



Order of Worship

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost
November 5, 2023

Call to worship

Come, all who are weary from the past week.

We come seeking rest; We come seeking comfort.

Come, all who are in need of inspiration for the week ahead.

We come seeking God's truth, word and worship that will set us on the faithful path.

Come, all who are humble, open, and ready to learn.

We come as God's students, ready to listen and learn.

Call to confession

Confession requires a humble heart. Let us bow before our God to honestly confess our sins.

Prayer of confession

God our teacher, we often exalt ourselves while evaluating and judging others. We assume too much and don't invest enough in listening, learning, and seeking to understand. You call us to humility, yet we resist, puffing ourselves up with prideful arrogance and rigid certainty. Forgive us, soften our hearts and open our minds to all we have yet to learn. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

"Your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Isaiah 6:7
Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

You call us through your Word read and proclaimed, Holy God. May our eyes be opened and our hearts willing to follow wherever your Spirit leads. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon





Affirmation of faith (from A Brief Statement of Faith)

**We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.**

Call for the offering

Friends, out of the abundance we have been given, let us humbly present our tithes and offerings to our God.

Prayer of dedication

God, you call us to Christ's mission and ministry. Bless these gifts that they might spread the hope of your good news, feed the hungry, shelter the poor, comfort the suffering, and free the captives. Bless us, also, so that our lives conform to radical love and faithful humility. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Eternal God,

We gather as Christians, who love each other and love this world. Our hearts are burdened by the violence we witness in nations far away and in neighborhoods close to home. We grieve when your people suffer, and your peaceable kingdom seems like an impossible dream. It's just too much, at times, O God. We'd much rather keep our heads down and push on, pretending that all is okay.

And yet, you call. You call us not to close ourselves off from the pain and the suffering of the world. You call us to stay human, to care for the suffering, to seek understanding and not dehumanize enemies as objects, easy to dismiss.





You know our history of complicated conflicts, tense polarization, and situations so politicized that we are afraid to say or pray anything. Yet we know you grieve the violence of war and condemn abhorrent acts of terrorism. As war rages in the Holy Land, we know you grieve the historical suffering of Jews and Palestinians. May our prayers for peace be uttered out loud for all to hear, our prayers for diplomacy, and for difficult, yet faithful conversation to resume.

God, we also groan in grief over the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia. Pave a path toward peace in this tragic conflict, and all wars happening across the globe. Protect the innocent wherever bombs of destruction fall.

God of grace, even as wars rage, there is suffering close to home, as well. We pray for those who worry about loved ones and care for their sick. We pray for the exhausted, the depressed, the grief-stricken who we count among our friends and family. We pray for the poor and marginalized. We pray for the angry and overlooked.

Holy One, in a world so broken and in need of love, you do not leave us without hope. Your scriptures help us glimpse your vision for our future; a vision of our planet redeemed and renewed, a vision of peace and comfort where death, crying and pain will be no more. You are at work in our world making all things new. God our savior, we place our trust in this hopeful promise, even as we live, trying our faithful best to be Christ's body; his hands, his feet — sharing your love with others.

Now, as people of the church and the body of Christ, hear us as we pray together the prayer Jesus taught us: "Our Father ...".

Charge and benediction

We do not leave God behind when we leave this sanctuary.

God's call to love, to humility, to work and service that benefit all, is clear. May this call 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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