



Order of worship

13th Sunday After Pentecost

August 30, 2020

Call to worship *(Psalm 105:1-6)*

O give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name,
make known God's deeds among the peoples.

Sing to the Lord, sing praises to God;
tell of all God's wonderful works.

Glory in God's holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Seek the LORD and God's strength;
seek God's presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works the Lord has done,
God's miracles, and the judgments the Lord uttered,

O offspring of God's servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, the Lord's chosen ones.

Call to confession

Siblings in Christ, we have not always walked with integrity or trusted the Lord without wavering. Our love of God and neighbor has lacked zeal and at times we have done the very things we hate. We need God's grace, God's mercy and God's transforming power. Confident in God's promise to be with us always, we boldly confess our sin and seek to be made new in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer of confession

Lord, you instruct us to hate what is evil and hold fast to that which is good. You tell us to love genuinely, ardently, fully. You teach us to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice, and yet we neglect those who suffer and resent the successes of others. We fail to honor one another and fall easily into judgment, anger and revenge. In your abundant mercy, break our hearts of stone and put a new and right spirit within us. Grant us the eyes to see our own sin and the strength of character to be gentle with others. Do not let our Christian witness be tarnished by our inability to admit our mistakes, make amends and alter our ways. Forgive us, Lord, and set us free to follow you more closely, even to the cross. Amen.



Assurance of pardon

We seek the Lord's strength and presence, knowing that those who seek will find. We believe that Jesus came to save sinners. We rejoice in the truth that we are forgiven and made new, freed to live a new life in Christ.

Prayer for illumination

I AM, you call out to us by name, wanting to speak to us, to instruct and send us. Help us to notice your near presence, so that we will stop to listen for your voice. In your goodness, grant us yet again a holy encounter that transforms us and, in turn, relieves the suffering of your people. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(from "A Brief Statement of Faith")*

We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.



Call for the offering

Our Lord tells us that if we are to be his followers, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and go wherever he leads us. We struggle with such a total commitment and often go our own way instead. And yet, Jesus promises us that it is in losing our lives that we find them. As a sign of our desire to lose our lives for Christ's sake, we joyously give our morning's offering.

Prayer of dedication

Loving God, when we stumble in our discipleship you do not give up on us, but instead invite us again to follow you. We recommit ourselves this day, giving these gifts as a symbol of our will to give ourselves entirely to you. Take them, we pray, to relieve the suffering of your people. May these offerings be a means through which others find reasons to rejoice so that we may rejoice and praise you together. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, it feels as if we are lingering in the wilderness with threats all around us. We wonder when better days will come, when the public health crisis will abate, when the violence in your world will come to an end, when your people's suffering will cease. Ease our anxious minds, encourage our trembling hearts, embolden our sometimes-struggling faith. As we make our way to your holy mountain to worship, do not let us miss your angels along the way. Attune us to those sights and sounds, those wonders and miracles, that you make manifest through ordinary bushes and everyday bread.

Hearing your voice call our name astounds and frightens us. How is it that the maker of heaven and earth knows us by name and entrusts us with doing divine work? As we haltingly say, "Here I am" and seek to faithfully fulfill your call, remind us again that you are with us, always and forever surrounding us with your peace and power.

Recognizing that you, Lord of all, have observed many injustices and too much sorrow in your beloved world, we ask you to reveal to us how we are to intervene and we begin with praying for those people, places and circumstances that keep us up at night.

As the political process heats up and we are tempted to further divide ourselves by demonizing each other, we pray for patience, for gentleness, for mutual affection. May our unity in Christ be leaven

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for the whole world, a witness to what it means to love genuinely, to outdo one another in showing honor.

As the pandemic persists, we feel the pain of those most impacted by it, the sick and those who grieve the death of loved ones, the essential workers and the unemployed. We are indeed one body, one singular creation; when one part hurts, we all weep in solidarity. Do not let us neglect to do good, to uphold the weak and strengthen the fainthearted. May we be so knit together that no one falls through the cracks.

As we grow weary with the upheaval of these days, lagging in zeal for the work you set before us, afraid to stand up to the powers and principalities of this world that oppress, exploit and threaten your good creation, send the flame of your Holy Spirit. Set us ablaze with your power. Help us to burn so brightly that we are indeed the light of the world you call us to be. Make us such close followers of our Lord that we cannot help but live in harmony with each other and bless even those who persecute us. May we freely lose our lives and be saved through the One who taught us to say when we pray...
Our Father...

Charge and benediction

What does the Lord require of you? Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and remain with you always.

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Liturgy written by Jill Duffield and provided for free distribution.

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