunting. We want to know where you would have us go and how we can find Jesus' way no matter where you send us. We need to know your near presence.

God of beginnings and endings, as the summer heat deepens and the pandemic continues, we ask for your wisdom. Do not let us give in to our fears, but instead inspire us with your Spirit. Show us the new things you are right now doing so that we can participate in them. In all the upheaval and pain, the loss and uncertainty, help us to see the places where this chaos is opening space for a better way of life together. Grant us the courage to not only see the cracks in the structures of our society, but the faith to repair them so as to build better communities for all your children.

God of grace and mercy, we know that with your power mustard-sized seeds give way to majestic, nurturing trees and unseen leaven produces more than enough bread to feed the world. We pray for those suffering in body, mind or spirit. May our faith in you lead us to act in ways that make your relationship with us evident and our discipleship transformative for others.

Confident that the Spirit intercedes for us in our weakness, we ask you to guide those in leadership positions making difficult decisions that will impact our children and parents, our neighbors and friends, our schools and communities. Give humility and insight to those in power. Give voice and strength to those who speak truth to power. Give relief and support to those with no power.

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We know, Lord of all, that nothing can separate us from your love, that through you all things are possible, that your grace is sufficient and that your will for abundant life cannot be thwarted. We praise you for these gifts and pray that our lives will reflect their truth. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father ...*

Charge and benediction (1 Peter 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

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Liturgy written by Jill Duffield and provided for free distribution.

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