



## Order of service

6th Sunday of Easter

**May 17, 2020**

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### **Call to worship** (*Psalm 66:16-20*)

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what God has done for me.

I cried aloud to the Lord, and God was extolled with my tongue.

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

But truly God has listened; God has given heed to the words of my prayer.

Blessed be God, because the Lord has not rejected my prayer or removed God's steadfast love from me.

### **Call to confession**

The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, gives us the words we need to speak. Jesus Christ himself prays for us. We need not fear sharing our failings with the One who abides with us and in us. With the confidence of the children of God, let us confess our sin to God and before one another.

### **Prayer of confession**

Lord, you tell us that if we love you, we will keep your commandments. You tell us that your new commandment is to love one another as you have loved us. We cannot possibly live up to this standard. We frequently neglect your teachings. We easily see others' faults and too often make excuses for our own. Send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to help us follow your instructions to feed the hungry, tend to the hurting and love our enemies. In your mercy forgive us yet again and free us to love God and neighbor more fully. (*Silent prayer*) Amen.

### **Assurance of pardon**

God is not far from us. God is closer than our own breath. We are not alone, not left to save ourselves. Jesus Christ came to save sinners. When we confess our sin and repent, the heavens rejoice and we can trust we are forgiven.



### **Prayer for illumination**

Almighty God, we know that we are not to be a people of fear, and yet there is much of which we are afraid in these challenging times. We come to you now, asking for the gift of your living Word. Enlighten the eyes of our heart so that we can be the people of love you call us to be.

### **Scripture readings**

### **Sermon**

### **Affirmation of faith** *(from A Brief Statement of Faith)*

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.  
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,  
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,  
and binds us together with all believers  
in the one body of Christ, the Church.  
The same Spirit  
who inspired the prophets and apostles  
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,  
engages us through the Word proclaimed,  
claims us in the waters of baptism,  
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,  
and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.  
In a broken and fearful world  
the Spirit gives us courage  
to pray without ceasing,  
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.  
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,  
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks  
and to live holy and joyful lives,  
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,  
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"



### **Call for the offering**

God you have kept us among the living and not let our feet slip. You listen to us and abide with us. You sent your Son to save us, gave us the Advocate to guide us and promise to never leave us alone. Your goodness astounds us. We will extol you and sing your praises. We will offer in thanks a portion of the resources you have entrusted to us.

### **Prayer of dedication**

Lord, in you we live and move and have our being. You pour out your blessings upon us and we rest in your steadfast kindness. We cannot possibly return to you that which you deserve. We can only humbly present you with these gifts in gratitude and joy. Use our offerings, we pray, to show the love of Jesus Christ to a hurting world. May they be a source of hope and comfort to all those who need to know they are not alone. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

### **Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer**

Helper, Holy Spirit, Advocate, Comforter, come to us now as we seek the wisdom and will of our God. We want to love as Jesus commands, loving others no less than he loves us, and yet we struggle with pettiness and partisanship, with greed and selfishness. Our fears prevent us from practicing the perfect love that sets us free to live with joy. For just a moment, Helper, Holy Spirit, Advocate and Comforter, come to us and quiet our minds, calm our hearts, envelop us with the peace of Christ.

Abiding in the God who abides in us, we remember Jesus' teachings to serve and tend, feed and visit, clothe and welcome. We remember those who feel forgotten. We embrace those who know rejection. We treat with tenderness those who have been abused. We seek out those who are lost. We stand with the vulnerable and speak up to those who oppress the weak. We will not abandon those who mourn but will remain with the brokenhearted until resurrection resounds through all creation.

Helper, Holy Spirit, Advocate and Comforter, come to us now to show us how to follow Christ more closely. As the world reels from this pandemic and our anxieties increase, give us the courage to speak the truth to power, the wisdom to tell the truth in love, the faith to live the truth that sets us all free. May our presence provide the light of Christ that will show us the way.

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Resting in the promise that we will not be left alone, we dare to risk our own safety and security for the sake of others. In this season when so many are suffering, we will not forget that whenever we care for the least of these among us, we care for Christ himself. Grant us the energy to remain steadfast in our caring, the hope to bear witness to the compassion of Christ in painful places and the inspiration to see divine possibility where others only see intractable problems.

Helper, Holy Spirit, Advocate and Comforter, come to us now to ease our burdens, refresh our souls and make our joy complete. Helper, Holy Spirit, Advocate and Comforter come to us now to assure us that we are not alone, not now, not ever. We pray in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, the One who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father...*

**Charge and benediction** (1 Peter 3:15-16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24,28)

In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and will do this.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

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Liturgy written by Jill Duffield  
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