



Order of worship

15th Sunday after Pentecost

September 5, 2021

Call to worship (*Psalm 146*)

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!
Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.

Call to confession

God knows us completely. God knows our heart and discerns our thoughts. Let us then confess what we carry within us that does not honor God or God's path of righteousness.

Prayer of confession

Holy God, although we honor you with our words and worship, our hearts are often far from you. We are quick to judge, quick to exclude, quick to put others down instead of building them up. Forgive us, God. Help us amend our ways. Help us embrace the inclusive love you graciously offer us and expect us to offer others. Amen.

Assurance of pardon (*Book of Common Worship*)

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.
I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

May the God of mercy, who forgives you all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.



Prayer for illumination

Open us, Eternal God, to your Word read and proclaimed. Help us not to turn from your truth, or avoid and distract ourselves from your message. Help us be receptive to the wisdom you offer in this worship moment.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(Romans 8)*

**We believe there is no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus;
for we know that all things work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called according to God's purpose.
We are convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Call for the offering

We have more to offer than we recognize or realize. God has given us abundant gifts. Let us faithfully respond to our generous God by presenting our tithes and offerings.

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, how often we take for granted all that we have. How often we fail to recognize how blessed we are. Take these gifts we give in response to your generosity and use them to further Christ's mission and ministry in a hurting world. Amen.



Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of mercy, the earth groans as wildfires rage, hurricanes destroy and our climate continues to warm and change. We are weary of disaster, God. We are tense from concern and fear. We feel helpless as we watch each evening's news. Hear us, O God, as we share ourselves, our prayers, our hopes with you. Bless us, O God, with a reverent sense of your presence as we lift these petitions to you.

We pray for students newly returned to school. We pray for their curiosity, imagination and intellect to bloom. We pray that they persevere through every new challenge, that they take advantage of their education, that they work hard to develop their emerging skills. We pray also for parents and teachers still navigating the change and pressures brought on by the pandemic. Bless these, we pray, with your wisdom and grace.

We pray for our nation and our nation's leaders. In this time of national turmoil, come near, Holy God, to both judge and save. When we turn from your way, help us repent and return. May our leaders be led by your wisdom; may they clearly discern your will and seek to follow it. We pray also for those who serve our nation through the military. Keeps these sons and daughters safe, keep them from being hardened by war, restore them from moral injury, heal them from physical, mental and spiritual pain.

We pray for the suffering all across our globe. We pray for peace to reign in Afghanistan, for the Afghani people to enjoy the freedom and dignity they deserve. We pray for mercy for the people of Haiti, for respite from their endless woes, for prosperity for a country desperate to may their way. We pray for all those who must endure violence, destruction and abuse. Save us, God, from sectarian thinking that leads us to believe others' problems are not our own. Remind us of our interconnectedness, that the suffering of some is the suffering of us all.

Mighty and merciful God, we praise you for sending healing and hope through doctors and nurses and researchers who bless us with new science and technology to serve and save. We claim your promise of wholeness for all who suffer. We glorify you for your constant presence, help and hope. May your world and all who live in it be renewed through the power of the risen Christ and those committed to being Christ's hands and feet in a hurting world.

continued on the next page



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

May we leave this house of worship today,
open to the ways God's Spirit is calling us and encouraging us
to an inclusive,
barrier- and boundary-breaking love,
open to the people God is waiting for us to embrace.

May the grace, hope, peace and love of God the Creator,
Redeemer and Sustainer be with you now and always.
Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott,
and provided for free distribution.

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