



Order of worship

5th Sunday after Epiphany

February 7, 2021

Call to worship *(from Psalm 147)*

How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for God is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

God heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;

God's understanding is beyond measure.

Call to confession

Isaiah exclaims "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. God does not faint or grow weary," but rather comes to us to renew our strength. So let us make our confession before God and one another, and find therein renewed life in God.

Prayer of confession

O God, our creator, sustainer and redeemer, we confess our feelings of exile and alienation amid a global pandemic, and we wonder where you are. We fear your absence when in fact you are most present to us. Restore in us a sense of your comfort and care. Renew our strength so that we might mount up with wings like eagles. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

The God who hung the stars and the moon has come close to each and all with mercy and love. Hear the good news of the gospel: We are forgiven and empowered by God's Spirit to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. Thanks be to God.

Prayer of illumination

O God, open our hearts by the power of your Holy Spirit so that the words of Scripture that we hear this day may become your Word that empowers our lives in this time and place. 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.**

**With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that
nothing in life or in death can separate us from the
love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Call for the offering

The God of all creation who has stretched out the heavens and called the stars by name also gives us strength for our journey. Let us now respond with gratitude to God's empowering presence by giving of our resources in return.

Prayer of dedication

O God, we give you thanks for the gifts of creation, and for the gift of life itself. We dedicate our resources to you, trusting and hoping that they will build up your work in our world. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of creation and redemption, your prophet Isaiah reminds us that you have established the heavenly host and invite us to "Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?" We thank you for this assurance of your strength and power. You have created all things and continue to sustain them. You also come into our present moment, our times of vulnerability and trial, to renew our strength, and for this we are thankful!

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Yet we acknowledge, O God, that the realities of the pandemic weigh heavily upon us, upon our children, upon our nation and the entire globe. Our crisis feels like an exile, because we are living with profound isolation and deep vulnerability. Teach us, O God, that stand-alone self-sufficiency is an illusion and is not your will for us. Help us to discern our deep interdependency with one another and with you. Help us to trust in the comforting words of the prophet Isaiah that remind us that you give power to the faint and strengthen the powerless, and that those who wait on you “shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” These words affirm that you, O God, can make a way when there appears to be no way.

Thus we continue to pray for weary healthcare workers in the trenches of this pandemic and for all who are now facilitating vaccinations. We pray for your comfort for all who are sick and for all who have lost loved ones. Empower us to be agents of love and justice for all who are suffering in our midst. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying, *Our Father...*

Charge and benediction *(from Isaiah 40)*

God gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench
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