

# Order of Worship

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
July 23, 2023

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## Call to worship

God's Spirit gathers us

**We are not alone**

God's Spirit calls us

**We are to discern together God's will**

God's Spirit sends us

**We are to shine like the sun, bearing witness to Christ our Savior**

## Call to confession (1 John 1:8)

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Sin is our stumbling block before God. Repentance clears our path to hear and receive God's truth. Let us confess our sins together.

## Prayer of confession

Master Gardener, weeds and wheat fill the fields of our lives, grow entangled, and are difficult to distinguish. We have not spent the time we should in prayer and study of your Word to help us discern what is evil and against your will. We excuse our complacency and justify our passive faith. Yet we need your truth. We hunger for your harvest. Jesus, forgive us. Deliver us from evil. Clear our path to you. Amen.

## Assurance of pardon

Through Christ's death and resurrection, we are a new creation, ready to shine like the sun to the glory of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

## Prayer for illumination

Illumine us, O God. Bless us with ears to hear your truth, vision to discern your path, and feet ready to move into action, responding to your call. Guide us and inspire us in this moment of proclamation. Amen.

## Scripture readings



## Sermon

### Affirmation of faith (Apostles' Creed)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
he descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand  
of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### Call for the offering

God dwells among us making all things new. Let us participate in this new creation by offering our gifts to God.

### Prayer of dedication

Grateful for your radical hospitality and steadfast love we present these gifts to you, God. Use them to further your will and transform our world into your new, redeemed creation. Amen.

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

Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul (Psalm 86:4).

Our souls, Savior God, open and flower before you. Our spirits soar in your presence. Our hearts warm in the presence of your divine love. We come to you in prayer, bow before you in humility, and offer you both petitions and praise.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication (Psalm 86:5-6).

Holy Spirit, Breathe of God, be with those who are suffering and struggling. Free the captives. Heal the sick. Care for the cast aside. Energize the exhausted. Lighten the load of those overwhelmed. Calm this world's warring madness. Shelter the innocent.

"Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an



undivided heart to revere your name" (Psalm 86:11).

Master Gardener, we walk among weeds and wheat, oftentimes unaware of the difference between good and evil. Help us discern your will and your way. Guide our feet as we walk and work in the garden of your world. Nurture us in your good soil. May our lives contribute to your kingdom to come. May our toil support the growth of your harvest.

"You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Psalm 86:15).

As the father welcomes the prodigal home, as the mother hen covers and protects her chicks, you welcome us, love us and receive us. We are a people who err and stray. Yet you seek us when we are lost. You love us until we find our way home. So often our suffering is of our own making. We sing your praise today, Glorious God, and dedicate our lives to your faithful path.

Now, as the Body of Christ and your covenant community, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us, saying, "**Our Father...**"

### **Charge and benediction**

God's Spirit sends us.

We are to shine like the sun, bearing witness to Christ our Savior.

May the nourishment of God's Word, the bond of Christian community, and the guidance of God's Holy Spirit fortify us for faithful lives of discipleship.

Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott and provided for free distribution.

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