



Order of Worship

Third Sunday of Lent
March 3, 2024

Call to worship (Psalm 19:7-10)

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;

The decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

They are more desirable than gold and sweeter than honey. Let us worship God!

Call to confession

Christ calls us to live lives in harmony with our God and our neighbors. Even our best efforts fall short. Yet our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Trusting that abundant mercy, let us confess our sin together.

Prayer of confession

God of righteousness, we confess that we have not kept your commandments. We bow down before idols, declaring our allegiance to other powers and principalities. We take your name in vain, using it to justify our own prejudices and opinions. We do not make adequate time to rest and remember your goodness, nor do we revel in the delight of family and friends. We look the other way in the face of violence and oppression, misogyny and sexual assault, land grabs and unjust economic practices. Our dishonesty and greed get the better of us. Yet you gave us commandments not for condemnation, but so that we might live in justice and joy. Purify us by your righteousness and enfold us in your grace. Sanctify our intentions and actions, that our lives may begin to reflect your Beloved Community. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Hear these words from the Apostle Paul, "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength." The grace of Christ is sufficient for us.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!





Prayer for illumination (Psalm 19:14)

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (adapted from The Confession of 1967)

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of human life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes our natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. God wills that God's purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ, and all evil be banished from God's creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in all people and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

Call for the offering

God's house does not operate according to the logic of the market, but according to the abundance of God's grace. Let us each give what we have, trusting that by God's generosity, it will be enough. Let us receive the morning offering.

Prayer of dedication (may be spoken or sung, "We Give Thee but Thine Own," GtG #708)

*We give thee but thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is thine alone,
A trust, O Lord from thee. Amen.*

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Table-turning God, we praise you, for in taking on flesh and dwelling among us, you hallowed all human experience. We thank you for the gift of emotions – from joy to sorrow to anger. Help us to regulate our inclinations and impulses. May we always stay attuned to the guidance you give us through the feelings of our bodies, minds and spirits.

God of holy traditions, we give you thanks for the rituals that shape our lives, give us meaning, and draw us closer to you. Enliven us and keep us from growing rigid in our sacred practices. Shake up our systems so that we may draw closer to you.

God of justice and righteousness, we pray for the healing of the nations.



Guide rulers and citizens with your wisdom and compassion. Teach us to care for the poor and vulnerable. Drive out ignorance, hatred and greed from all the earth's peoples.

Lord Jesus Christ, whose body was and is God's own temple, we thank you for the variety of bodies you have made in your image. Keep us always appreciative of the delightful diversity of your people. We pray for bodies that are broken, sick, weary or growing old. Send your loving presence to all who seek healing in body, mind or spirit.

Comfort all who are afflicted, and with the generative fire of your Holy Spirit, lovingly afflict all who are comfortable. All this we pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray, saying, **"Our Father..."**

Charge and benediction

Body of Christ,
go forth from this place
knowing that it is your Lord
who drives you out into the world.
Go forth, empowered by the Holy Spirit,
to be the very place where God's presence dwells.

And as you go,
may Christ's grace nurture your heart,
God's justice guide your mind,
and the Holy Spirit's power fill your every breath,
To the glory of our living Lord,
Amen.

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Liturgy written by Ginna Bairby and provided for
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