

Order of Worship

First Sunday of Lent
February 18, 2024

Call to worship (based on Psalm 25)

O God, in you we trust.

Lead us in your truth and teach us,
for you are the God of our salvation;
for you we wait, for you we worship.

Call to confession

We pause here to examine our lives, our temptations, and the ways we have fallen short before our God. Let us confess our sins together.

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, as we begin this Lenten wilderness journey with Jesus, we confess our neglect of you and our faith. We make idols of nation, money and power. We build walls instead of better relationships. We fail to follow Jesus to the poor, the destitute, the stranger. Empty us this Lent, Holy God. Guide us in our faith so we can leave this wilderness season in right relationship with you. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Remember and receive these hopeful words from John 8:31-32, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Receive God's truth. Receive God's grace. Accept the freedom God provides. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

God of grace, help us seek you and the truth you intend for us today. Let us not be distracted by worldly pursuits or pleasures. Help us to focus our hearts and minds on you and your Word read and proclaimed. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon



Affirmation of faith (from A Brief Statement of Faith)

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves
and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.
The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.
In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Call for the offering

God calls us to lives of grateful generosity. Let us praise the Giver of all good gifts through our offering today.

Prayer of dedication

God of grace, you provide for us in amazing ways. Accept these offerings as signs of our gratitude and bless them to further Christ's ministry and mission among the poor, the suffering and the destitute. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

O God, your Word is holy and hope-filled. We read these words from the Gospel of Mark today with joy and thanksgiving: "The Kingdom of God has come near." On this First Sunday of Lent, we give thanks for all the ways you come near and make yourself known to us, Great God. We give thanks for the boundaries you break on our behalf, crossing the heavens to come to earth, moving from the spiritual to the physical in the life and flesh of Jesus. As we follow your Beloved Son and our Beloved Savior into the wilderness of Lent, we pray for more signs of your "Kingdom come near" in our lives, the lives of those we love, and our world.

God of all nations, the kingdoms we have built have desecrated your creation and established hierarchies of domination. We pray for an end to violence, war, hostage taking and terrorism, the abhorrent methods by which one tribe seeks to dominate another. May your kingdom come near, enlightening us to the error of our ways, to the consequences and



costs of our sins, to alternative structures that promote peace, justice, and dignity for all life. Just as your Spirit possessed Jesus on the day of his baptism, may your Spirit fill us with the passion and the courage to pursue a more just world for all, the building of peaceful kingdoms, not hierarchical kingdoms, where all can flourish, and all creation can be renewed.

God of the incarnation, we praise you for the intimacy of knowing you through your son, Jesus Christ, and the way you come near in human flesh. You know our joy and our pain. You know our need and that which truly satisfies. You know our suffering and the path to healing. Your presence is balm to our wounds. Your love is an unfathomable grace. God be with those we know who are suffering and struggling, as well as those known only to you.

We pray for the innocent trapped beneath falling bombs and warring nations ...

We pray for those forced from their homes, unsafe and insecure and seeking asylum ...

We pray for the unhoused and the hungry, struggling to survive ...

We pray for the overwhelmed and exhausted, in need of respite, rest and relief ...

We pray for those who are ill and their caregivers ...

We pray for those who are struggling under the weight of grief ...

God, come near to those who are suffering. Also, come near to those in our community, those on our prayer list, those we name silently before you now

We lift these prayers to you, Gracious God, confident that you hear us and even know the prayers we are too afraid to pray. Hear us now as we join our hearts and our voices to pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray by saying, **“Our Father”**

Charge and benediction (from the “Invitation to Observe a Holy Lent,” Book of Common Worship, Ash Wednesday Service)

Beloved people of God;
I invite you, in the name of Christ,
to observe a holy Lent
by self-examination and penitence,
by prayer and fasting,
by works of love,
and by meditating on Gods' Word.

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

© Presbyterian Outlook, 2024

Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott and provided for free distribution.

For more resources, visit pres-outlook.org

