

Order of Worship

Third Sunday after Epiphany
January 21, 2024

Call to worship

Silence your scattered thoughts and lay down your distractions.
God calls us here to worship.

We are here to worship.

Drop your nets and leave your boats.
God is with us. Jesus calls us.

We are here to worship.

Let us worship God together.

Call to confession

Jesus calls to us: change your hearts and change your lives! Repent, and believe the good news. The mercy and forgiveness we have already received enables us to be honest about the places in our lives in need of transformation. Let us confess our sin together.

Prayer of confession

God of mercy, we confess that we have settled down in Nineveh.

We have gotten comfortable in our categories:

**haves and have-nots,
makers and takers,
bigots and bystanders,
self-starters and subordinates,
law-abiders and illegals,
the perpetrators and the innocent.**

We confess that we are comfortable living under systems of injustice and exploitation. We confess our discomfort in speaking truths that unmask idolatries.

Make us ready to follow Jesus, ready to repent, and eager to change our hearts and lives. Call to us again, and show us your mercy. Let us hear your good news again. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

God desires relationship with us, and reconciliation for all of creation.



Jesus comes bearing the good news of forgiveness and transformation. Receive the good news of God's grace: We are forgiven!

Prayer for illumination

God who creates us and calls to us, by the power of your Holy Spirit, enable us to hear your Word, and embolden us to respond faithfully as we seek to follow Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (The Declaration of Faith)

In forming his people and sending them into the world Jesus called individuals to be disciples. They were to share the joy of his companionship, to understand and obey his teachings, and to follow him in life and death.

We confess that Christians today are called to discipleship. Life shared with Christ and shaped by Christ is God's undeserved gift to each of us. It is also God's demand upon every one of us, never perfectly fulfilled by any of us. Forgiven by God and supported by our siblings in Christ, we strive to become more faithful and effective in our daily practice of the Christian life.

Call for the offering

With open hearts and open hands, we let go of the things that possess us, we offer our gifts to God, and we dedicate our lives in service to Jesus Christ. Freely we have received, now freely let us give.

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, change our hearts and our lives. Renew us by your good news. Use the gifts we bring for your holy work of transformation, as we seek to go where Jesus leads us. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Eternal God, we come to you again to pray for the church, the world, and all of the people and situations on our hearts. Hear us as we lift our prayers to you, aloud or in our hearts.

We thank you that you care for those who are distant from us in relationship, geography, worldview or otherwise. For those people and communities, we pray ...

We thank you for your faithfulness. When we see all the evil and suffering in our world, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed and to give up, but we are grateful that you have not given up on us. We offer our prayers now for the situations that seem to be beyond repair, healing, and hope ...

We thank you for continuing to invite us to be partners in your trans-



forming, reconciling and redeeming ministries in our communities and beyond. We pray for the church universal, and for the work of Presbyterians around the globe. We pray for the work of this community of faith, and for ministries that are sharing your love and care in our community and beyond ...

We thank you for the gift of relationship: for colleagues, friends, family and the communities to which we belong. When one rejoices, we all rejoice, and when one suffers, we all suffer. We offer our prayers of thanksgiving and our petitions and laments, for those who are on our hearts today ...

We thank you for hearing our cries, for knowing what we need before a word is on our lips, and for holding in your loving care those people and situations known only to you. Unite us in our prayers and embolden us to follow Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying, **“Our Father...”**

Charge and benediction

The God who called us here today is calling us out from this place and into the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, let us follow where Jesus leads, sharing God’s love and grace with a world that is groaning for redemption.

As we go, may the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of our parent God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, today and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Stephanie Sorge and provided for free distribution.

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