



# Order of Worship

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany  
January 28, 2024

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## Call to worship (from Psalm 111)

Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

**Great are your works, O Lord,  
pondered by all who delight in them.**

Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,  
and your righteousness endures forever.

**You cause your wonders to be remembered;  
you are gracious and full of compassion.**

## Call to confession

Jesus calls us to enter the joy of discipleship, the joy of following in his way. But sin clings closely, and we struggle to respond fully to Christ's invitation. Let us seek God's forgiveness so that we may know more deeply the joy God intends.

## Prayer of confession

**Merciful God, in Jesus, we have seen your glory. Yet our sinfulness often blocks out the light of Christ. We are quick to accuse and slow to confess. We find faults easily in others while ignoring our own shortcomings. We have squandered your gifts. We have turned from your ways. We have ignored your Word. Have mercy on us, compassionate God. Pour out your Holy Spirit on our sinful lives. Wash us with your love and cleanse us with your grace that day by day we might move closer to the people you would us be. Amen.**

## Declaration of forgiveness

Relentlessly God seeks us out with abundant grace and boundless mercy. This is good news!

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

## Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, illumine these words by your Spirit that we might hear what you would have us hear and be who you would us be, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.





## Scripture readings

### Sermon

#### **Affirmation of faith** (from Colossians 1:15-20)

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation;  
in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,  
things visible and invisible.  
All things have been created through him and for him.  
He himself is before all things,  
and in him all things hold together.  
Jesus Christ is head of the body, the church;  
he is the beginning,  
the firstborn of the dead,  
so that he might come to have first place in everything.  
For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things,  
whether on earth or in heaven,  
by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen.

#### **Call for the offering**

With gratitude for God's faithfulness and with thanksgiving for all that we have received, let us bring our gifts to God.

#### **Prayer of dedication**

O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, even as you use us, to accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, the Head of the church and the Lord of our lives. Amen.

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

Holy God, eternal yet immediate, beyond yet near, we praise you for all that you have made, for grace that amazes, for mercy that cleanses, and for love that never lets us go. Hear our prayers, our shouts and our sighs, our whispers and our cries, and that which we can only speak deep within. Hear our prayers, for we long for all to be well, for all to be right, for all to be whole.

Comfort the sick and encourage those who strive to heal them.

Hold the mournful and grant them peace that passes understanding.

Enlighten our leaders and give them a vision that promotes the common good.

Shelter those reeling from stormy blasts. Sustain those starting on new adventures. Satisfy those who hunger and thirst for justice.

We pray for teachers and students, for parents and children, for caregivers and care receivers, for gifts of knowledge and wisdom passed one to another.



Refresh your church. Give us a creative spirit as we travel together, sharing life and ministry. Renew our commitment to using well your abiding gifts of faith, hope and love.

You have shown us in Jesus an example of courageous compassion and risky generosity and bold truth-telling. Help us to follow in his way so that we might know the fullness of life you intend for us all.

God of each day and all days, hear us, hold us and keep us, for the sake of Jesus our Savior, who taught us to pray like this: **“Our Father....”**

### **Charge and benediction**

Let us go from this place trusting that in Jesus Christ God is with us and for us in every place.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you and abide with you this day and forevermore. Amen.

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Liturgy written by John Wurster and provided for free distribution.

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