



Order of worship

19th Sunday after Pentecost

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

October 3, 2021

Call to worship

(Psalm 26:3,6-8, 12 & hymn "Come All Ye People" - #388 in Glory to God; this short gathering song is a great favorite among children in Zimbabwe)

Come all you people, come and praise your Maker;

**God's steadfast love is before our eyes,
and we draw near in faithfulness.**

Come all you people, come and praise your Maker.

**We gather around the table of our Lord,
singing songs of thanksgiving,
proclaiming God's wondrous deeds.**

Come all you people, come and praise your Maker.

We will bless the Lord in the great congregation.

Come now and worship the Lord.

Call to confession

It can be daunting to lay our shortcomings before God. But our God knows the trials of humanity, because Christ chose to set aside the glories of heaven to become human — to walk the earth in all its beauty and ache, to experience the joy and heartbreak of human relationships, to feel the weight of expectation. So trusting in our God, who knows us and longs to know us, let us draw near by laying aside the burdens that separate us from God.



Prayer of confession

God of mercy,
in Jesus you modeled power through vulnerability,
and victory through sacrifice.
But we live in a world that celebrates abundance and might.

God of grace,
in Christ we find unhesitating welcome as siblings —
all children of One loving parent.
But, if we're honest with ourselves, there are members of our
human family we would rather avoid.

God of love,
reshape us that we might be brave enough to show strength
by sharing power,
encourage us that we might admit to ourselves our reluctance
to acknowledge those across the ocean, over the border,
or just around the corner as our family.
And reorient us to the trailblazing example of Jesus,
whose super power was sacrifice and whose
gracious embrace knows no bounds.

(time for silent reflection)

Assurance of pardon

Siblings in Christ,
Our savior abandoned the company of angels for this marvelous
and messy world, and in his sacrifice we find a fresh start for our
relationship with God and with one another.
May we live into this new day; in Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven.

Scripture readings

Sermon



Affirmation of faith (from *The Belhar Confession*)

We believe

that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about
justice and true peace among people;
that God, in a world full of injustice and hostility,
is in a special way the God of the destitute,
the poor and the wronged,
that God calls the church to follow him in this;
for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;
that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger,
helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;
that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good
and to seek the right;
that the church must therefore stand by people where the Lord stands,
namely against injustice and with the wronged;
that in following Christ the church must witness against
all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests
and thus control and harm others.

Call for the offering (Micah 6:8)

God has told us what is good;
and what does the Lord require?
To do justice, love kindness,
and walk humbly with our God.
In gratitude, humility, and sacrifice,
let us return to God a portion of God's gifts to us.

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, thank you for entrusting us to participate in your
worldwide circle of caring.
May the offering of the time, talent and treasure that you have
sewn in us bring you joy and bring our neighbors comfort and
hope. Show us how to use these gifts entrusted to us for your
glory and your dreams. Amen.



Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God, who is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end,
we celebrate today the many beginnings we find in you.

When you split the darkness from the light and
scattered the stars against a midnight sky,
you showed us the beauty and possibility of creation.

As we look out over the planet you crafted with intricate care,
we celebrate the beauty of your vast creativity —
sand and flower, mountain and creek bed, turning leaves
and crisp air clouded with warm breath.

We also hear groaning for relief of an earth and her people
which has rattled with quakes, billowed with fire,
raged in wind and wild storm.

Send your comfort, O God, to those longing for relief
from the ravages of changing climate and natural disaster.

May we find inspiration for care of your world —
plants, and critters, and people too —
as we remember your pioneering acts of hopeful creation.

God who, in the first interactions with humankind,
taught us how to make covenant and form mutual relationships,
you have offered those lessons of promise-keeping, forgiveness,
and boundary-making over and over again.

You modeled interdependence, and partnership, and
priorities rooted in you.

And you have offered those early lessons on repeat,
putting words into the prophets' mouths to remind your
wayward children that love comes first.

We celebrate signs of new love — a first kiss, a baby grasping
a parent's finger, blooming community partnerships, the
early signs of friendship.

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And we bear witness to heartbreak — homes that are not safe, power structures that are volatile and do not protect the vulnerable, populations that have long been silenced, communities where there is not enough and communities where there is more than enough.

May we find inspiration in your promise-making, O God.
Open our eyes to the ways we may follow your example to break down barriers,
uplift the trampled, and self-limit that none must live on crumbs and daydreams.

May we find our voices for forgiveness and prophetic witness for justice.

And where our own agency is limited,
send your Spirit to stir healing and fresh hope.

God, who in Jesus Christ, walked in our shoes
and pioneered our salvation through humble sacrifice,
teach us when to flex our muscles and when to lay down our power and prestige
that there might be enough to go around
that all Christ's siblings, who are our siblings too,
may have enough —
enough bread for the journey,
enough companions to share dreams,
enough evidence of love that
hope may take root and grow.

We pray all of this in the name of the one who taught us how to pray, *Our Father ...*

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Charge and benediction

Family of God,
Jesus promises never to be ashamed of us
but to boldly *proclaim* us as brothers and sisters, as siblings.
May we go forward to proclaim that same love —
that east, west, north and south, we belong to one another.
And may we go forward to *live* out that love —
willingly giving ourselves in sacrifice that will make the world
shake its head in wonder.

And as you go,
may the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
go with you all —
this day and every day.
Amen.

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Liturgy written by Shelli Latham, pastor at
Druid Hills Presbyterian Church in Atlanta,
and provided for free distribution.

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