



Order of worship

3rd Sunday in Lent

March 7, 2021

Call to worship *(from Psalm 19)*

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;

**The decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;**

The precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;

**The commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes.**

Call to confession

We have been called to love our God with all of our heart, mind, strength and soul, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, but our lives are constricted and self-consumed. We have failed to love God, neighbor and ourselves as we should. Let us make the good confession before God and others.

Prayer of confession

Merciful God, you have commanded us to love you above all and to have no other gods. You have called us to love others as you love them. But we are personally and socially deformed by the love of other “gods” — the false gods of prosperity and materialism, of racial and ethnic privileging, of gender exclusivity and of nationalistic imperialism. Forgive us our sins and transform us by your Spirit that we might learn to love as you love and to live as people who have been baptized as your own children. Amen.



Assurance of pardon

Friends, hear the good news of the gospel: God's radical forgiving, transforming and justice-seeking love will not let us go, and is ever bringing resurrection and new life. Let us remember our baptisms and trust in God's mercy to restore our right standing as God's own. Thanks be to God!

Prayer for illumination

O God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that the Scripture we are about to hear will become the Word of God for us in this day and time of our lives. Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Scripture readings

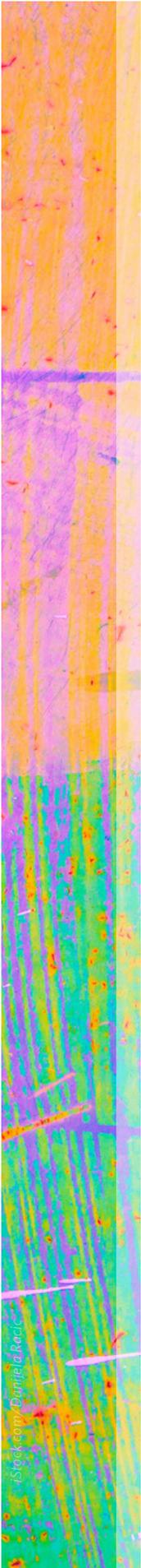
Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(from a Brief Statement of Faith)*

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

Call for the offering

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. God has given us life and resources for it, so let us give in return.



Prayer of dedication

O God, may these gifts be used as a witness to your love, peace and justice at work in the world, renewing the face of the earth.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

O God, your commandments give us a sense of direction for renewing our discipleship. Your way and pattern of life shown in your commandments enable us to enter ever more deeply into the Christian life. We ponder your commandments in their depth and breadth. You have called us not just to refrain from violence, but to restrain hurtful and unkind words. Indeed, you have called us to ponder deep flourishing for all of your children and for our planet. Empower us to live by your way in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy one, help us to be an embodiment of the peace that we pass to one another, and by so doing that we might be your peace in the world. We know too well our divisions based in gender, race, sexuality and class, but help us bear witness to a different reality. Help us begin the process of healing and deliverance. Help us form new ways of being in mutuality, love and justice with and through one another. Empower us to live out of your love in all that we do, healing divisions, addressing enmity and reaching out to those we perceive as enemies. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all nations, we pray for all countries around the globe — for those who have been charged to exercise leadership on behalf of the common good. Help them to discern the wise use of resources, including vaccines, to address the needs of citizens suffering from the pandemic and its grave economic strains. And move us all to attend to the cries of the marginal in our midst. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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



Charge and benediction *(based on 1 Corinthians 1:18-25)*

We proclaim Christ crucified,
a stumbling block to some,
but to those who are the called,
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom,
and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.
So as you go, lift up the broken hearted and stand with the crucified.
Love God with your whole lives and love neighbor as yourself.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench
and provided for free distribution.

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