



Order of Worship

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 16, 2023

Call to worship

The very word of God is a light to our feet,
a lamp to our path.

We gather this day to hear the Word of God,
to offer prayers and sing songs of praise.

We gather this day,
to worship God!

Call to confession

To know God is to know of God's mercy, justice, and love. To know God is to also know ourselves, and we are a people who have not loved as much as we should, always showed mercy, or worked for justice. So let us offer our prayer of confession, knowing that out of God's great mercy, we will be forgiven and made new.

Prayer of confession

Gracious and loving God, we are a people who are always concerned about ourselves. We worry about what is ours and are concerned with getting more. We have not been guided by your Spirit or the teachings of Christ. Forgive us, we pray, and gently guide us back to your way. Help us to think of others and sharing what we have with the world. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Hear the good news! There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! Know you are forgiven, and be at peace.

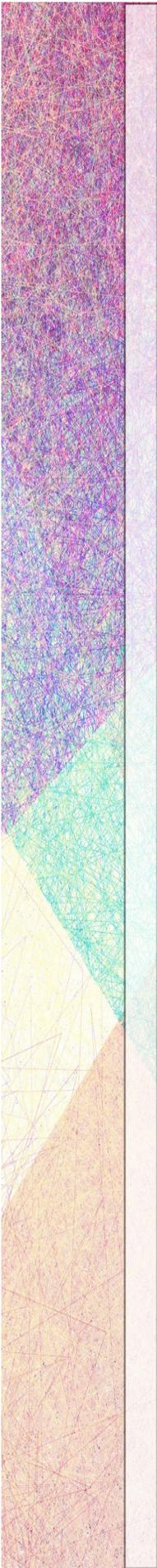
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

In the reading of you Word, may we be given light to see. May your word rest in our hearts and minds and in so doing, transform us into your faithful people. Amen.

Scripture readings





Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from A Declaration of Faith)

We know that God is not confined to the story we can tell. The story itself tells us God works his sovereign will among all peoples of the earth. We believe God works beyond our imagining throughout the universe. We acknowledge no other God. We must not set our ultimate reliance on any other help. We must not yield unconditional obedience to any other power. We must not love anyone or anything more than we love God. We praise and enjoy God. To worship God is highest joy. To serve God is perfect freedom. Amen.

Call for the offering

As Christ has been generous with us, to the point of death on the cross, let us be generous too. Let us give a part of what we have to God's work in the world. Let us give our offering.

Prayer of dedication

Gracious God, thank you for these gifts given this day and for the many gifts of our lives. May they be used ever and only to glorify you. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Gracious God, your care and providence extend to all, and so we come this day with our prayers for the world and all humanity.

We pray for all nations and their leaders. In a world where people are so often formed by their own self-interest and sinfulness, we pray that your will would be done. Grant those who govern the knowledge that they are to serve for the greater good and to guide the world into a better place than it finds itself today.

Let us work for a world of equality and fairness. There is still so much difficulty and darkness in our world. May our church and our world work for a more just and equitable society.

We pray for our local communities. May the Spirit lead each community as it walks into an uncertain future. May we learn to place an emphasis on hospitality and welcome and may our cities and towns be beacons of tolerance and love.

During this busy summer, we pray that you would be with all those who travel. Grant mercy and safety to them as they travel near and far. Keep our children safe, we pray, in this summertime of sports and activities. Be with the elderly — may they find rest and renewal this season too. And for all who are sick and suffering — we ask for your healing and peace.

We pray for all churches — big churches and small churches, rural churches and urban churches, churches of every denomination and creed. Especially we pray for our Methodist brothers and sisters as they struggle with separation and dissension in their journey to become a more inclusive sign of your kingdom. We pray too for our Baptist broth-



ers and sisters. May they recognize the gifts that so many have to offer and may you heal their divisions.

May all who call on the name of Jesus Christ flourish in the days ahead. We ask this all in the name of Jesus and offer together the prayer that he taught us saying, **“Our Father....”**

Charge and benediction

May we each go out to love and care, to find the Spirit’s leading and join in its work and to bless the world as we have been so richly blessed. In the name of our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, Amen.

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Liturgy written by Tara W. Bulger and provided for
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