

Order of Worship

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
February 5, 2023

Call to worship (Psalm 27:1)

Leader: We are called to the work of Israel, to the work of Jesus.

People: We are called to spread God's love in this world.

Leader: We can do this work, as we are, because of the Holy Spirit.

People: By God's grace, we are salt.

Leader: We purify, we cleanse, we bind, we bring out the best in people.

People: By God's grace, we are light.

Leader: We allow things to be seen as they are. We point to holiness.

People: By God's grace, we follow the commandments and the law.

Leader: We love the Lord our God and our neighbors as ourselves.

People: By God's grace, we are salt. We are light. God transforms us and uses us.

Leader: Let us worship our God, so full of transformative grace.

Call to confession

In worship, everyone is welcome as they are. We invite each other to set our burdens down, including the burden of false pretenses. Let us be honest with God and with our selves about the ways that we fail so that we can hear the good news of Jesus' redemption anew. Let us confess our sins together and individually.

Prayer of confession

Almighty God, you have called us to bring out the best in the world around us, to be bold in our faith, to share your love with those around us. We have failed your command. We choose conflict. We choose laziness. We choose excuses. Forgive us for rejecting the identity that you offer us freely, for rejecting the work of your Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Assurance of pardon

Leader: Even when we fail, even when we are not perfect, God still claims us. God still calls us by name. God still places God's Spirit upon us.

People: We are known and loved and forgiven. Amen.



Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (The Confession of Belhar)

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 life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's life-giving 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.

Call for the offering

Friends, we have confessed our sins; we have reminded each other of our forgiveness; we have heard the Word of God proclaimed. Let us respond by offering God what we hold as precious, whether that is our money, time or talents.

Prayer of dedication

Heavenly Parent, we offer you these gifts. Please bless them, just as you bless those who gave them and those who will receive them. May the sharing of these gifts remind us of the connection that holds us all together and the beloved community you call us to form. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Creator God, we gather this morning with our siblings in Christ across the world to worship you. Thank you for all the ways that you bless us — for the gift of a warm cup of coffee, for the love of a sister, for warm, winter coats, for the luxury of naps. You are so good.

We know that you accompany us every day, God, and that you bless us in small and large ways. But we also know that this life is hard. It is full of sadness, of loneliness, of illness, of fear and of hatred. Heavenly Parent, we remember those who are struggling — those that we know intimately and those who we have never met. We lift them up to you now.

Lord, you have called us to share your love with the world. Empower us to do so. Empower us to work for good and to make a positive change. Please guide our political leaders. Please guide our community organizers. Please bless medical professionals and nonprofit workers and parents and volunteers and everyone who works, in small and big ways, to bring about kindness and love.

Unifying God, we pray for the universal church. We pray specifically this morning for our siblings in Christ who we do not agree with. May religion and tradition not distract us from the movement of your Spirit. May we find a way to stand united with other Jesus-followers without turning away from injustice.

God of all creation, we pray for those who are suffering from natural



disasters. We pray for California and all of the rain it has been receiving. We pray for those in Kentucky, still recovering from Tornados and floods. We pray for those on the Gulf Coast still recovering from hurricanes.

All-knowing God, you know us our deepest, truest selves and so you know the prayer requests we carry. But the miracle of prayer is that there is something in the naming of our needs and worries and pain that connects us to you. And so, with faith in your compassion, we pray for those in our community [insert your church's prayer requests here.]

Christ, you are alive. You are present. You are working in the world. And it is in your name that we pray together the way you taught us, **“Our Father...”**.

Charge and benediction

Beloveds, you are the salt of the earth. Go, today, with the Spirit and bring out the best of the world — the goodness that God has already created. Purify. Cleanse. Bind. And remember that this imperative from God is to the church. Let us spread God's love in the world as a community because we cannot do it alone. Amen.

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