

Order of Worship

Baptism of the Lord Sunday
January 7, 2024

Call to worship

God spoke the creative Word into the formless void.

The cosmos cries, "Glory!"

From the wilderness, God brought forth new life and liberation.

The plants and animals that inhabit the wild places cry, "Glory!"

A messenger in the wilderness brings good news.

God's people cry, "Glory!"

In baptism, we are united to God through Jesus Christ.

With all of creation, we cry "Glory!"

Call to confession

The One who was without sin received the baptism of repentance so that we who have sinned may be covered by his righteousness. The Spirit enables us to tell the truth of our brokenness, assured already of the grace we know in Jesus Christ. Let us confess together:

Prayer of confession

Creating God, we cannot look at our lives, our communities, or the world around us without seeing the fractures and brokenness that reflect the reality of sin.

You created the earth and called it good, but it now groans, awaiting redemption and re-creation under the weight of our greed, abuse and carelessness.

You created humanity in your image, and called us very good, but we have ignored the image of God in each other. We have created, maintained and benefitted from unjust systems built on divisions based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and more.

You poured out your love in Jesus Christ, who showed us how to live and how to love, but we continue to make our own path, follow our own desires, and neglect to love others as Christ loves us.

Lord, have mercy. Rend the heavens. Re-create us now. Amen.



Assurance of pardon

The heavens part, the waters swirl and the dove descends, reminding us that we, too, are God's beloved children. We are covered by God's grace and forgiven in Jesus Christ. Amen!

Prayer for illumination

God of Wisdom, send your Holy Spirit upon us to show us your Word, and show us your way. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (The Apostles' Creed)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

(Note: The Apostles' Creed is particularly appropriate as an affirmation of faith for this Sunday, and may be incorporated into a reaffirmation of the baptismal vows in the liturgy.)

Call for the offering

We are called in virtue of our baptism to a life of service. We are equipped through the gifts and grace of the Holy Spirit. Let us live into our baptismal calling, sharing from what we have received according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, we trust in the provisions of your love and the abundance of your grace. May the gifts we offer bring glory to you in the ways they bear your love into the world. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.



Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of new beginnings, as we turn the calendar page to a fresh, new year, we long to erase and leave behind the brokenness of the year behind us. We forget that our time is not your time. We are grateful that you are just as present with us today as you were last week, and that you will be present with us in the coming weeks when we are ready for yet another fresh start.

We pray for all that we wish to erase:

Wars, genocide, and atrocities that are beyond what most of us can imagine,
Places on the brink of humanitarian crisis, and those already past it,
Senseless gun violence,
Climate change and its many devastating facets,
Inequalities of wealth and access,
The erosion of democracy,
Cultural, social, political, and familial divides,
Economic despair,
Loneliness,
Hopelessness,
Hunger for food,
Thirst for clean water,
Addiction,
Despair,
and more.

Rend the heavens, we pray!

We pray for the burdens that we continue to carry forward:

Scary diagnoses,
Unknown and uncertain futures,
Loss of loved ones,
Watching loved ones losing more of themselves.

Send your Holy Spirit of comfort and peace!

We follow Jesus, reminded that the waters of baptism unite us to you and to each other. We enter wildernesses not of our choosing, reminded that they are places of new beginnings.

Our time is not your time, and yet in this new year, we believe that you are doing a new thing. Hear our prayers for new beginnings, new hope, and healing as we offer you the prayers of our hearts...

We entrust the prayers voiced, the ones that remain held in confidence, and those known only to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray by saying, **"Our Father..."**.



Charge and benediction

Hear the good news: God is doing a new thing! Refreshed and renewed by the waters that unite us to God and to each other, let us go into the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit, following the way of Jesus Christ.

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of our parent God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, today and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Stephanie Sorge and provided for free distribution.

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