



Order of worship

August 15, 2021

12 Sunday after Pentecost

Call to worship *(from Psalm 111)*

Praise God!

We will give thanks to the Lord with our whole heart,
in this congregation we will seek wisdom.

Great are the works of God
studied by all who delight in them.

God's deeds are amazing and to be remembered;
God is gracious and merciful.

The awe of God is the beginning of wisdom;
All those who practice it have a good understanding.

May God be praised forever.

Call to confession

There is a sort of wisdom that comes in admitting our limitations, and asking God for help. When we ask, God listens; and when God listens, we change for the better. Let us ask God for help, together.

Prayer of confession

God, we may not be the leaders of states, the sovereigns of this world, but we do have power. We confess the ways we hoard our power, or exert it over others in vain efforts to establish ourselves. Forgive us for trying to make a name for ourselves at the expense of others. Forgive us for forgetting our own belovedness. Show us the path of wisdom once more, and give us the courage to walk in it, together. Amen.



Assurance of pardon

Take a deep breath. Release all you've held too tightly. Feel how deeply held you are in the love of God. Believe that God is enough, that you are enough, that we are enough. Live in the grounding knowledge that God's forgiveness goes ahead of us, and behind us, and within us.

Prayer for illumination

Speak, God, for we your children are listening. If we need a gentle word, bring that. If we need a strong one, bring that. Come, Holy Spirit, spark our imaginations and stir our hearts. Give us wisdom.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (*Westminster Catechism*)

What is God?
God is a Spirit,
in and of God's self infinite in being,
glory, blessedness, and perfection;
all-sufficient,
eternal,
unchangeable,
incomprehensible,
everywhere present,
almighty;
knowing all things,
most wise,
most holy,
most just,
most merciful and gracious,
long-suffering,
and abundant in goodness and truth.



Call for the offering

We give both because we have much to be grateful to God for, and because the giving itself molds us into generous people. It teaches us a path of wisdom marked not by risk management but by overflowing grace.

Prayer of dedication

Add your blessing to these gifts, God, that they may multiply in ways far beyond us, establishing your kin-dom of peace and plenty. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God, who weaves the world together in wisdom:
give us even the tiniest taste of your wisdom.
Our lives are flooded with words:
with news stories of bigotry, hatred, violence and suffering.
With tweets and posts that dice our days into tiny
bites that turn to sawdust in our mouths,
leaving us ravenous.
With the emotional whiplash of
announcements, policies and press conferences,
reigniting the anxiety and the anger.
So many words swirl around us, and overwhelm us.
And we do what feels safest to us,
which is to form action plans and mission statements,
as if our words will make this flood of our time obey us.
As if our words will calm the flood waters of
grief within us.
Underneath all of these words, these
efforts of ordering
what can't be ordered
and explaining
what can't be explained
of performing our lives for
the consumption of others
rather than living them
there is a common word:
fear.

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We are afraid of our own mortality.
We are afraid we are meaningless.
We are afraid we will revert into
our smaller, sadder selves of six or twelve months ago.

And so when we ask for your wisdom to come
amidst all this noise
and all this fear,
we must also ask that you come in a way
we do not expect.
In a way we cannot
plan, organize, schedule or commodify.
You will have to surprise us.
You who came not as a mighty monarch to establish your
reign over all lesser people,
but as a curious child.

You will have to weave your wisdom into the
spaces between all the
words, the chaos of our days.
And maybe - if you are as good as you say you are,
if you are as good as we say you are -
you will even bring your wisdom through
joy.
Joy that sends the fear away
empty
and fills up every crack
of these fractured lives of ours
to the brim
and overflows with a deep
knowledge - a wisdom -
of your goodness toward us, and our capacity
to be good to each other.
May it be so.
Hear us as now we pray with one voice as you have taught,
saying, *Our Father ...*



Charge and benediction

There is a wisdom in knowing our limits.
There is a wisdom in knowing our potential.
And mostly, there is a wisdom in knowing God is with us,
we are with each other, and
we are not alone.

Go, walking in the wisdom of the God
who lights the path before us.
Go blessed by the God who journeys with us -
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer - Amen.

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