



# Order of Worship

Second Sunday of Lent  
February 25, 2024

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## Call to worship (based on Mark 8:31-38)

Let us not be ashamed of our Savior. Let us sing and praise our God out loud.

**In the midst of the crowd, we will praise you. In our community, we will bear witness to our faith.**

Let us set our minds on divine things.

**Let us take up our cross and follow Christ.**

## Call to confession

When we cry to God in prayer and confession, God hears. Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence and faith.

## Prayer of confession

**Savior God, the public spectacle of the cross calls us to account. We hesitate and hedge when opportunities arise to speak of you. We are shy in faith and not bold to proclaim. Your story saves, yet we keep it to ourselves. Forgive our reticence of faith. Forgive the ways we fail to serve as public witnesses. Help us be your candlelight, held high to set the world aglow. Amen.**

## Assurance of pardon

God does not forsake us. Our God is a gracious God, abounding in steadfast love. Know that in Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

## Prayer for illumination

Merciful, God, help us to seek you and the message you intend for us in your Word read and proclaimed today. Amen.

## Scripture readings

## Sermon





## **Affirmation of faith** (from A Brief Statement of Faith)

In life and in death we belong to God.  
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,  
whom alone we worship and serve.  
We trust in Jesus Christ,  
fully human, fully God.  
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:  
preaching good news to the poor  
and release to the captives,  
teaching by word and deed  
and blessing the children,  
healing the sick  
and binding up the brokenhearted,  
eating with outcasts,  
forgiving sinners,  
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.  
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,  
Jesus was crucified,  
suffering the depths of human pain  
and giving his life for the sins of the world.  
God raised this Jesus from the dead,  
vindicating his sinless life,  
breaking the power of sin and evil,  
delivering us from death to life eternal.

## **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. May our offerings provide for others and be used to further Christ's ministry and mission. Amen.

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

God our hope and our holy companion, we come before you on this Second Sunday of Lent, knowing we can be honest because you know us; you know our thoughts, our struggles, our joys. You know our prayers even before they form in our minds and are articulated with whispered words. You know how we struggle. You know how we hope. You delight in our joy. You desire our peace.

What is the point of this prayer, then, we honestly ask of you who already knows everything? Or of any prayer, our doubt cries, when the world's struggles have opened a hole that seems impossible to fill? Can you stop the bombs from falling, God? Can you soften the hearts of warring dictators? Can you cure the cancer ravaging our loved one's body? Can you unburden the depressed from the weight of their sorrow? Can you make the chaos make sense?





God, we are vulnerable, and we know it. We need you. As the thirsty deer longs for the flowing stream, our souls thirst for you. Our hearts ache for your love. Our spirits cry for relief from the turmoil and the sorrow. Our bodies yearn for the ecstatic movement of joy. Our minds want to be assured, without a doubt, of your presence among us and with us. Life is a wilderness, and so often we are lost.

Therefore, in these long wilderness days of Lent, we audaciously ask for your help and hope. Comfort the sick and the grieving. Heal our wounds of heart and body. Calm our frantic anxieties. Order the chaos.

Also, help us pay attention to your still, small ways of working beauty and awe into the ugly and despairing; the bump of a bee's head on a windowpane; the spring crocus that's begun its journey out of the dark soil; the uninhibited bounce of a child, dressed as batman, heroically saving his friends at the playground; the heavens ablaze in the pink, red, and orange of your glory at the morning sunrise; the reminders – in the squeeze of a hand, the kindness of a smile, the receiving of an encouraging note – that we aren't alone in our wilderness wanderings; the grace that you make readily available when we are ready to receive it.

God, come near to us this Second Sunday of Lent, and near to those we love. Sit and stay awhile. And hear our prayers, as we pray the prayer Jesus taught us 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.

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

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