



Order of Worship

4th Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025

Call to worship (inspired by Psalm 32)

In times of trouble, in days of fear,

Steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

When we are lost and lonely, not sure of our place,

Steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

When we are hard-hearted and cynical,

Steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

When we struggle to believe God's promise of redemption,

Steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

Together we look to God to teach us the way we should go.

Steadfast love surrounds us, as together we place our trust in the Lord.

Call to confession

Scripture promises us that no matter how far we stray from God's ways, when we make the decision to return to God, God runs to greet us with open arms. Trusting in the never-failing mercy of the Lord, let us turn to God together by confessing our sins.

Prayer of confession (*Book of Common Worship*)

Almighty and merciful God, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. O Lord, have mercy upon us. Forgive those who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to the world in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O merciful God, for his sake, that we may live a holy, just, and humble life to the glory of your holy name.



Assurance of pardon

Psalm 32 says: "Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are those happy people whose sins have been forgiven. Believe in the good news of the gospel and rejoice!

Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, your mercy is wide, but our understanding is limited. As we hear your Word read and proclaimed today, open our minds and our hearts, that your good news may reach the deepest places within us. Renew us in your forgiving love and enliven our imaginations to possibilities for sharing that love with others. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (A Brief Statement of Faith)

**We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed and blessing the children,
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

Call for the offering

As people who have received the overflowing God's mercy, we respond with gratitude in our hearts and with the dedication of our lives to God's ways. Our offerings give us the opportunity both to express our gratitude and to commit our resources to God's gracious purposes in the world. Let us share what we have for the good of this community and the good of our neighbors.

Prayer of dedication

Lord of all, we give you thanks for your unfailing love. All that we have and all that we are is a gift from you, and we return it to you now with thanks and praise. Take and bless what we offer here today, that it may be used to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, liberate the oppressed, care for the suffering, and share the good news of your redeeming love with the world. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Loving God, we give you thanks for your words of hope to us. You promise us that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation; the old passes away and a new life is possible. In these days of chaos and fear, we cling to the possibilities of life with you: that hearts can be turned, people can





be reconciled, and redemption can spring forth from the most unlikely places. Ground us in these truths of the gospel, O God, that our hearts might be open and loving, compassionate and generous. Guard us from despair and grow within us strong and sustaining hope for the future of wellbeing you imagine for all creation.

Merciful God, you invite us not only to receive your grace, but to share it with others. Show us how to reflect your mercy in our individual lives, and in our life together. Help us to care for the most vulnerable in our communities with love that listens, responds and builds partnerships. Draw us into your redeeming work of creating more just systems and structures in our world. Commit us to ways of living together that provide all with what they need, rather than enriching some while others go without necessities of shelter and safety.

We pray for the work of this congregation [specific ministries may be listed here]. Bless our efforts to be your people of peace in a world obsessed with destruction and revenge. And we pray for the work of our mission partners [organizations or people may be listed here]. Give them the resources they need to offer the critical services they provide. And as the landscape of social services is destabilized by governmental changes, watch over their employees as well as the people they serve.

God of justice, we pray for our nation in turmoil. Turn the hearts of those in power toward those they have been elected to serve. Give them ears to hear the suffering of those who cannot make ends meet and those whose lives have been upended by job cuts and funding freezes. Grant leaders at every level of government wisdom and discernment for the road ahead. Bring order out of chaos, O God, and draw us together for the good of all people and the world you so love.

Healer of our every ill, we pray for those in our community who need your care this day. Soothe the nerves of the anxious and lift the spirits of the depressed. Comfort those who sit in the heavy fog of grief. Energize those who are weighed down by burdens of care. Bring healing in body, mind and soul to those who are sick and recovering. We name before you now in the quiet of our hearts all we know who need your healing mercies...

Surround us with your steadfast love, O Lord. When we are afraid, remind us to turn to you. When we don't know what to do, animate us by your Spirit. Draw us close to you and close to one another in relationships that nurture our souls and show us the way. We pray all these things in Christ's name and as he taught us: **"Our Father..."**





Charge and benediction (Book of Common Worship)

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold onto what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
support the weak;
help the suffering;
honor all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Ellen Williams Hensle
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