

# Order of Worship

Seventh Sunday of Easter  
May 21, 2023

---

## Call to worship

Sing to God.

**Sing praises to God's name.**

Sing to God O kingdoms of the earth.

**Sing praises to the Lord.**

Let us worship God.

## Call to confession

Confession is a mirror by which we see ourselves more clearly. Let us offer our prayers to God.

## Prayer of confession

We confess, O God, that too often we have our head in the clouds. We are more comfortable with dreaming of the world as we wish it would be instead of working with you to bring that wish to reality. At times, we find it difficult to claim the power you have given us. Surely you have others more capable to be your witnesses? And so, we continue to gaze heavenwards. Jolt us out of our complacency, O God. Remind us to get a move on. Remind us we have work to do with you. Give us your energy, courage, and vision to be your witnesses to the end of the earth.

## Assurance of pardon

We are God's people

**created, loved and forgiven.**

The God of all grace has called us by name.

**God will restore, support, strengthen and establish us.**

It is good news to celebrate.

**We are forgiven!**

## Prayer for illumination

Open our eyes; open our hearts. May we hear your Word read and proclaimed so that our lives and our witness will be strengthened. Amen.



## Scripture readings

## Sermon

### Affirmation of faith (from A Declaration of Faith)

**We are certain that Jesus lives. He lives as God with us, touching all of human life with the presence of God. He lives as one of us with God. Because he shares our humanity and has bound us to himself in love, we have an advocate in the innermost life of God.**

**We declare that Jesus is Lord. His resurrection is a decisive victory over the powers that deform and destroy human life. His lordship is hidden. The world appears to be dominated by people and systems that do not acknowledge his rule. But his lordship is real. It demands our loyalty and sets us free from the fear of all lesser lords who threaten us. We maintain that ultimate sovereignty now belongs to Jesus Christ in every sphere of life. Jesus is Lord! He has been Lord from the beginning. He will be Lord at the end. Even now he is Lord.**

### Call for the offering

To God we give in thankful response for all the gifts God has given us. The money we give is but one way we say, "thank you." The morning offering will be received.

### Prayer of dedication

Good and gracious God, the money we place in plates or give online we pray will be used to bring your kingdom to earth. May our gifts strengthen this congregation to be more faithful, more present and more daring in our community and to the ends of the earth. Amen.

### Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

O God, we gather with the disciples' question on our hearts — is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel? Is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Sudan, to Ukraine, to Ethiopia, to Uvalde, to all the places where grief and fear blanket the lives of your people?

We remember the answer given: It is not for us to know the times (Acts 1:7) ... and yet we want to know. We desperately want to know. We want to know when there will be an end to violence and hate and oppression. We desperately want to know when people created in your image will exhibit love and care for one another as a first action. We desperately want to know when nations will turn swords into plowshares and leaders will lead with the wellbeing of the people uppermost in their hearts.

And then we remember the rest of what Jesus said to his disciples about receiving power from the Holy Spirit, about being his witnesses (Acts 1:8). And we wonder, just like your disciples 2000 years ago, here on the cusp of Pentecost: what power do you have in store for us? What are the ways you call us to witness? What would you have say and do as we continue to live a life of faith?



And so we return to our question: Is this the time, O God? Is it the time for us to claim the power you have given us? Is it the time for us to claim our role as witness? We pray for a sense of your clarity, your vision. Lead us, O God, in the ways and witness that will reveal your desire and intentions for your world.

As we immerse ourselves in your Word, we are reminded that you are the parent to orphans and protector of widows (Psalm 68:5). You give the desolate a place to live.

Scripture shows us again and again how you care and love for the oppressed, discounted and ignored. Is this the witness you call us to? Would you invite us, O God to join you in this work — the work of care and love for the ones disregarded and casted aside?

Following Jesus' example of praying for his disciples, we are bold to pray for your world, your children and for ourselves. May our prayers give voice to the hurts of our hearts and the commitments of our souls. May we with honesty acknowledge the world as it is and pray for your guidance as we your disciples work for the world you desire.

We offer this prayer in the name of the one who taught us to pray, **“Our Father....”**

### **Charge and benediction**

May your eyes cast heavenward give you the courage and energy to be about the work God has laid at your feet.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest, remain and abide with you today and all days. And all of God's people say: Amen.

© Presbyterian Outlook, 2023

Liturgy written by Sharon Core and provided for free distribution.

For more resources, visit [pres-outlook.org](https://pres-outlook.org)



**THE PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK**