



# Order of Worship

First Sunday after Christmas  
December 31, 2023

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## Call to worship (from Psalm 90)

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,

**so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.**

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and prosper for us the work of our hands —

**O prosper the work of our hands!**

Let us worship God!

## Call to confession

Scripture tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Scripture also promises us that we are now made right with God by God's grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Acknowledging this truth about ourselves and with gratitude for the truth about God, let us confess our sins in God's presence and before one another.

## Prayer of confession

**Gracious and loving God, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we look back and recognize the many ways we have fallen short of your glory: missed opportunities to share your love; times when we were silent when we could have spoken up for what was right; indifference to your claim on our whole lives through Jesus Christ; and a lack of gratitude for your amazing grace by which you save us and call us to be your people. Lord, forgive us.**

**As we look ahead to a new year, free us from thinking we can save ourselves. Help us to follow where you lead. Show us how to be your children and your heirs, forgiven and freed to live for our God and for one another in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**





## **Assurance of pardon**

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **Prayer for illumination**

Almighty God, as we hear your Word read and proclaimed, may it not return to you empty. May it accomplish that which you purpose. May it succeed in the thing for which you sent it. Open our ears and hearts to your Word that we may live as your children and heirs. Amen.

## **Scripture readings**

## **Sermon**

### **Affirmation of faith** (from A Declaration of Faith)

Jesus, the long-expected Savior,  
came into the world as a child,  
descended from David,  
conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of Mary, a virgin.  
He lived as a Jew among Jews.  
He announced to his people  
the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth.  
We affirm that Jesus was born of woman  
as is every child,  
yet born of God's power  
as was no other child.  
In the person and work of Jesus,  
God himself and a human life  
are united but not confused,  
distinguished but not separated.  
The coming of Jesus was itself  
the coming of God's promised rule.  
Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,  
he brings about the relationship between God and humanity  
that God always intended.

Jesus is Lord!  
He has been Lord from the beginning.  
He will be Lord at the end.  
Even now he is Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Call for the offering**

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Let us give thanks to the Lord as we continue our worship and bring our tithes and offerings.





## Prayer of dedication

Gracious and giving God, we give thanks to you for you are good. Your steadfast love endures forever. We thank you for the blessings of the past year and for how you have stood with us and guided us in difficult times. We give thanks that you will stand with us and guide us in the year to come. Bless these offerings that they may be used to your glory and in service to others in the name of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Help us to have grateful hearts and to live as the joyful people of God; through Jesus Christ, the greatest gift of all. Amen.

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

Eternal God, we praise you that in you we live and move and have our being. As you have always guided your people by your grace and mercy, we seek your guidance in the new year. Help us to demonstrate the love of Christ in all we do as a church and in our personal lives. When we worry about life, help us to put our trust in you and strive first for your kingdom and righteousness. In our failures, let us look to you for forgiveness and correction. In our successes, may we give glory to your name rather than brag about our accomplishments.

God of all wisdom, we often do not now how to pray as we ought. Thank you that your Spirit intercedes for us with sighs to deep for words, for there is much in our world about which to sigh. Lord, in your mercy we pray for peace, for justice, for reconciliation, for healing, for truth, for new hearts, and for clear vision to see you at work in our world. We pray for the courage to commit ourselves again to Jesus Christ as Lord. May we seek your will in all things, even as Jesus always put your will above his own.

Lord of all time and space, as we mark another year, remind us that in your sight one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. Your steadfast love and mercy are the sure foundation for our lives. We thank you for the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of your Son, our Savior. As your children and heirs, may we lead lives worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace as we pray the prayer our Lord taught us: **"Our Father ...."**

## Charge and benediction

As we leave the old year  
and enter the new,  
go with these assurances:

The risen Lord says,  
"I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the first and the last,  
the beginning and the end."

Jesus Christ is the same  
yesterday and today and forever.





The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with all of you.  
Amen.

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