



# Order of Worship

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost  
October 29, 2023

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## Call to worship (based on Psalm 1)

Happy are those who do not take the path that sinners tread.

**Our delight is in the law of the Lord.**

May we be like trees planted by streams of God's living water.

**May our lives bear good fruit, loving God and loving neighbor.**

## Call to confession

Sin betrays us and our God. Repentance redeems and restores. Let us confess our sins together.

## Prayer of confession

Eternal God, your law commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Too often we prioritize our own interests above the health and welfare of others. We betray you and our best selves by living without regard for the ways our actions harm our neighbors in need and the planet entrusted to our care. Open our hearts to love. Open our minds to honestly acknowledge our role in wrongdoing. Forgive us and return us to your way of righteousness.

Amen.

## Assurance of Pardon (2 Corinthians 5:17; Book of Common Worship)

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

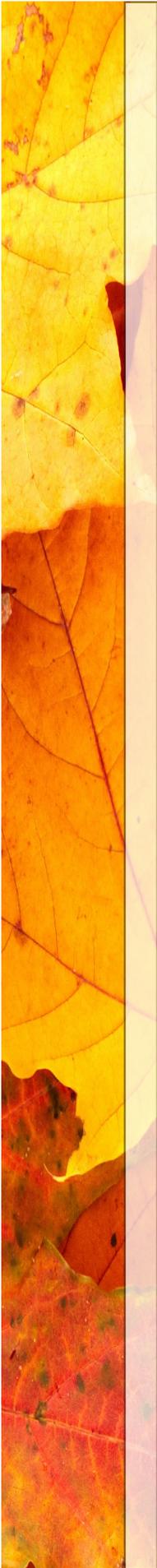
## Prayer for illumination

Bless us, O God, with ears to hear your truth, vision to discern your path, and feet ready to move into action. Open our minds and our hearts to the reading of your Word, and the honest proclamation of your truth. Ready us to respond to the Spirit's call. Amen.

## Scripture readings

## Sermon





## **Affirmation of faith** (from the Belhar Confession)

### **We believe**

- that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;
- that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;
- that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;
- that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity.

### **Call for the offering**

God loves us and blesses us with abundance. God also calls us to love others and be generous with all we have been given. In gratitude to God, let us present our tithes and offerings.

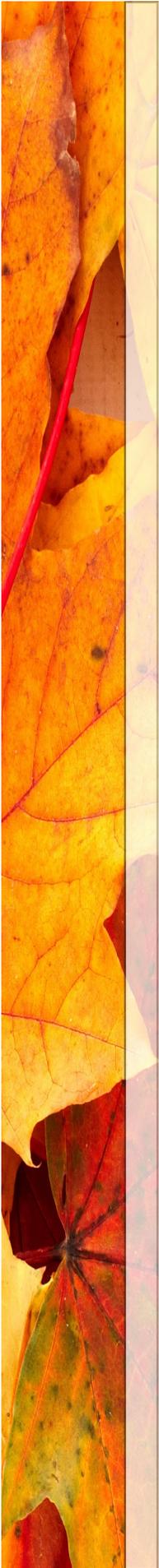
### **Prayer of dedication**

Holy God, these offerings are only a portion of all that you have given us. We gratefully entrust these gifts to your care and Christ's ministry. May these gifts reflect our love for our neighbors in need; blessing others as we have been blessed. Amen.

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

God of history, you know our story better than we know ourselves. You are the Alpha and the Omega, with us from the beginning, with us until the end. Your steadfast love is our ever-present help and hope. We praise you for your faithfulness. Despite our wanderings and failures, you





have not abandoned us. We are your people. You are our God. Hear our prayers of gratitude.

God of redemption, you call us to repent from the sins we have committed and the harms we've perpetuated. You call us to learn from past mistakes and seek your path of reconciliation. Yet we are a stubborn and wayward people. We have soul work to do, examining the painful truths of our interior lives so we can be transformed for honest, outward living. God grant us the courage for reckoning with our past, so we can reconcile and redeem our present, and build a better future with you.

God of the powerful and privileged, we scream in frustration over “politics as usual” and national leaders who squander opportunities for civil dialogue and real change. We groan in protest over every political setback and join our voices to the chorus calling for necessary progress. We lament the problems of our world that feel utterly insurmountable. Yet, we are not without resources. You have blessed us with gifted leaders and voices of reason. Lift these people up, Holy God. Call them to service. Grant them the platform and the votes they need to make a difference.

God of creation, stoke the fires of urgency in pursuing justice for our planet. May those of us who do not live where flood waters are rising or wildfires raging or the earth shaking understand our environmental emergency and give this climate crisis our passionate attention. Help us change our consumeristic ways, adapt to healthier planet habits, and treat nature with the care and respect she deserves.

God of our Savior, you command us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. In all that we do, help us to emulate Christ. As Christ's disciples, help us follow his way of love, truth, and justice. As Christ's body, may the world know your love through us — what we do, who we are, how we pray.

Finally, hear us as we pray the prayer Jesus taught us, saying: **“Our Father ....”**

### **Charge and benediction**

We do not leave this sanctuary and leave God behind.

God's law is clear.

We are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

May this commandment be ever before us; guiding us, inspiring us, enabling us to be Christ's body – his hands, his feet, his heart – in this, God's world.

May the grace, hope, peace, and love of God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer be with us all, now and forever. Amen.

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

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