



# Order of Worship

Second Sunday after Epiphany  
January 14, 2024

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## Call to worship (based on Psalm 139:7-10)

Where can we go from God's spirit?

**If we ascend to heaven, God is there; if we make our bed in Sheol, God is there.**

If we take the wings of morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

**Even there God's hand shall lead us, and God's right hand will hold us fast.**

## Call to confession

Let us approach God with confidence, trusting in God's grace as we humbly confess our sins.

## Prayer of confession

**Gracious God, you know us better than we know ourselves. You know our sins even before we confess. Your knowledge is wonderful, but also challenging. We'd much rather avoid painful truths and deny our role in wrongdoing. Help us face our failings so we can move forward in truth. Amen.**

## Assurance of pardon (Psalm 103:17)

"The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

## Prayer for illumination (based on Psalm 19:14)

Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. As we approach your Word, may we be ready to receive the message you intend for us today. 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** (Acts 20:35)

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

## **Prayer of dedication**

Holy God, these offerings are only a portion of all that you have given us. We gratefully present these gifts and entrust them to your work in this world. May our gifts share the good news of the gospel to those who are in need. May these gifts help unburden those with the heaviest of loads. Amen.

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

Eternal God, just as you called Samuel and the prophets of old, you call us to lives of love and justice: breaking down barriers that divide, building bridges of cooperation, peace, and beloved community. As we remember the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., we pray for the day when all God's children can be free. We pray for the day your children will not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character. We pray for the day when hate and violence and bigotry are overpowered by love





and peace and acceptance. Let justice roll down like waters, Holy God, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

For too long, God of justice, oppressed peoples have heard the word, “Wait” — a word that King said almost always meant “Never.” God, help us push toward progress on issues of justice and work diligently toward the vision of your kin-dom community.

Holy, God, hear the prayers of your people.

As global wars rage and gun violence desecrates, protect the innocent, and help us prioritize efforts of peace.

In the face of political polarization, help us listen more, seek understanding, and approach those with whom we disagree with curiosity, humility and openness. Help us listen for the story beneath others’ stories.

In the face of fear and anxiety, pressures and provocation, help us find in you a refuge and strength, a steadfast support in times of trial. Remind us, Holy God, we are not alone.

Bless those who are suffering, ill, and grieving. Bless those who feel weak and worn down by our world.

United as the Body of Christ we lift these prayers to you, Savior God. Hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying together, **“Our Father...”**.

### **Charge and benediction**

May we leave this house of worship  
emboldened by the Spirit  
redeemed by God’s Grace and  
ready to follow Christ’s call.

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

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott and provided  
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