

Order of Worship

Third Sunday after the Epiphany
January 22, 2023

Call to worship (Psalm 27:1)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

We gather in the presence of God. Let us open our hearts and minds in worship.

Call to confession

Let us pause here to confess the sins that have kept us from recognizing and enjoying God's presence.

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, when despair and suffering overwhelm us, we cry out for you and feel abandoned. We doubt your presence and your promises. We believe you have turned away from us in anger. We ask why you have forsaken us. In these moments, strengthen us in faith and fill our hearts with courage. We believe, God. Help our unbelief. Amen.

Assurance of pardon (Psalm 103:17)

"The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting."
Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

God of epiphanies, you reveal yourself to us in diverse and numerous ways. Free us the distractions that turn our focus away from you and your Word. Open us to the truth you reveal to us today. Amen.

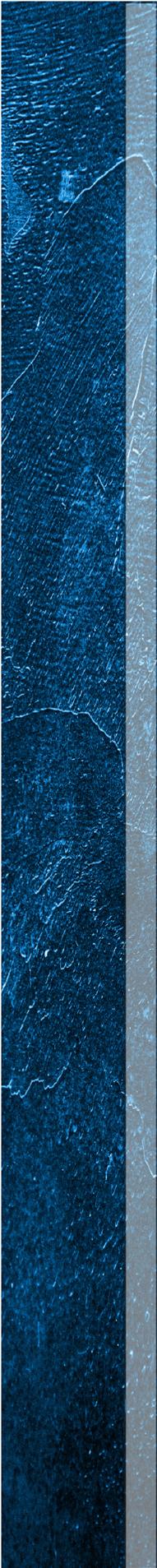
Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from A Brief Statement of Faith)

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves
and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.





The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.
In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Call for the offering

Let us return a portion of the gifts we have been given to Christ's ministry
and those most in need.

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, we present these offerings to you in faith. We trust 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

Eternal God, in this season of Epiphany, this season of Divine "show-
ing" we recall the wonder of Christmas and the birth of Emmanuel with
joy and gratitude. Still, our problems, our brokenness and our suffering
remain. Our hearts cry for you as we seek to know you face to face, as
intimate as creature and creator can get. So often we can't find you and
feel forsaken in the midst of our despair. Show us how wrong we are,
Holy God. Restore our confidence in your presence.

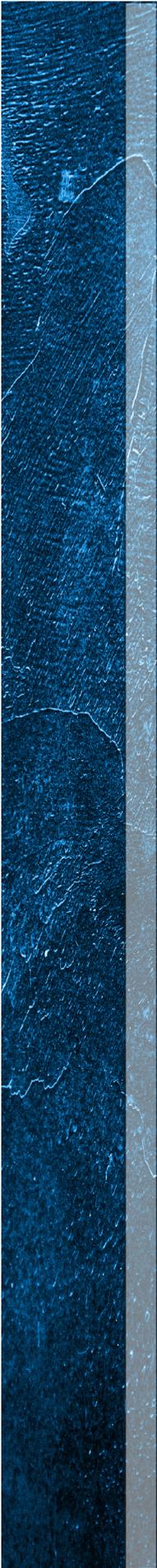
We pause here to focus our minds and hearts on you, God, in this prayer.
The psalmists, ages ago, lifted their prayers to you in faithful confidence
that you would hear and receive their petitions. Following their lead, we
lift our petitions for the world, our communities and our loved ones.

In your mercy, O God, **hear our prayers.**

We pray for our world full of violence, political tension and suffering.
We pray for the Ukrainians who remind us of democracy's fragility and
inspire us to cherish our right to self-determination. Protect those who
hold to good and resist evil. Soften the tyrants who fail to see the global
consequences of greedy pursuits. Lift the lowly in need of grace. Set the
oppressed free.

In your mercy, O God, **hear our prayers.**





We pray for our communities, for the people searching for companionship and communion, for the ill and their caregivers, for the laborers who ensure our needs are met. God, help us see you at work among us, in the bonds we form serving together, in kindness shown and care received, in the ways we grow in understanding and empathy for those whose lives are different. We praise you, God, for the many ways you show up. We praise you for becoming God-with-us in Jesus Christ. Dispel our doubts and fears so we can embrace your presence in the flesh.

In your mercy, O God, **hear our prayers.**

We pray for our loved ones, those whom we hold closest to heart and mind. Comfort those who grieve. Encourage those who are ill. Embrace those who have received bad news. Make space for those who struggle to belong. Generous God, filter our despair through your good news of great joy, so we might see and know and share your abundant hope and irresistible grace.

In your mercy, O God, hear the prayers of your people. Help us to live as epiphanies of your work and your presence, showing your love to all the world. Now, hear us as we pray the prayer Christ taught us, saying, **“Our Father...”**.

Charge and benediction (Based on Psalm 27:8)

Your heart beckons you to “Come! To seek God’s face!”

Let us listen to the needs of our heart and leave this house of worship ready to seek, find and follow our Savior.

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

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott
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