



Order of worship

17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 19, 2021

Call to worship

If you are weak and in need of strength,
if you are feeling fragile, or vulnerable,
know that you are welcome here,
know that Christ beckons you here,
know that you are loved here.

We come to worship like children, ready to rest in God's arms.

Call to confession (*Mark 9:35*)

Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Let us humble ourselves before God and confess our sins as individuals and as a community.

Prayer of confession

Holy God, we commit ourselves to service, but fail to have a servant's heart. We seek social status, not sacrifice. We welcome worldly success, not the humble path of Christ. Forgive us, we pray. Free us from the pressures of the world that keep us jockeying for position. Help us be servants of all. 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, we are forgiven! **Amen.**

Prayer for illumination

With a reverent sense of your presence and your Spirit's gift of guidance, we gratefully approach your word today, Holy God. Help us meditate on the message you intend for us and be open to your life-giving truth. Amen.



Scripture readings

Sermon

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

We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.

God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.

Call for the offering

With glad and generous hearts, let us return to God a portion of
all that we have been given. Let us present our tithes and offering
to our God.

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, we gratefully present these gifts and entrust them to the
power of Christ's ministry. May these gifts bear the Good News of
the gospel to the least and the last. May these gifts be signs of our
welcome to the most vulnerable among us. Bless our offerings so
they might provide healing and hope. Amen.



Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Persistent and present God, deliver us from doubts that keep us from turning to you more often in prayer. Deliver us from catastrophizing thoughts, from assuming the worst, from failing to recognize the power you have given us to help and heal. Deliver us from the shame of past failures that keep us from risking vulnerability. Deliver us from cynicism that keeps us from embracing each day as a new opportunity, a precious gift, another chance to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.

God of peace, be with those who are fleeing violence, tyranny and war. Accompany those seeking safety and shelter. Rescue the asylum-seekers and the unaccompanied children. By the gift of your Holy Spirit, embolden us to cross borders of our own making — overcoming bias, seeking justice, offering welcome.

Creator God, in the midst of hurricanes, floods and devastating wildfires, empower us to care for our earth and one another. Give comfort and courage to those who are suffering. Guide world leaders toward smart and sustainable action that will care for your creation and not cause further harm. Quench our warming globe's thirst for justice.

Finally, God, we pray for the sick in need of healing: friends, neighbors and loved ones suffering from COVID-19 or other diseases. Sit with those waiting for a diagnosis. Comfort those living with pain. Sustain those filled with worry. Restore those living without hope.

Almighty God, we praise you for your grace that has sustained us, your discipline that has corrected us, your patience that has borne with us, and your love that has redeemed us.

United as a family of faith and as the Body of Christ we lift these prayers up to you. Hear us now as we pray the prayer Christ taught us, saying, *Our Father...*



Charge and benediction

Welcomed into the embrace of God,
renewed by the love of Christ,
inspired by the work of the Holy Spirit,
let us leave this house of worship ready to welcome, renew and
inspire others with the Good News.

Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott,
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