

## *Order of worship*

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

**January 24, 2021**

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### **Call to worship** *(based on Psalm 62)*

For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
for my hope is from God.

**God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress;  
I shall not be shaken.**

On God rests my deliverance and my honor;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

**Trust in God at all times, O people;  
God is a refuge for us.**

### **Call to confession**

When Jesus emerged from 40 days of temptation in the wilderness, he called for us to repent and believe the good news of the gospel — to turn away from our sin and temptations to sin, in order to see and live into all that God wills for us and for our world. Let us confess our sin together.

### **Prayer of confession**

Merciful God, you have called to participate in your reconciling, justice-seeking work in a broken world plagued by pandemics of race, class and political division. Yet we acknowledge that we have fallen short of that calling. To be honest, we are inclined to hate our enemies rather than to love them as you love them. We quickly discern the sins of others, but fail to acknowledge our own. We seek accountability for others, but not for ourselves. We confess these sins, O God. Help us to hear your call to repent, to reorient our lives to your purposes and to believe in the gospel. Amen.

## **Assurance of pardon**

God's mercy abounds, forgiving us, restoring us and setting us on right paths of justice and peace. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and empowered to live into God's kingdom as it struggles toward realization now.

## **Prayer of illumination**

Holy One, pour out your Spirit upon us that we may hear your Word and respond faithfully to it. Tell us what we need to hear and show us what we need to do to follow Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Scripture readings**

## **Sermon**

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

**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 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 is the giver of life and source of all that is good. We acknowledge the abundance of gifts that have been showered upon us, and now return a portion of them in the hope that they might serve Christ's purposes in our community and in our world.

## **Prayer of dedication**

Gracious God, we offer our gifts to you that may they be sanctified and dedicated to ministries of reconciliation and justice in our church, our nation and our world. Receive these gifts as a sign of our commitment to follow Jesus as his disciples. Amen.

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

Eternal God, we praise you that in Jesus Christ your kingdom has drawn near and is present even now in our midst. Help us to live as if it were so and bear witness to its presence among us. Galvanize us, so that we no longer make our peace with the world as it is, but rather lean into the world as it should be. Awaken us, so that we are no longer numb to violence and the suffering of others. Empower us by your Spirit to participate at those points where your reign is struggling toward realization even now.

We acknowledge the skepticism in our world, and sometimes in our own hearts, that your reign is at hand. There have been too many tyrants to name, along with courts and congresses that have enabled them. There have been genocides and slave ships and unimaginable horrors. Forgive us for doubting the reality and power of your kingdom. Help us to believe in the One who proclaimed its presence among us and who lived and died as if it were so. Empower us by the Spirit that raised him from the dead and that enables us to participate in your life-giving work in the world.

Hear our prayers for the world of nations, for a global community that is suffering under a raging pandemic. We pray that you would grant strength and endurance to medical personnel who continue to tend those who are desperately ill; comfort families who are grieving the loss of loved ones. We pray for our own troubled country as we reel from the shock of mob violence at our nation's Capitol and as we navigate tumultuous transitions. Embolden the leadership of our nation to censure those who have incited and inflicted this violence, holding them accountable. And we pray for wise discernment among our elected leaders as they grapple with enormous challenges, in order to bring health, healing, peace and justice to our land.

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



**Charge and benediction** *(based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24)*

Friends, as you go from here, take with you the good news  
that the kingdom of God has drawn near.

Believe that good news and live into it.

And by the power of God's Spirit at work within us,

Stand in solidarity with those who suffer,

Comfort all who grieve,

And let everything we do and say be in love. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench  
and provided for free distribution.

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