

Order of Worship

19th Sunday after Pentecost
September 29, 2024

Call to worship (adapted from Psalm 124:8)

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

**In speaking, in silence,
in movement, in stillness,
God is with us.**

God alone saves us.

God alone helps us.

God alone sets us on the path of peace.

Let us worship our Helper!

Call to confession

We long to gloss over the messy parts of our stories: the deceit, the anger and the heavy grudges. But nothing is hidden from God. We come before God and one another with complete honesty, naming our sins that we might reclaim our name as God's beloved children.

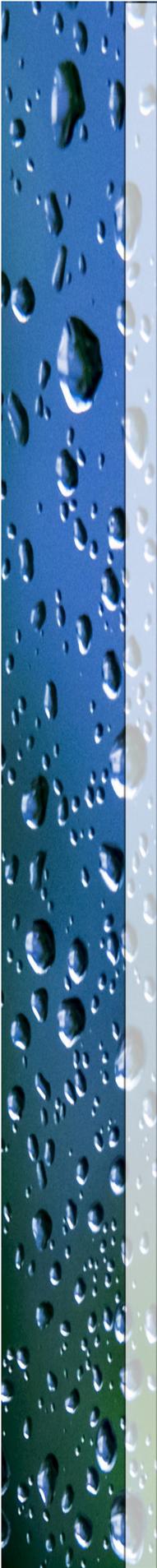
Prayer of confession

God, do you go silent when we perpetuate cycles of retaliation and violence? Does your silence mock our own silence in the face of unchecked weaponization and loss of life? Forgive us for our failure to speak out and speak up for the victims of violence in our midst and around the world. Open our ears and hearts to hold space for your voice to return to us: the voice of a better way of healing and hope for all people. Show us this faithful path and give us the courage to walk in it, even if for the very first time. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Hear the good news: our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. We are a people set free from the harmful patterns of the past for a future God builds in our midst even now. We are whole people who are called to make this world whole, with God's help.





Prayer for illumination

If we are uncertain and weary, speak to us, O God. If we are grounded and hopeful, speak to us. If our faith feels solid and steady, speak to us, and if our faith feels shaky and tentative, speak to us. Keep speaking through your holy Word, O God, that we may find our voice in yours. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (Barmen Declaration)

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so in the same way and with the same seriousness is he also God's mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to God's Creatures. We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords – areas in which we would not need justification or sanctification through him.

Call for the offering

We make our offering before God, not as payment for a grace we could never afford, but as an act of commitment and gratitude for the God who builds a new world in our midst, even now. We do not give out of guilt or pride. We give out of joy, trusting that God will use these gifts for the good of all people.

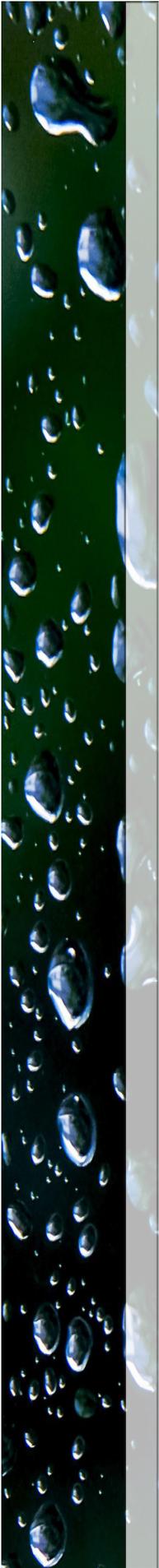
Prayer of dedication

Accept all that is offered in this place this day, O God. Accept our material commitments to build a more peaceable family on this earth and in our own communities. Accept our personal commitments to become a people who break cycles of hatred and retaliation, in both large-scale and everyday ways. Use these gifts, and use us messy people, for the rebuilding of a world of hope and healing in your name, Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God our creator,
Christ our friend,
Spirit our guide,
we spend so much time straining to hear your voice,
picturing a booming baritone from the heavens startling us with words of power.
But that is not how you often speak to us, is it?
You speak in the cry of a child who has lost her homeland.
You speak in the desperation of a mother who feels the thunder of bombings,
and who finds it in herself to sing a song of calm to her children.
You speak in the terror of parents receiving alerts on their phones that their child's school is on lockdown.





You speak in teachers putting their bodies on the line when they should never have to.

In all the heartbreaking moments of human history,
in the illness,
in the poverty,
in the racism,
in the bigotry,
in the injustice,
in the terrible cycles of violence,
you are there.

You speak not as a booming voice,
but in the quietness of tears falling on stunned cheeks.
You speak in the quiet resolve of not one more lost life.
You speak in the quiet everyday heroism of people who act
for policies and protections against unfettered violence and weaponiza-
tion.

You are still speaking in it all,
just as you were speaking in the time of Esther and Vashti.
Speak to us all a word of building a new world,
where tears and violence and even death are no more.
Where life is for all people,
not in a vague spiritual sense
but a material life of enough and safety
for all of your children.

Speak to our hardened hearts, O God. We will listen and act.

Hear these prayers from your people, God, as we pray the prayer our
Savior taught us, **“Our Father...”**

Charge and benediction

We will not always get this human story right.

But – even in silence – God never abandons us.

We are a people made for delight, and joy, and justice.

We are called very good.

We will walk with integrity.

We will speak with courage.

Blessed by God, we will change this world – and ourselves – for the better.

In the name of God in community, Three-in-One, may it be so. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Rev. Dr. Whitney Wilkinson Arreche-
and provided for free distribution.

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