



Order of worship

4th Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021

Call to worship *(from Psalm 107)*

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good; for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those God redeemed from trouble.

God gathers us from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Let us thank the Lord for God's steadfast love, for God's wonderful works to humankind.

Call to confession

Christ has lifted up our brokenness so that we might see the wounds of the world. In the light of Christ, we can find healing and mercy. Let us confess our sin before our merciful and healing God.

Prayer of confession

O God, you have set before us our greed, our hatred and self-hatred, our fear and our apathy. You have also shown us the injustice and tyrannies of our public life. We have succumbed to paralyzing anxiety in response to injustice. We have resisted the prompting of your Spirit who nudges us out of self-absorption. Empower us by your Spirit to be attentive and discerning partners in healing your creation. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

God's healing mercy abounds. God's grace goes before us, after us, through us — sometimes even unbeknownst to us. Friends, hear the good of the gospel: We are forgiven and restored to right paths of justice and shalom. Thanks be to God!



Prayer for illumination

Pour out your Spirit to us to open our hearts, so that we may discern your Word in and through the words that we are about to hear. Show us your way in Christ. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(from A Declaration of Faith)*

We believe Christ gives us and demands of us personal lives that are centered in God and open to God's reality and rule.

Christ teaches us to put obedience to God above the interests of self, family, race, or nation; to offer God joyously our money, ability, and time.

It is part of our daily discipline to observe a day of worship and rest, setting aside our own working to enjoy God's work, celebrating with sisters and brothers the Lord's goodness.

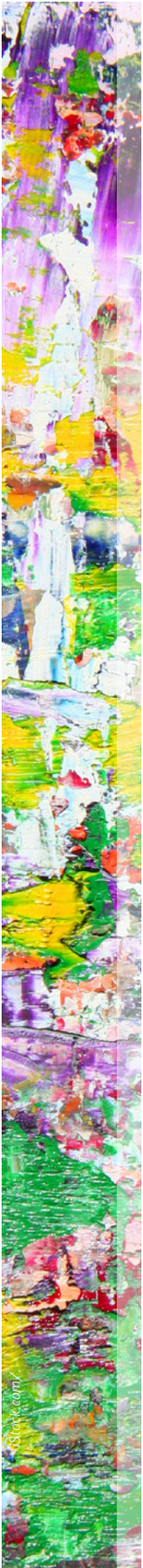
We need constantly to search out God's way in Scripture, not expecting detailed directions for every decision, but relying on the Word to tell us who God is, to press God's present claim on us, and to assure us of God's grace and comfort.

We are charged to pray for ourselves and others with gratitude, boldness, and persistence, confident that God hears and answers our prayers in ways best for us all.

Life in God's presence issues in life for others, for if we do not love sisters and brothers whom we see, we cannot love God whom we do not see.

Call for the offering

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. God has given to us many good gifts, and calls us to respond. Let us now give in return.



Prayer of dedication

Gracious God, accept what we offer today in the hope that it reflects the offering of our lives as dedicated to you and your service. Bless all that we offer so that it might serve you in this church and in our world. Amen.

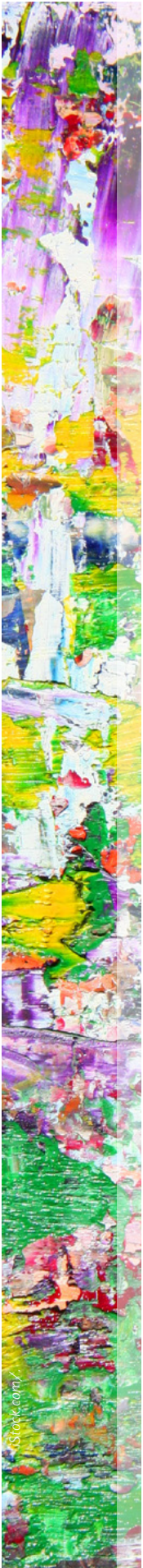
Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of Lent, help us as we continue our journey to the cross and resurrection. Help us to discern the crosses that litter the landscape of our lives and your world. Enable us to see your resurrecting power always and already at work in the broken places of our lives and your world. Empower us to step into those places where we can participate in your work of bringing life out of the death-tending places of our world.

And we pray for the world of nations, especially for those places where violence is wreaking havoc upon human lives and the life of your creation. We pray for countries dealing with devastation caused by the pandemic. We pray for those in our own country who have lost jobs, revenue, healthcare and loved ones during this relentless pandemic. Help us to serve as agents of your love and care to those who are suffering. And we pray for wise discernment by our nation's leadership as they negotiate ways in which to aid those most afflicted.

O God, you have called us to be church of Jesus Christ in this time and place. Keep us faithful to that calling. Help us love one another and, by so doing, to be a witness to our world of what it means to be disciples of Jesus. In polarized communities, enable us to hear Jesus' commandment to love even those we perceive as enemies. Help us to refrain from seeing the other as "evil" and ourselves as "good." Empower us by your love to see each other as your beloved. Enable us also to see that we are all "sinners and saints" who are equal recipients of your magnificent love.

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



Charge and benediction

Go out into the world in the peace of God in Christ.

Love God with all of your heart, strength, mind and soul.

And love your neighbor as yourself.

Lift up the brokenhearted,

Stand with the oppressed,

And let all that you do be out of love. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Roger Gench
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