

Order of Worship

Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 19, 2023

Call to worship (based on Psalm 23)

The Lord leads us like a shepherd.

God nourishes our lives and restores our souls.

The Lord is with us, even in the darkest valley.

God's goodness and mercy are always close.

Call to confession

Jesus calls us to enter the joy of discipleship, the joy of following in his way. But sin clings closely, and we struggle to respond fully to Christ's invitation. Let us seek God's forgiveness so that we may know more deeply the joy God intends.

Prayer of confession

God of perfect love,
you continually bring forth life,
transforming sadness to joy,
and despair to hope
We are weak, but you are strong.
Our ways are flawed, but your ways are true.
We are seldom right, but you are never wrong.
Forgive us, redeem us, transform us.
Take away the sin that burdens us,
and restore us to the people you would have us be,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Declaration of forgiveness

Relentlessly, God seeks us out.
With abundant grace and boundless mercy,
God seeks us out.
This is good news!
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!





Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, illumine these words by your Spirit that we might hear what you would have us hear and be who you would us be, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from The Brief Statement of Faith)

We trust in Jesus Christ,
Fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.
With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Call for the offering

With gratitude for God's faithfulness and with thanksgiving for all that we have received, let us bring our gifts to God.

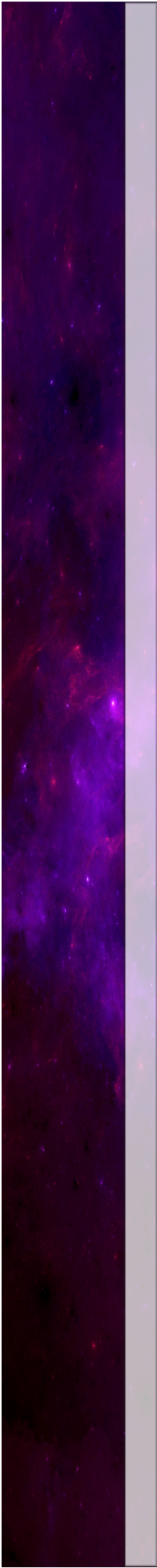
Prayer of dedication

O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, as you use us, to accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, the head of the church and the Lord of our lives. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Great God, in you is more love than we can imagine and more grace than we can fathom. You have shown yourself in Jesus Christ as a God who meets us where we are and loves us as we are. We are glad for this day and grateful for your many gifts. You bring good things into our lives, more than we can name, more than we can number. You give us the bread of life, sustaining our souls and feeding our deepest hungers. You accompany us on our way. Thank you for your abundant faithfulness.





Our hearts are full with many things today. Disease and death and pain and sorrow are constantly among us. The journey through these days is marked by uncertainty and heartache. We are frequently overwhelmed by the needs around us and within us. Some need healing, some need encouragement, some need comfort, some need assurance, we all need hope. So we turn to you asking you to hear our prayers and grant what we need for the living of these days.

We pray for our nation. We pray for renewed commitments to our common life. Refresh us in the values of your heart: justice, righteousness, compassion, mercy, peace. Help us to find a unity of purpose as citizens and neighbors.

We pray for your church in places near and far. May the waters of your grace continually refresh and empower us to extend the love of Jesus to all people. We pray for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), for the clarity of our witness and the success of our mission. We pray for our congregation, for our life together, and for our efforts to follow in the way of Jesus. Hear us. Hold us. Heal us. Help us. For the sake of our Savior, our Lord, Jesus Christ who taught us to pray like this: **“Our Father ...”**.

Charge and benediction

Let us go from this place trusting that God is with us and for us in every place.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you and abide with you this day and forevermore. Amen.

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Liturgy written by John Wurster and
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