



Order of Worship

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 28, 2024

Call to worship

We gather this day in joy and Christian fellowship,

for we are the church of Jesus Christ!

We pray for the Holy Spirit to be among us,

opening our hearts and minds to the worship of God!

Call to confession

When we come before God, we remember and proclaim who God is: merciful, just, holy, and loving. We must also remember who we are, and we are a people who have not always been the people God has called us to be. We have not always been merciful, just, holy or loving. So let us confess our sin, trusting in God's goodness to forgive us and create us anew for our lives ahead.

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, our hearts are restless until they find their home in you. Forgive our pursuit of things that separate us from you. We pursue success, realizing it will never be enough. We desire more possessions, knowing they are empty. We turn toward the world and hope we will find peace, knowing the world cannot provide it. Forgive us, we pray, and may our wandering hearts find their rest in you alone. Amen.

Assurance of pardon (from 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Hear the good news! In Christ, we are new creations. The old life is gone, thank God! A new life has begun. Know you are forgiven, and be at peace.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, may your Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds to your words of love and grace this day. Amen.

Scripture readings





Sermon

Affirmation of faith (adapted from *Belonging to God: A First Catechism*)

We are the church: the people who believe the good news about Jesus, who are baptized, and who share in the Lord's Supper. Through these means of grace, the Spirit renews us so that we may serve God in love. We believe the good news that gives us comfort that we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for our sake, so that nothing will ever separate us from God's love. We know this good news through reading the Bible and hearing it taught and preached. The Holy Spirit inspired those who wrote the Bible and helps us rely on its promises today.

Call for the offering

Having heard the good news and being assured of God's love and grace, our only response is one of gratitude. Let us give thanks with what we have and who we are. Let us give our offering.

Prayer of dedication

Gracious God, please accept these gifts and use them for the coming of your kingdom in this time and place. In gratitude for all we have and for your love for us, we pray with thanksgiving. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Gracious God, you have promised to hear us when we pray to you, and we desperately need your guidance and care. We are a people who often walk around with a long list of concerns and worries on our minds. What a gift it is to come and offer them to you — for you are the author of all grace and goodness.

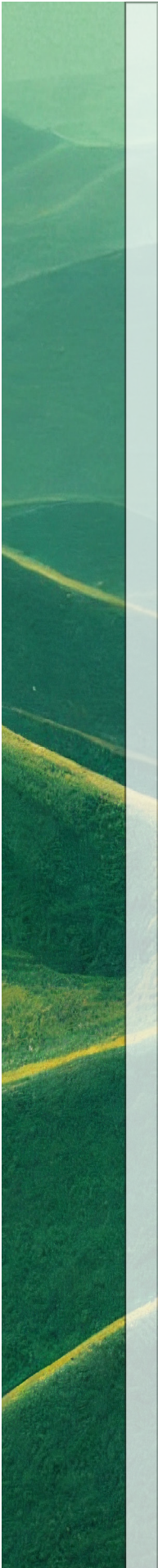
We worry about the state of the world. More people die in Gaza and Ukraine, and we grieve it all. We pray for your peace to come to every war zone in the world and for leaders to be filled with a spirit of reconciliation and care.

We worry about the state of our nation. In the run-up to the presidential election, it seems that divisiveness still reigns and that our very democracy is threatened. Remind us, Lord, of the greater good. May we focus not so much on ourselves, but on what we can do as a nation for those who need help the most. Let us live into our highest ideals and may we be agents of unity in a difficult time.

We worry about our communities. May your hand be in all of our decisions as a community so that we can be a light unto the world.

We worry about our those who are sick and suffering. It is difficult to witness illness, and we give you thanks for all the doctors and medical workers who live into their calling with grace and care. Help us each to offer a kind word and helping hand when we are able. May your Spirit be with all who suffer, giving them each a peace that passes all understanding.





We worry about our families. We pray for your blessing on big families and small families, blood families and families of choice. We pray for our church family. May the bonds of loyalty and love that unite us with others be strengthened and may we share love with all.

Lord, all that we know of goodness and love is found in the person of Jesus Christ and so we now join our voices together in the prayer that he taught us saying, **“Our Father...”**.

Charge and benediction

May you leave this place to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in the world, offering love and grace to all you meet.

And may you be blessed by the triune God, Father, Son and Spirit. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Tara Bulger and provided for free distribution.

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