



## Order of worship

2nd Sunday of Christmas

**January 3, 2021**

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### **Call to worship** *(based on Psalm 147 and John 1)*

Praise the Lord, O people!

**For God strengthens the weak and blesses the children.**

God grants peace and gives abundance for all.

**God has created all things through the Word, and sustains the goodness of creation.**

### **Call to confession**

In this season of Christmas, we are reminded that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Yet we are fearful and anxious; we do not trust in the light of God — the Word of God made flesh. Let us therefore confess our sin, trusting God's promise of light and grace.

### **Prayer of confession**

O God, you create and sustain all things by your Word. Your love is manifest throughout your good creation. Indeed, your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, so that we might see, hear and know you in ways never before possible. But we do not always trust in that revelation and in your sustaining power. We sometimes doubt that your abundant love will overcome hatred in our world. Forgive our disbelief. Have mercy upon us for our failure to abide in Christ and to walk in his light. Amen.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and from that fullness we have all received grace upon grace. And to all who receive this good news, who believe in Jesus' name, God grants power to become children of God — power to participate in God's own life. Bear that family resemblance into the life of the world, for we are forgiven and restored to walk in the light, set on right paths of justice and peace.



### **Prayer of illumination**

We praise you, O God, for your word — a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. Help us hear and believe the promises you have spoken, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Scripture readings**

### **Sermon**

### **Affirmation of faith** *(from Confession of Belhar)*

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ;

We believe that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.

We believe that God's life-giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.

Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Call for the offering**

On this Second Sunday of Christmas, we ponder the gift of light that has come into the darkness of our world — the gift of incarnation, of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. Let us give in response to what we have been given, that we may share the light of the world with others.

### **Prayer of dedication**

O God, receive the gifts we offer in gratitude for abundant gifts that we have received from you, and now return to you to further your work in the world. Amen.



## **Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer**

God of incarnation, you have granted us power to become your own children, and we come before you longing to enter ever more deeply into this mystery. By the power of your Spirit at work in us, help us to abide in Jesus and to share in his life so that your love will continue to take up residence in our lives and communities. We cling to Jesus' promise as he said: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." Enable Christ to be shaped in our lives so that we might bear the fruit of love into the world — that we might become a tributary of living water to others and a morsel of the bread of life for all around us. Shape us to love as Christ loved so that we might bear witness to your light in the darkness of our world.

Give us the power to live out of the new commandment that Jesus gave us: to love one another. Help us to embody that love as your witnesses in a broken and distrustful world. Compel us to be your loving presence amid divisions and conflicts in our families, our workplaces and our communities so that estrangement will not have the last word.

Hear our prayers also, O God, for the world of nations, especially for those places where resources are in short supply. We pray especially for regions where the pandemic is overwhelming healthcare systems. We pray for all who are desperately ill, for doctors and nurses who tend to them, and for their families. We also pray for our own county as we transition to new leadership and a new administration, that we may navigate change peacefully. Open the hearts of civic leaders in our states and in our nation, that they might embrace bipartisan efforts to address the health and economic distress in our land. And help each of us to discern ways in which we can be agents of your love and peace in the communities around us.

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying, *Our Father...*



### **Charge and benediction**

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.  
Go from here as a witness to the light.  
Walk in that light, as God's own children.  
Lift up the brokenhearted, stand with the oppressed,  
And let all that you do - all of it - be out of love. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench  
and provided for free distribution.

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