



# Order of Worship

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost  
June 16, 2024

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## Call to worship (based on on Ezekiel 17:22-24)

God takes a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar, and plants it on a high mountain

**in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit and become a noble cedar.**

Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

**God welcomes. God loves. God provides.**

## Call to confession

God gathers and prepares us for worship. Let us confess the sins that detract and distract us from God's path.

## Prayer of confession

**Holy God, you are a blessing to all people yet we choose sides and pit "us" against "them." Forgive our divisiveness. Forgive our exclusion. Forgive the ways we fail to seek and share your abundance. Help us build the Beloved Community you desire for us, where all your children may live in peace. Amen.**

## Assurance of pardon

Christ has set us free. Claim your forgiveness. Rejoice in God's grace. Respond with love. Amen.

## Prayer for illumination

Prepare our hearts and minds for the hearing of your Word, Holy God. Open us to your truth. Humble us to your way. Amen.

## Scripture readings

## Sermon





## Affirmation of faith (from the Belhar Confession)

### We believe

- that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;
- that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;
- that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

### Call for the offering

Paul reminds us that generosity is a fruit of the Spirit. Let us generously share of the gifts we have been given. Let us present our offerings to God.

### Prayer of dedication

Most generous God, you have blessed us with gifts to serve and share. May the offerings we present today be used to further your Kingdom and build your beloved community. Amen.

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

Eternal God, we are lost without you. Protect us from ourselves, our idolatrous ways, the violence we perpetrate, the destruction we fail to prevent. Our power is nothing compared to yours. Therefore, we seek your guidance through Word and worship. We pray for the Spirit to lead us in the path of righteousness. We seek our freedom in Jesus Christ.

God of our ancestors, who worshipped golden idols when distraught, help us to heed the warnings of our biblical narrative. We place idols above you and prioritize self-centered concerns over sacred. We mythologize our nation as a land of the free, refusing to hear your condemnation and critique. Our sorrows multiply when we fail to heed your truth.

Good God of grace, we choose you and return to you today. You have set a table before us, and we gladly accept your welcome. Your portion and your cup fill us as nothing else in this world can. As your guests, we give





thanks for your acceptance, your inclusion and your overwhelming love. At your table, may we be freed to love others as you have loved us.

Prince of Peace, our world is broken by violence, our relationships severed by grief. We lament the ways of our world that lead to death. We revel in your path of life. In your presence we know the fullness of joy.

On this Father's Day, we give thanks for men who embody love; the encouragers, coaches, mentors and bleacher-sitting cheerleaders. We honor those who support and provide. We give thanks for the blessing of fathers, fatherhood, and those whose generative lives includes fathering others. We also remember those for whom such holidays are painful, reminding them of loss or suffering endured.

Renew us, Great God, in this moment of worship so we can tread your path, and labor in your field. Grow your kin-dom here on earth. Start with us, we pray.

Hear these prayers of your people, Holy God, and as the Body of Christ, hear us as we pray our Savior's prayer, **"Our Father ..."**.

### **Charge and benediction**

God, bless us.

Jesus, walk with us.

Holy Spirit, guide us as we enter this new week.

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

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

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