



Order of Worship

21st Sunday after Pentecost

October 17, 2021

Call to worship (*Psalm 104:1-3,5, 24, 35*)

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O God, how fantastic you are!

You are clothed in glory and grandeur!

You wear light like a robe;

You open the skies like a curtain.

**You make the clouds your chariot
and ride on the wings of the wind.**

You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.

Lord, you have done so many things!

You have made the earth overflow in wonder.

We praise you, with every bit of ourselves!

Praise the Lord!

Call to confession

Even the disciples, those closest to Jesus, get it wrong sometimes.

They ask off-the-wall questions

and frequently misunderstand Jesus' plans
for the world and for them.

But Jesus loves them still and trusts them

with his companionship and his ministry.

Trusting in a savior who can see our human fumbling

and still long to be near us and shape us anew,

let us come before God with the confessions of our hearts.



Prayer of confession

Holy God,
through Jesus, you taught us that the last shall be first
and the first shall be last,
but we often struggle with creating space so that others might thrive.

We are haphazard with your creation,
choosing convenience over conservation,
and recklessly assume there will always be enough to go around.

We idealize the poor as “happy with their small portion”
and put off acts of justice that
restore opportunities for the vulnerable.

We are often content for those on the margins to be “first” in the afterlife
but not in this life.

And sometimes we fall prey to the world’s priorities, which whisper
that we must come in first
and have the most
and that we are always in jeopardy of not being enough.

Help us, O God, to lean into the example of our servant savior,
who models power in vulnerability
and invites us to serve one another.

(Time for silent reflection)

Assurance of pardon *(based on Mark 10:45)*

Family of God,
our hope is in the Son of Man,
who came not to be served but to serve,
and who gave his life as a ransom for our own.

In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,
the debt of our sin has been paid,
and we have been freed for new life.

In Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven

Scripture readings

Sermon



Affirmation of Faith (*"Confession of 1967," Inclusive Language Version*)

God's sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness. But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men and women. The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of God's love.

Call for the offering

Our God trusts us to be agents of change and love. May we respond to the generosity of our God and to God's ceaseless hope in us by serving God through the sharing of the gifts of our time, toil and treasure.

Prayer of dedication

God of love, we know that all good things come from you. As we return these gifts to you, we pray that they will bring you joy. We pray that you will show us how to use them to serve you, your church and your people that you may be glorified. We pray this in the name of the one who modeled servant love for us, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

(This prayer is a modified call and response. It was written to correspond with either Richard Gillard's "The Servant Song," ("Glory to God" #727) or "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" ("Glory to God" #366). To print the lyrics for "The Servant Song," you will need a CCLI or EMICMG license. "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" is public domain and therefore free to use. Learn more about copyrights for hymns [here](#).)

Holy God, in three persons,

We wonder at you —

mighty enough to carve out the mountains yet
tender enough to be born as a baby,
powerful enough to conquer death but
humble enough to pause by a well with an ostracized woman.

We marvel at the complexities of you,
and we long for you to show us the way.

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Show us, O God, how to use the bits of power
that we have to break the chains of injustice.
But teach us to do that without the misuse of influence
and without the desire for personal glory.

Help us find ourselves in your song,
the one that rings out that whoever wishes to be great
will be a servant to all:

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion;
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.*

(Verse 1, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling;"
alternative: verse 1, "The Servant Song")

Holy God, it can be so hard to ask for help.
We often worry about being a burden,
and we know others often have needs bigger than our own.

Help us to trust that we can come to you
with the aches of our hearts —
for the world, our communities, our families and ourselves.

Give us the courage to share the journey with our fellow servants,
to carry the load when we can and to allow others to support us
when our legs wobble.

Help us find ourselves in your song:

*Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.*

(Verse 3, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling;"
alternative: verse 2, "The Servant Song")

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God of light and life,
there is so much strife in our world that
it can be difficult to catch a glimpse of hope sometimes.

We pray for all whose joy has been cast in shadow:
those in the grips of depression and addiction,
refugees with no safe place to call home,
your children living with heavy medical news,
caretakers in hospitals, public safety units and homes.

We pray for all who long for relief and celebration.
And we pray that you will show us how to tap into
our creativity, our talents, our voices and our time
to do whatever we can to alleviate pain, extend compassion
and offer comfort.

Help us find ourselves in your song:

*Finish then thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

(Verse 4, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling;"
alternative: verse 3, "The Servant Song")

Thank you, O God, for the example of our servant Lord, Jesus Christ,
help us find ourselves in his example and in prayer, as we join our
voices saying: Our father, who art in heaven ...



Charge and benediction

Let us go forth,
being as Christ to one another,
raising one another up,
stepping aside to make room for those who are left out,
seeking not to be served but to serve.

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 Teri McDowell Ott
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