



Order of Worship

20th Sunday after Pentecost

October 10, 2021

Call to worship:

I will tell God's story to family and friends;
I will offer praise in the center of the congregation!

**Let us raise our hallelujahs together,
God's children one and all!**

Because God has never turned away from our suffering
or hidden away when we were in need.

**God has been right here listening,
a breath away when we cry out for help.**

To our great comfort, I raise my voice in praise.

In the presence of the congregation we honor you, O God!

Call to confession

Once, daunted by the challenges of faithfulness, Jesus's disciples asked urgently, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For humans it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

Trusting in God who longs to mend our broken places, let us turn to God in prayer.



Prayer of confession

Holy God,

sometimes it hurts too much to look honestly
at the world and ourselves.

We grow tired of the constant bad news,
so we put on a brave face and gloss over the ache of violence,
sickness, disaster, and human callousness that plagues our globe.

With those we are closest to, we sometimes pretend that we feel
okay, that we are not worried, that we have a plan.

We even lie to ourselves, not fully admitting the impact of our actions
on one another or ourselves.

Forgive us, O God, when we try to hide our hearts from you.

Fuel our trust that we might approach you with our full selves—
authentic in our gifts, and our fears, and our shortcomings.

Give us the courage to walk together through the trials of life, rather
than soldiering on alone.

And help us to sense your faithful presence through the days when
there feels like more shadow than sun.

(time for silent reflection)

Assurance of pardon *(from Psalm 103:8, 11-12)*

The Lord is compassionate and merciful,
very patient, and full of faithful love.

As high as heaven is above the earth,
that's how large God's faithful love is for God's children.

As far as east is from west—
that's how far God has removed our sin from us.

In Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven.

Scripture readings

Sermon



Affirmation of Faith (*The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 1*)

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

**That I am not my own,
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death—
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.**

**He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.
He also watches over me in such a way
that not a hair can fall from my head
without the will of my Father in heaven;
in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.**

**Because I belong to him,
Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
assures me of eternal life
and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.**

Call for the offering

Even in the midst of our darkest days and deepest longings, we are assured of the presence of God. In gratitude for our God who is big enough to hold our loving praise and our cries of woe, let us offer signs of our thanks with the gifts of our time, talent, and treasure.

Prayer of dedication

Gracious God, all that we have is yours. Accept these gifts — signs of our gratitude — as we return them to you. Show us how to use them that they may point to your abiding love, which is our eternal hope. Amen.



Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

God of our joyful days and our aching days,
we give thanks that we can trust you with the heaviest parts of our hearts,
and so we bring to you the burdens of our complicated world,
and we ask you to lighten the load.

Yet, even in the midst of an avalanche of challenging news,
we spot the sliver of moon in the night,
and so our prayer of longing is punctuated by gratitude.
Hear both, our cries for relief and our warbling song of joy, O God.

Sometimes our words of lament get stuck in our throats,
but we yearn for a better world —
 one that brings to life your plans for wholeness and well-being
 to fulfillment for all.

Heal our warring madness, and teach us the ways of peace
 with our global neighbors,
 within our polarized society,
 and in our local communities.

Breathe life into the lungs of those who are trampled down.
Turn the hearts of oppressors.

And stir our compassion and energies
 when indifference sets in for other people's struggle.

We raise to you the cries of those who may be feeling forsaken:
 those longing for relief from natural disaster,
 women and girls in societies which limit their
 opportunity and access to power,
 refugees who long for welcome and safety,
 overburdened healthcare workers,
 and all who wonder if someone — anyone —
 will take notice of their pain and extend comfort and hope.

Thank you for small signs of kindness and possibility
 in days that are bleak —
 the red bird perched on a bare branch,
 one hand brushing another in kindness,
 the familiar tune of "Happy Birthday,"
 the smell of baking bread.

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Sometimes our words of lament get stuck in our throats,
and so, O God, we carve out this silence for our hearts to speak to yours,
to trust you with our wounds,
our dreams long buried,
our yearnings for those most dear
and the fractures in our relationships,
Listen to our thoughts and our silence, O God.

(time of silence)

Thank you for small signs of possibility
and fresh hope that sparkle amidst the fog of ache —
laughter that surprises us,
children's imaginations,
a perfect crisp apple,
the first promising notes of a song we know by heart.

We are grateful that you hear our prayers
whether we are brimming with joy,
seething with anger,
crying out for justice,
or sighing with grief.

Hear us now, as we turn to the reliable words of the prayer for all our days,
the one that Jesus taught us to pray,
saying, "*Our father, who art in heaven . . .* "



Charge and benediction (*inspired by Psalm 22:3-5*)

As you go forward from this place,
whether it is with a spring in your step
or with resolve for the slog,
God goes with you,
 before you,
 beside you,
 and surrounding you.

You may entrust the shiniest parts of yourselves to our faithful God.
And you may entrust the shadows too.
For the same God our ancestors trusted with their cries,
hears our cries as well.
And their witness assures us that there is no shame in the cry —
that our with-us-God will not let us down.

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
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and provided for free distribution.

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