

Order of Worship

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
June 23, 2024

Call to worship (based on Mark 4:35-41)

When the storms of life arise

and the waves threaten to overturn the boat of our faith,

remember the power of our Savior

to calm, to still, to establish peace.

Call to confession

God gathers and prepares us for worship. Let us confess the sins that detract and distract us from God's path.

Prayer of confession

Holy God, we doubt you and are people of little faith. When the circumstances of our lives overwhelm and the tragedy of the news leaves us lamenting the state of our world, we wonder where you are or if you even exist. Does the universe really bend toward justice? Does this justice include us and those we love? Does this justice include the innocent caught in the crosshairs of war? Forgive us, God, for the evils we perpetuate, the unjust systems from which we cannot see our way clear. Claim us and guide us in working toward the Beloved Community you so desire for us, where all your children live in peace. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

Christ has set us free. Claim your forgiveness. Rejoice in God's grace. Respond with love. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

Prepare our hearts and minds for the hearing of your Word, Holy God. Open us to your truth. Humble us to your way. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon



Affirmation of faith (from A Brief Statement of Faith)

**We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.**

Call for the offering

In gratitude to God for all our blessings, let us bless others with a portion of all we have been given. Let us present our offerings to God and God's ministry.

Prayer of dedication

Most generous God, you have blessed us with gifts to serve and share. May the offerings we present today be used to promote the peace, justice and healing you desire for us and your world. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God of mercy, the suffering of our world is overwhelming. Innocents are killed by the bombs of war. Terrorists hold hostages. Dictators use political manipulation and violence to hoard power. Guns in the hands of broken people continue to destroy lives. All this suffering leads us to ask, like Job, "Why?" and "Where are you?"

Even as we suffer, God, we recognize the many ways you show up for us, the many ways you offer comfort, support and care. We, like Job, are humbled before you. We do not and cannot know your ways. We do not know the plan and the path you intend for us or our world. So we bow before you, humbly, reverently, to lift our prayers for all who suffer. In your mercy, God, hear our prayers.

We pray for those caught in the cycle of violence, the victims and the perpetrators, that all may find their way to peace.



We pray for those suffering from disease, that their bodies might find their way to healing and wholeness.

We pray for those suffering from exhaustion and burnout, that their spirit might be lifted, their purpose renewed, their energy restored.

We pray for those suffering from hopelessness, that their faith finds its wings, their spirit finds its way to soar.

We pray for mother earth, neglected and abused, that she is renewed and her flourishing respected.

Hear these prayers of your people, Holy God, and as the Body of Christ, hear us as we pray the prayer our Savior taught us, **“Our Father ...”**

Charge and benediction

God shows up for us in the midst of our suffering.

May we show up for others as well, listening to Christ our Teacher, and following the Spirit, our Guide.

May the grace, hope, peace and love of God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with us all, now and always. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Teri McDowell Ott and provided for free distribution.

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