



Order of Worship

23rd Sunday after Pentecost
October 27, 2024

Protestant churches celebrate the Reformation annually on October 31, the anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. In honor of the celebration, this week's liturgy draws on prayers and liturgy from Protestant Reformers.

Personal prayer of preparation (a prayer by John Calvin)

My God, my Father and my Savior, you have been pleased to preserve me by your grace through the night and you have brought me to this new day. Grant that I may use it entirely in your service, that I may think, say, and do nothing but to please you and to obey your holy will. May all my actions be to the glory of your name and to the service of others. And just as you cause the sun to shine on the world to give physical light, let your Holy Spirit illumine my mind to guide me in the way of righteousness. In everything I do, let my goal and intention always be to walk reverently and to honor and serve you, relying only on your blessing for my well-being, and undertaking only what is pleasing to you. Amen.

Call to worship (Psalm 124:8 and Psalm 46)

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

Amen.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,**

Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

**God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.**

"Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth."

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge

Let us worship the living God!





Call to confession

As we worship the living God, we remember all those who have walked this life of faith before us. They remind us not only of our triumphs, but also of our failures to be the people God has called and created us to be. With confidence that God is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, let us confess our sins:

Prayer of confession (a prayer by Martin Luther)

Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled.

My Lord, fill it.

I am weak in the faith; strengthen me.

I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbor.

I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether.

O Lord, help me.

Strengthen my faith and trust in you.

In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have.

I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor.

I am a sinner; you are upright.

With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness.

Therefore, I will remain with you, of whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give. Amen.

Assurance of pardon (a prayer by John Calvin)

Let us never forget you, O Lord, nor your goodness. Let the remembrance of your mercy be always engraved on our minds.

Hear and believe this good news! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

Prayer for illumination (a prayer by Ulrich Zwingli)

Almighty, eternal, and merciful God, whose Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path, open and illuminate our minds that we may truly understand your Word and that our life may be conformed to what we have rightly understood, that in all our ways we may be pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from The Heidelberg Catechism)

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

That I am not my own, but belong — body and soul, in life and in death — to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.





Call for the offering

Out of gratitude for all that God has provided for us and with hope for a future that continues to unfold toward God's promised end, we bring our tithes and offerings for God's work among us in this time and place.

Prayer of dedication (a prayer by Martin Luther)

O Lord, come to me and use my bread, silver and gold. How very well they are spent if I spend them in your service. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer (adapted from prayers by John Knox)

Honor and praise be to you, O Lord our God, for all the tender mercies you have again given to us through another week. Continual thanks be to you for creating us in your own likeness; for redeeming us by the precious blood of your dear Son when we were lost; and for sanctifying us with the Holy Spirit.

For your help and support with our needs; your protection in the many dangers of body and soul; your comfort in our sorrows; and for sparing us in life, and giving us so long a time to repent.

O God of all power, you have called from death the great Shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus: Comfort and defend the flock which you have redeemed; increase the number of true pastors; relieve and enlighten the heart of the weak; ease the pains of the afflicted, and especially of those who suffer for their witness to the truth.

Give us an increase of hope and love, together with a careful keeping of all your commandments, that no hardness of heart, no hypocrisy, no lust of the eyes, nor any methods of the world, may draw us away from obedience to you. And, since we now live in these most perilous times, let your providence defend us against all violence and harm.

We pray now that you would grant this request — that you would never allow us to grow so callous as to forget your many blessings, but rather, imprint and fix them firmly in our hearts, that we may grow and increase daily, more and more, in true faith, even as we wait for the coming of your kingdom as we pray as Jesus taught us, **"Our Father..."**.

Charge and benediction (Numbers 6:24–26, as used in John Calvin's Strasbourg Liturgy)

The Lord bless you, and keep you;
The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up his countenance, and give you peace. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Matthew A. Rich
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