



Order of Worship

1st Sunday of Christmas
December 29, 2024

Call to worship

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

Teach us, O Lord, how to lead lives of holiness and godliness while, in accordance with your promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Call to confession (Acts 3:19)

Hear these words of the Apostle Peter, "Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." With humble and trusting hearts, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Prayer of confession

Holy and merciful God, we confess we neglect to seek your wisdom for our lives. Instead, we think more highly of ourselves and our own knowledge, choosing to go our own way in this world. Lord, have mercy. We let the cares and concerns of this world crowd out the promise of your Word, that you are with us always. Christ, have mercy.

We confess we face the future with uncertainty and misgivings. Help us put our trust in you so we may live faithful and obedient lives, as we depend on the wisdom of your Holy Spirit and the love of Christ to shape our lives and actions. Lord, have mercy. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.





He fulfills the desires of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.

Friends, hear and believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven!

Alleluia! Amen.

Prayer for illumination

God of Wisdom, as the Scriptures teach us, truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty, that makes for understanding. Send your Holy Spirit upon us as we hear your Word read and proclaimed, that we may be encouraged and strengthened to live lives worthy of our calling as your people. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (from A Declaration of Faith, Chapter Six, Section 2, "Jesus Christ is the living Word of God")

The Word which was with God from the beginning was embodied in Jesus Christ.

We hold that what God says to us and does for us centers in Jesus Christ our living Lord as he is remembered, known, and expected.

In Christ God's Word of acceptance takes flesh: by grace through faith

we are set right with God, adopted as children of God, not because of anything we have done, but because of what Christ has done.

In Christ God's Word of demand is lived out: to love God and neighbor as he did is what God requires of us.

The Spirit adds no different Word from God, but leads us deeper into the truth of God uttered in Jesus Christ.

Call for the offering (Hebrews 13:15)

The letter to the Hebrews calls us to a life of gratitude and generosity with these words: "Through Jesus let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Let us present our tithes and offerings with glad and generous hearts.

Prayer of dedication

Good and gracious God, in this season during which we have given and received so many gifts, we thank you for the greatest gift of all, your Son Jesus Christ. In response to your love and mercy, we bring our tithes and offerings to you. Bless them and us, so our gifts may be multiplied and our hearts may be generous as we seek to do good and share what we have; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.





Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, in this Christmas season, we thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus Christ. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we rejoice that we serve a risen Savior who is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, who is the same yesterday and today and forever. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Sovereign God, help us trust in your Word that you are making all things new. Open our eyes to your powerful works all around us. As we look ahead to 2025, we are tempted to see nothing but more of the same. Show us what you have in mind. Call us again to be part of your ongoing re-creation of your world. Inspire and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

Lord of all nations, we humbly pray for peace throughout the world. Hasten the day when weapons of war will no longer be needed. Inspire world leaders to seek the things that make for peace. Comfort the afflicted and oppressed. Shelter all who suffer the devastation of ongoing conflicts. Protect the aid workers and peacemakers. Lord, may our prayers for peace not be empty words. Give us the courage to work for peace in our own communities. Help us do the hard work of reconciliation and truth-telling that all may have liberty and justice.

Loving God, during this Christmas season, may we not forget to share the love you have so freely given in Jesus Christ. Guide us in all we do that we may respond with compassion to those in need. Help us be a church that takes the good news of Jesus Christ beyond the walls and traditions and safety of our buildings. Help us always to put our trust in our Lord who says, "Follow me."

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

May you be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

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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