



Order of Worship

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 13, 2025

Call to worship

Christ has set us free

Free to serve

Free to welcome and include

Free to love our neighbors as ourselves

Call to confession

Our world and our human desires often lead us to oppose God's way. Before we hear the Word read and proclaimed, let us confess these sins before our God.

Prayer of confession

Spirit of the Living God, your fruit includes love, peace, patience and kindness but we are a divided, hateful people. We turn to violent means and violent words to settle our disputes. We are impatient with each other and fail to honor your commandment to love. Our idols fascinate and distract us from your rightful path. Forgive us. Turn us from our sinful ways. Set us free in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Christ has set us free. Claim your forgiveness. Rejoice in God's grace. Respond with love. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Open our hearts and minds by the power of your Spirit, Holy God, that we might hear and receive the message you intend for us today. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon





Affirmation of faith (from the Belhar Confession)

We believe

- that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ; that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;
- that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity;
- that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine.

Call for the offering

Paul reminds us that generosity is a fruit of the Spirit. Let us generously share of the gifts we have been given. Let us present our offerings to God.

Prayer of dedication

Most generous God, you have blessed us with gifts to serve and share. May the offerings we present today be used to further your Kingdom and build your beloved community. Amen.

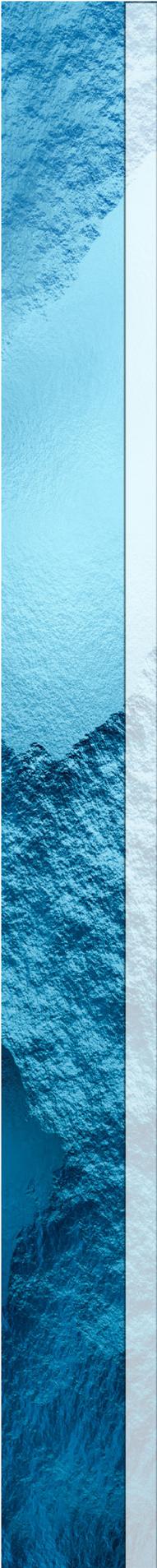
Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Protect us, O God. We are lost without you. Protect us from ourselves, our idolatrous ways, the violence we perpetrate, the destruction we fail to prevent. Our power is nothing compared to yours. Therefore, we seek your guidance through Word and worship. We pray for the Spirit to lead us in the path of righteousness. We seek our freedom in Jesus Christ.

God of our ancestors, who worshipped golden idols when distraught, help us to heed the warnings of our biblical narrative. We place idols above you and prioritize self-centered concerns over sacred. We mythologize our nation as a land of the free, refusing to hear your condemnation and critique. Our sorrows multiply when we fail to heed your truth.

God of grace, we choose you and return to you today. You have set a table before us, and we gladly accept your welcome. Your portion and your cup fill us as nothing else in this world can. As your guests, we give





thanks for your acceptance, your inclusion and your overwhelming love. At your table, may we be freed to love others as you have loved us.

Prince of Peace, our world is broken by violence, our relationships severed by grief. We lament the ways of our world that lead to death. We revel in your path of life. In your presence we know the fullness of joy. Renew us, Great God, in this moment of worship, so we can tread your path, and labor in your field. Grow your kin-dom here on earth. Start with us, we pray.

In your mercy, Beloved God, hear these prayers of your people. Now, as the Body of Christ, we pray as Christ taught us, **“Our Father...”**

Charge and benediction

God, bless us.

Jesus, walk with us.

Holy Spirit, guide us as we enter this new week.

May the grace, hope, peace and love of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with us all, now and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott
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