



Order of Worship

10th Sunday after Pentecost

August 14, 2022

Call to worship *(Based on Hebrews 12:1-2)*

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely.

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Let us look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Call to confession

Our sins and shortcomings are not permanent obstacles to God. Grace and forgiveness are freely given. Let us take this opportunity to humbly approach our God and confess our sins.

Prayer of confession

Christ calls us to stand with the least and the last, but we cling to power and privilege. We fear worldly consequences for faithful action. We fail to follow where Christ leads, making excuses for ourselves, for our silence in the face of oppression, for our lack of action. Forgive us, God, and help us risk following where Christ calls. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

God's love is sure and steadfast. Receive the good news that you are forgiven and return to right relationship with God. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Open our ears and humble our hearts as we approach your Word read and proclaimed today, Great God. May we listen, discern and follow the path you intend for us. Amen.

Scripture readings



Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(From The Belhar Confession)*

We believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;

- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged
- that God calls the church to follow him in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;
- that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;
- that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;
- that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering;
- that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;
- that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;
- that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

Call for the offering

“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48).

Let us present our tithes and offerings to God.



Prayer of dedication

The bounty of summer is upon us. God's table is filled with a feast beyond our wildest dreams. We are grateful to be God's welcome guest. May the gifts we give during this offering bless others as we have been blessed. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer:

*Is the tree as it rises delighted with its many
branches,
each one like a poem?*

From the poem "Do stones feel?" by Mary Oliver

God of glory, may we delight over our growth, our branches reaching to the sky, our children dancing beneath the summer sun, blades of grass between their bare toes. May we delight over the growth of our summer gardens, the food we can produce by seed and soil, the hunger we can feed with the abundance you so freely share. Let us not be so shrouded with concern, so overwhelmed by worry, that we miss the ways you grace us with delight.

*Only if there are angels in your head will you
ever, possibly, see one.*

From the poem "The World I Live In" by Mary Oliver

God of grace, help us to see your angels at work among us, lighting upon the unhoused in the street, delivering cups of coffee, Ziploc bags full of fresh toiletries, and deli sandwiches. Help us honor your angels with our praise and gratitude — the patient teacher, the loving parent, the determined wildfire fighter, the volunteer rescue worker, the visitor of the elderly, the sick, the imprisoned. Give us eyes to see, O God, your angels at work and help us be among their ranks.

*The last roses have opened their factories of sweetness
and are giving it back to the world.*

From the poem "Roses, Late Summer" by Mary Oliver

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Loving God, like the roses, what sweetness can we give back this week at work, at church, within our homes and our communities? A smile? A supportive gesture? A longed-for embrace? Guide us to share what we have to give: a kind, encouraging email; an unexpected compliment; a reassuring word of grace; our presence in the midst of pain; a prayer of petition on behalf of the poor and downtrodden; an offering of time or treasure. Generous God, guide us in our giving this week. Make us bearers of your abundant grace.

In these final weeks of summer, we lift these prayers to you, Great God, deserving of all our honor and praise. Now, as the Body of Christ, hear us as we pray the prayer Christ taught us saying, **"Our Father..."**.

Charge and benediction

During this hour of worship, we have known forgiveness, restoration and grace. Now we are sent from this place to share and to serve.

May God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer go with us, guiding and blessing us as we seek to be a blessing to others.

Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott
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