



Order of worship

12th Sunday after Pentecost

August 23, 2020

Call to worship *(Psalm 138:1-5)*

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks
to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name
and your word above everything.

On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.

Call to confession

The pressure to conform to this world, to capitulate to earthly powers rather than fear the Lord, tempts us and sometimes we give in to that temptation. We confess Jesus is Lord with our lips, but our actions reveal that our loyalty lies elsewhere. Nonetheless, God is merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. With the confidence of the children of God, we join together and confess our sin.

Prayer of confession

Lord, we grow hardhearted, seeing each other as competing for scarce resources rather than one human family created and cared for by you, our God of infinite abundance. We conform easily to the ways of the world, striving endlessly for those things that do not satisfy, practicing greed and participating in systems that hurt people and creation. You call us to another way, the way of Christ Jesus our Lord, a way of compassion and justice, love and service. You offer us a life of joy and grace, mercy and redemption, readily available to us when we repent and seek you and your righteousness first. We turn to you now, forgive and free us, we pray. Amen.



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Assurance of pardon

We can trust that when we call out to God, God hears and responds. When we humble ourselves and honestly confess, God forgives and makes of us new creations.

Friends, believe the good news, through Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayer for illumination

When the demands of the world and the stress of these days weighs heavy upon us, we turn to you, Lord God. We proclaim that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the one who claims and saves us. Help us to hear again Jesus' call and grant us the faith to follow so that we will know the abundant life you want for your people. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(from "A Brief Statement of Faith")*

In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.

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,

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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

Freely we have received, freely let us give. With joyous and generous hearts, let us offer to God a portion of what God has entrusted to us. Let us worship as we give!

Prayer of dedication

Receive these gifts, gracious God, bless them and distribute them in ways that reveal to the world your loving kindness and steadfast love. In a season of great upheaval and much uncertainty, may the giving of our resources and the sharing of our lives bring hope, comfort and relief to those most in need of good news. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Lord, when the world looks at us, your church, who do they see that you are? We pray that through the testimony of our lives and ministry others glimpse clearly your goodness and compassion. We hope that indeed the world knows we are your followers by our love. Where we have fallen short of that commandment, forgive us and send your Spirit to correct and transform us. When we attempt to love you and our neighbors, strengthen that urge and embolden our witness.

As the summer moves toward the fall, we admit our weariness with the ongoing threats brought on by this pandemic. We had hoped to be through the worst of this health crisis and all its fallout, moving headlong into the events and transitions that mark this time of year. Instead, we continue to navigate the troubled waters all around us, unsure when this storm and all the damage it has wrought will come to an end. Quiet our anxious minds, Prince of Peace. Grant us courage for the living of these days. Do not let our faith fail when we most need to put it into practice.

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We ask for wisdom as we seek to make decisions and act in ways that bring healing and wholeness to the brokenness we feel within and see all around us. As followers of the One through whom all things are possible, give us vivid imaginations for how the difficulties of this time can be used by you to bring good and build communities of mutual care. Trusting your promise that even the gates of hell will not prevail against your church, we pray to take risks for the sake of the gospel that make for abundant life for all people.

We voice to you - who counts every hair on our head and promises never to abandon us - the concerns we hold near to our hearts this day. Hear our prayers for those closest to us for whom we worry and wonder how to support. Intervene for those farthest from us, those we do not know, those we do not want to know, those known only to you. Call us to you now so that we will be drawn toward one another and through you made one, a vision on earth of the multitude of tribes and nations united in worship and praise.

Make of us rocks upon which your church stands firm, a beacon of light that provides warmth, direction and comfort to the world you so love. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ, your Son, who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father ...*

Charge and benediction

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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
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