



Order of Worship

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 27, 2023

Call to worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord,

who made the heavens and the earth.

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,

then the flood would have swept us away.

The God who saved Israel is still at work in the world,

hearing the cries of the afflicting and setting God's people free.

Thanks be to God!

Call to confession (Romans 12:3)

The Apostle Paul writes, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but think of yourself with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." In sober judgment and humility, let us confess our sin before God and one another:

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, you are always present and active amid your people. We confess that sometimes we fail to recognize and respond to your saving work in the world. We defer to power and privilege, expect the tried and true, and succumb to doubt and despair when your ways are not clear. Behold, you are doing a new thing; help us to perceive it. Forgive us when we do not respond to your call. Liberate us from our fears and self-imposed limitations. Guide us into the fullness of life and love that you are at work preparing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Friends, hear the good news: Our God makes a way where there is no way, infusing our world with grace and hope when such goodness feels long gone. We are a people redeemed and restored.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Prayer for illumination

Mysterious God, we trust that you are at work among us, even when you are hidden from our sight. By the power of your Spirit, open our



eyes to see you, our ears to hear you, and our arms to embrace your truth, as it comes to us in your Word. 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
and 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.**

Call for the offering

By the mercy of God, we are called to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, for this is our act of worship. Our gifts differ, but all can be used to further God's kingdom. Let us receive the morning offering.

Prayer of dedication

Generous God, you are the source of all good gifts, and you are the one who taught us how to give. Receive our offering — an act of faith that even our small gifts have power and purpose in your world. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of the exodus, we give you thanks for your continuing power of liberation in the world today. You create all that is out of chaos and formlessness. You draw your people out of our suffering, making a way where there is no way. You save us and forgive us and restore us to new life. Hear our prayers this morning for the whole human family.

God of Jochebed, we give you thanks for the fierce, maternal love in





which you enfold us. Help us to hold one another and all creation with that same love, tenderness and fidelity. May we see everything and everyone that you have made, treat the earth and one another with respect, and rejoice that all you have created is, indeed, very good.

God of Miriam, we give you thanks for caregivers in our world, for all who watch over and tend to those in need. Give them strength, wisdom and endurance for the task at hand. Surround them and us with your loving care that we may remember you are the one who sustains us all.

God of the Egyptian Princess, we give you thanks for people in positions of power and privilege who use the resources at their disposal to seek justice, pursue peace and offer compassion to those in need. Pour out your sovereign wisdom on presidents, governors and all elected and appointed officials that they might lead the people entrusted to them in paths of righteousness.

God of Shiphrah and Puah, we give you thanks for those among us practicing faithful resistance to the powers of evil. Give us the courage, persistence and humor necessary to stand up to Pharaoh in our day, to choose life over death, to usher in those new things being born in our midst.

God of all people, this morning we lift those in our midst and in our world in need of your healing and wholeness. Be with people who are sick or injured, hungry or homeless, grieving or lonely, in prison or estranged from loved ones. Comfort the afflicted and send your presence to all who suffer.

God who forms the church out of diverse and disparate people, send your Spirit to enliven us and equip us for ministry. As our bodies are made up of many members, build us up into the Body of Christ that we may be your church and members of one another. Keep us faithful to the gospel until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying, **“Our Father...”**.

Charge and benediction

Go forth from this place, to speak truth to power, to love and serve the least of these, and to seek God’s Spirit and embody that Spirit, in the places where God seems absent.

And as you go, may God’s creative energy animate you, may Christ’s liberating mercy surround you, and may the Holy Spirit’s subversive presence empower you, now and forever more, Amen.

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Liturgy written by Ginna Bairby and provided for free distribution.

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