



Order of worship

13th Sunday after Pentecost

August 22, 2021

Call to worship (*Joshua 24:15*)

Choose this day whom you will serve.

As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Call to confession

What have we positioned above God? Who do we honor above God? What loyalties loom larger than our life of faith? Let us examine our hearts, name our idols and confess our sins to God.

Prayer of confession

If we are honest with ourselves and with you, Holy God, we can confess the many gods who have staked a claim in our hearts. Whether it be our worship of money or power, nation or family, personal liberty or individual choice, alcohol or some other form of numbing drug, we betray you in a myriad of ways. Have mercy on us, O God. Turn us from the golden calves we erect in your presence. Return us and our hearts to worship you. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

In body and in soul, in life and in death, our salvation lies in the faith and the hope that we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. In Christ, we are forgiven. We are freed from sin. We are given permission to begin again. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Open us to your life-giving Word, Holy God. Help us set aside all that confuses the clarity you can bring. Focus our attention on the Word read and proclaimed so we might hear and know your truth. Amen.



Scripture readings

Sermon

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

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers in the one body of
Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us
through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and
calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

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 *(Matthew 10:8b)*

Freely you have received, freely give.

Prayer of dedication

Almighty God, from whom all blessings flow, help us to be
thankful for all your gifts. Accept these offerings as tokens of
our thanks and praise. Accept our commitment to serve and
worship you as our lived response of gratitude. Amen.



Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Eternal God,

Anxiety constricts and muscles tense as summer wanes, students return to school and the delta variant looms. What will this year bring? What new challenges will we meet? Have we learned enough, renewed ourselves enough to begin again? Will we do better? Will we survive? Gracious and patient God, bear with us in our fear and uncertainty. Calm our pinched nerves with the Spirit's deep breath of peace. Guide and direct us with your wisdom. As we pour ourselves out to you in prayer, hear and receive us, Holy God. We come as we are.

Great and wonderful God, we praise you for the gifts with which you bless us. Gifts of renewal, gifts of unexpected grace and intentional practice. We thank you for:

- Summer travel to visit family and friends;
- Porch swings to enjoy early evening breezes;
- New Netflix to binge, new fiction through which we can escape;
- Church groups meeting for theology on tap or to knit prayer shawls in love.

Merciful God, strengthen us in prayer that we might lift up the brokenness of this world for your healing. You make all things new, O God, and we offer our prayers for the renewal of our world and the healing of its wounds. Especially we pray for:

- Those who remain isolated, even as others enjoy new freedom;
- The newly sick, the break-through infections, the hospitals and hospital personnel under mounting pressure;
- The children who cannot get vaccinated, yet must return to school;
- The people of the world without access to vaccines, affordable and advanced health care.

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O God, you are the well-spring of life. Pour into our thirsty and anxious souls the living water of your grace, that we may be refreshed this day to continue in mission and ministry. May the pressures of this moment not pummel or paralyze, but encourage us to lean into exposed needs and lean on each other, and you, for strength and support.

United as a family of faith and as the Body of Christ we lift these prayers up to you, God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Finally, hear us pray the prayer Christ taught us, saying, *Our Father...*

Charge and benediction

Whom do we worship and serve?
God, and God alone.

May we leave this house of worship today,
renewed in God's faithfulness,
redeemed by Christ,
restored to right worship by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott,
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