



Order of Service

5th Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020

Call to worship *(from Psalm 31)*

In you, O LORD, we seek refuge; do not let us ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver us.

You are indeed our rock and our fortress; for your name's sake lead us and guide us,

Take us out of the net that is hidden for us, for you are our refuge.

Let your face shine upon your servants; save us in your steadfast love.

Call to confession

God promises that if we ask, we will receive. Jesus tell us to believe in him so that our hearts will not be troubled. We do not need to languish in guilt or regret or shame. We can come in faith, trusting God's grace and mercy, confess our sin, be forgiven and freed to live in joy.

Prayer of confession

Lord, we confess that we cover our ears to your commandments, choosing instead to carry out plans that cause suffering and inflict pain on others. We neglect to heed your instructions to care for the vulnerable and uphold the weak. Out of fear and selfishness we grab and hoard resources meant to be shared and distributed. In this season of uncertainty, we are tempted to seek control through self-protection rather than surrendering ourselves to you and trusting your promise to never abandon us. Forgive our unwillingness to listen to your Word and do your work. Hear our confession and grant us mercy. Amend our ways and help us to walk more closely with you. *(Silent prayer)* Amen.

Assurance of pardon *(1 Peter 2:10)*

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Friends, believe the good news, through Jesus Christ you are forgiven!

Thanks be to God. Amen.



Prayer for illumination

Gracious God, in this moment we want to listen attentively to you. Send your Spirit to silence the distractions within and without. Quiet any noise that beckons us away from your voice. Help us to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear his living Word.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(The Apostles' Creed)*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Call for the offering

As living stones constructing spiritual buildings, we know we can build nothing of value without the gifts and grace of our Triune God. All we have comes from the one who made heaven and earth. In gratitude for all the blessings of this life, we offer with joy God's tithes and our offerings.

Prayer of dedication

Lord, out of love you prepare a place for us not only in heaven, but on earth. We are never outside of your care or left to fend for ourselves. You are the way, the truth and the life that eases the troubles of our hearts. Take these gifts, bless and use them to create places of refuge for those most in need of your peace and rest. May these offerings build spaces of love and grace here and now, so that all can celebrate together in our Father's house.



Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Lord, we are here. Perhaps not unlike Jesus' first disciples, we come to you a little fearful, scattered, grateful for our encounters with the risen Christ — but troubled and unsure what to do next. As we continue to worship in our separate spaces, we long to be together, gathered in your home, brought to the places you prepare for us. In our anxiety over the duration of this pandemic and in our worries about the many and long ramifications of this trying time, we want desperately to believe in you and believe in Jesus. We pray for an outpouring of your Spirit. Send the Comforter, our Advocate, to show us the way, remind us of the truth and grant us abundant life.

Lord, we have questions. We know there are lessons we should know well but cannot seem to recall. We feel upended by so much change and so little control. We confess that there are commandments of Jesus we remember but struggle to keep. We need to be honest about our misgivings and doubts. Confident that you will love us to the end and despite our failings, we share with you all that troubles our hearts:

We are troubled by the mounting deaths caused by COVID-19.

We are troubled by the growing numbers of lost jobs and economic turmoil.

We are troubled by our inability to be close to the ones we love when they need us the most.

We are troubled by children missing out on their education, those who wonder when they will next eat, those with no place to find shelter.

We are troubled by the people wrestling with addiction, those suffering from mental illness and those languishing in loneliness.

We are troubled by pain within and without, the violence inflicted on the innocent, the cruelty perpetrated on the vulnerable, the scarcity that belies your generosity and abundance.

Lord, we come to you, aching to be given a place to rest and a space to set our burdens down. We come to you because we believe in you, your grace, your mercy, your compassion and your power. You promise us spaces of rest, inexplicable peace, joy not dependent upon our circumstances. In you we find our home. You set us free to do your work in this world.

continued on the next page



Grant us the courage to name how we feel, lament what we see and then turn us toward the people who need their hearts put at ease. Make of us living stones who create buildings of relief, shelters of compassion, tabernacles of mercy.

Lord, we boldly ask to follow you so closely that others will come to know you and believe in you through our work and our witness. May our faithful discipleship ease our troubled hearts and perpetuate the love of the One in whose name we pray, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father...*

Charge and benediction (*Romans 8:38-39*)

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and remain with you always.

© *Presbyterian Outlook*, 2020.

Liturgy written by Jill Duffield
and provided for free distribution.

For more resources,
visit pres-outlook.org.