



# Order of Worship

3rd Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025

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## Call to worship (Psalm 63)

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;

**My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

**Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.**

So I will bless you as long as I live;

**I will lift up my hands and call on your name.**

## Call to confession (Isaiah 55:6-7)

The prophet Isaiah instructs us to seek and to call upon the Lord. The prophet pleads with the wicked to forsake their way, with the unrighteous to forsake their thoughts. The prophet invites them to return to the Lord that he may have mercy on them and assures them that our God will abundantly pardon. Let us seek God, let us call upon the Lord, knowing that we will be received with mercy and abundant forgiveness.

## Prayer of confession (Luke 13)

**Merciful God, we confess that we have been quick to judge others and slow to make changes in our own lives. We confess that we have focused on others' shortcomings instead reforming our own.**

**Turn us, O Lord, from these ways that lead to perishing. Lead us, O Lord, in your ways that lead to abundant life. (Time for Silent Confession.) In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Assurance of pardon (Isaiah 55:8-9)

God speaks through the prophet Isaiah: my thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways. Let us find peace in God's ways of mercy and grace knowing that we are forgiven. Amen.





## Prayer for illumination

God of all times and places, be with us here and now. As we read from and reflect on Scripture, may your Holy Spirit move among us that we might hear your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Scripture readings

### Sermon

**Affirmation of faith** (from the Confession of 1967 Inclusive Language Text)

**God's sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness. But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men and women. The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of God's love.**

**God has created the world of space and time to be the sphere of God's dealings with humankind. In its beauty and vastness, sublimity and awfulness, order and disorder, the world reflects to the eye of faith the majesty and mystery of its Creator.**

### Call for the offering

The Confession of 1967 reminds us that "Life is a gift to be received with gratitude and a task to be pursued with courage." God has given each of us and all of us a variety of gifts and we are grateful. As an act of worship, let us commit to returning those gifts to God and God's service.

### Prayer of dedication

Gracious God, you give to us out of your abundance. For the material gifts and the spiritual gifts you give us, we thank you. We dedicate these gifts of time and talents and tithes to you and ask that you continue to lead us as we use these gifts to join your work in this community.

### Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer (1 Corinthians 10)

Let us pray.  
As we close our eyes, let us imagine.

Take a deep breath and imagine a cloud..  
Imagine the breeze that moves among us as it moves the cloud across the sky..  
Picture all of us, following the cloud wherever it may lead us...

Imagine a nearby body of water..  
Imagine the breeze gaining strength..  
Picture the waves of the sea crashing on the shore...

The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians "that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized





into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all at the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.”

We give you thanks, O Lord, for your clouds and your waters, for leading your people, our ancestors, to your promised land.

Be with us as you were with those who came before us. Lead us, guide us, turn us from false idols, and transform us.

Surround us with your peace amidst uncertainty, your comfort amidst our grief, your healing amidst our injuries and illness.

*[This would be an opportune time to lift up specific prayer concerns from your congregation.]*

Lead us towards your promised kingdom, your new heaven and new earth, a world where all have enough food, all have enough drink, all are safe, and all are at peace.

We ask all this in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, who leads us, who cares for us, and who teaches us to pray, saying: **“Our Father ...”**.

### **Charge and benediction**

God has moved in all our lives. God has gathered us together this day. And now, God sends us into the world to join God’s ongoing work.

May the same God who led our ancestors from oppression continue to lead you; May the same Holy Spirit whose ways are higher than ours continue to empower you; and may the light of Christ continue to shine through each of you until the day that we are all gathered together again. Go in peace.

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Liturgy written by Tommy Carrico and provided for free distribution.

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