



Order of Worship

21st Sunday after Pentecost
October 13, 2024

Call to worship (from Psalm 136:1-3)

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good,
for God's steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the God of gods,
for God's steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Let us worship God!

Call to confession

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Trusting in God's gracious mercy through Jesus Christ, let us confess the sin that separates us from God and our neighbors. Let us pray.

Prayer of confession

Gracious and merciful God, we often wonder what we must do to be right with you. The gospel tells us what you have done for us in Jesus Christ to make us right with you. We establish rules and try to follow them to win your love. You call us to trust in your grace and promises in Jesus Christ. We strive for security by piling up the things of this life. Jesus says, "Come, follow me." Lord, forgive our self-centeredness that seeks our well-being while we ignore the needs of others. Forgive our relying on ourselves rather than accepting fully Jesus's call to discipleship. Help us to seek your kingdom and righteousness first in our lives. Through Jesus Christ, amen.

Assurance of pardon (based on 1 Timothy 1:15)

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance,
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Children of God, hear and believe the good news:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!





Prayer for illumination

Almighty God, we join the psalmist as we say, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). As we hear your Word read and proclaimed today, may our hearts be illuminated by your Holy Spirit. May our lives and actions reflect the light of your Word that others may follow your path, also. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from A Declaration of Faith)

Jesus broadened the definition of neighbor
to include those ordinarily despised and excluded.
His life in behalf of others
led to persecution and death.
He commanded his disciples to live the same way.
We believe Christ gives us and demands of us
lives that recognize all people in all cultures
as our neighbors on this planet.

Christ teaches us
to go beyond legal requirements
in serving and helping our neighbor,
to treat our neighbor’s needs as our own,
to care passionately for the other’s good,
to share what we have.
It is part of our discipline
to live in simplicity,
avoiding greed and luxury
that threaten our neighbor’s survival.
We are obligated to speak the truth in love,
to listen with patience and openness,
to love our enemies,
to accept the risk and pain
which love involves.

Call for the offering (based on 2 Corinthians 9:12)

When the Apostle Paul called for Gentile Christians to contribute to the offering for the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, he reminded them, “for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.” Mindful of and grateful for the many blessings we have received from God, let us give generously that we may supply the needs of the saints and overflow with thanksgivings to God.

Prayer of dedication

Generous and merciful God, we thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus Christ. As we present our offerings today, give us grateful and generous hearts, that we may always follow Jesus in what we say and do. Help us to remember that every generous act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, from you, our heavenly Father. Amen.





Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Good and gracious God, thank you for the many blessings and gifts you have given us, especially the gift of grace in Jesus Christ. Forgive us when we hoard what you have given us because we are worried we won't have enough. Help us trust in your promise of eternal life here and now, that we may live obedient, joyful, and faithful lives as your children in your kingdom.

Heavenly Father, we are grateful that Jesus looks at us in love as he calls us to follow him. Give us the courage to heed his call and to go where he leads us. Help us embrace the new life he offers, where the last shall be first and the greatest will be a servant to all, even as Christ came to serve us in love.

Almighty God, in a world where there is great need, free us from our attachment to the many things that occupy us and demand our loyalties. Give us grateful hearts and willing spirits so that our lives and actions reflect the self-giving love of our Savior Jesus Christ. May we trust Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, enough to follow him in your kingdom.

Divine Creator, we pray for our community. [Insert specific prayer requests here from congregation members and regarding the surrounding community.]

We offer these and all of our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray, **"Our Father..."**.

Charge and benediction

Christ calls each of us to a life appropriate to that kingdom: to serve as he has served us; to take up our cross, risking the consequences of faithful discipleship; to walk by faith, not by sight, to hope for what we have not seen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Philip K. Gladden
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