



## *Order of worship*

4th Sunday after Epiphany

**January 31, 2021**

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### **Call to worship** *(from Psalm 111)*

Praise the Lord!

Let us give thanks to the Lord with our whole heart,  
in the company of the congregation.

**Great are the works of the Lord,  
studied by all who delight in them.**

Full of honor and majesty is God's work,  
whose righteousness endures forever.

**God has gained renown by wonderful deeds;  
the Lord is gracious and merciful.**

### **Call to confession**

The Spirit of Jesus comes into our midst with authority — with the vision and power to expose the sin in our lives and in our world. The Spirit of Jesus also assures us that forgiveness and restoration to new life is real and present to us. So, let us make our confession before God and one another.

### **Prayer of confession**

Merciful God, we confess our complicity in the lies of racism, sexism and classism — whether we have benefited from these lies or been subjected to them. We have been silent when others are disparaged or held in contempt. Forgive us and liberate us from the enslavements of our world. Restore us to a life of mutuality, love and justice for all. Amen.

### **Assurance of pardon**

The grace of God is sure for each and for all. Be restored to right standing with God and with one another. Know that we are set free and empowered by God's Spirit to create loving and just communities in our world. Thanks be to God.



### **Prayer of illumination**

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, so that the Scripture we read will illumine our paths. Amen.

### **Scripture readings**

### **Sermon**

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

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

### **Call for the offering**

We celebrate God's life-giving presence in our church, our community and our world. Let us now bring our gifts in joyful response to the many gifts that we have been given.

### **Prayer of dedication**

O God, giver of all good gifts, we offer these gifts to you in return, with gratitude for the gifts you have showered upon us, including the gift of our very lives. May they, and we, bear your peace, love and justice into our community and our world.

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

God of grace, you come into our midst with power and authority to liberate us from anything that keep us from the fullness of life you desire for all of your children and for the earth itself. Help us to be open to your presence even if it means facing difficult circumstances that bind us and keep us from living fully. Help us to name the oppressive realities of our world that deform and deface human life and the life of our planet. Empower us to be agents of love and justice in our communities and world.

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Eternal God, we ask your blessing on our nation during these days of transition into a new administration. Bless our new president and vice president and their administration. Give them courage and keep them safe. Help them to honor you by doing what is right, fair and just for all our citizens and to heal the wounds of a troubled nation. We pray for them, and for us all, that we might serve the common good as engaged and faithful citizens, with ears attuned to those in our midst and around our world who are hurting most. We pray for bipartisanship within Congress and among elected officials throughout our nation as they grapple with the serious challenges that bedevil our common life. And grant your church the grace to bear witness in its life to the reconciling power of the gospel and the justice it demands.

God of compassion, we continue to pray for those whose lives have been most adversely affected by a raging pandemic. We pray for healthcare workers who work on overcrowded COVID-19 units throughout our country. We pray for all who are facilitating vaccinations. And we pray that you would comfort all who are sick or who have lost loved ones. Help us to be agents of your love and comfort for those upon whom pandemic challenges have weighed most heavily. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying, *Our Father...*

**Charge and benediction** *(based on Deuteronomy 18:15)*

The Lord God has raised us up to be prophets to our people. So have courage; hold on to what is good; return no one evil for evil; support the weak; help the suffering. And may the Spirit of the living God empower us to work for peace and justice in all that we do. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench and provided for free distribution.

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