



Order of Worship

4th Sunday after Epiphany

January 30th, 2022

Call to worship *(From the hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling")*

Love divine, all loves excelling,

Joy of heaven, to earth come down,

fix in us thy humble dwelling;

all thy faithful mercies crown.

Call to confession

Let us humbly approach God's throne of grace to confess our sins and present ourselves honestly before our Savior.

Prayer of confession

Savior God, you call us to love but we relish the fight. We divide ourselves into us and them and refuse to cross over, compromise, or contemplate the ways of the other side. Amen. Humble us in our certainty and arrogance, God. Remind us of the power of love calm conflict and wage peace. Amen

Assurance of pardon

Our God is a loving God, full of mercy. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Believe in this forgiveness, be at peace, and share the love you have graciously received. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Holy God, humble us and open us to your life-giving Word. As we hear your Word read and proclaimed today, may our hearts and minds be open to the Spirit's moving and Jesus' teaching. Amen.

Scripture readings



Sermon

Affirmation of faith

We believe there is no condemnation *Rom. 8:1, 28, 38, 39*
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 been called to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.
Let us return a portion of the gifts we have been given to Christ's
ministry and those most in need of love.

Prayer of dedication


In faith, Holy God, we present these offerings. We know that you
will bless and use them to further Christ's ministry and serve
those in need. May these gifts bless those we know who are
suffering and those known only to you. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer *(Based on 1 Corinthians 13:1-13)*

Eternal God,

You call us to a more radical love than words cross-stitched
on a pillow or framed on the wall by our bedroom nightstand
can convey. You call us to a love that includes our haters, our
enemies, those who demean and humiliate us. God, how can
we? How can we feel anything but disdain for awful people
who treat us awfully? Grant us the courage and the strength,
Holy God, to hold to that which is good.

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God, grant us patience in our practice of love. Help us not hit send on that scathing email that is so justified. Help us pause to breathe in and exhale out. Help us listen more, seek understanding, and approach those with whom we disagree with curiosity, humility and openness. Help us listen for the story beneath others' stories.

Peace-loving God, help us not provoke others with hard certainties, let us not be uncompromising and insistent on our own way. Open us to dialogue and to opinions different than our own. Build our endurance for bridge-building across barriers of difference so we can wage peace in our segregated world.

Finally, inspire us by your love through Christ's life, death and resurrection. Transform us in this love to live as Christ's disciples. Bless those who, in these pandemic times, are suffering, despairing and grieving and most in need of love.

United as the Body of Christ we lift these prayers to you, Savior God. Hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying together, **"Our Father ..."**

Charge and benediction

Love never ends.

May you leave this house of worship showered in the steadfast love of God, inspired by the love of the Holy Spirit, and ready to share the love of Jesus Christ with all who cross your path.

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

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott,
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