



Order of worship

16th Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 2020

Call to worship (*Psalm 105:1-6*)

O give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name,
make known God's deeds among the peoples.

Sing to the Lord, sing praises to God;
tell of all the Lord's wonderful works.

Glory in God's holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Seek the Lord and God's strength;
seek the Lord's presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works God has done,
the miracles and the judgments God uttered,

O offspring of God's servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, the Lord's chosen ones.

Call to confession

God offers us grace, and yet we grumble. God hears our grumbling and provides, and yet we want more. God's generosity knows no bounds, and yet we begrudge God's goodness. Recognizing the many ways we miss the mark of discipleship, we come to a time of confession, grateful that God's loving kindness persists even in the face of our ongoing sin.



Prayer of confession

Lord God, you hear our cries of pain and our murmured complaining. Your relentless compassion for your people defies any human logic or understanding. You provide manna in the wilderness, bread from heaven and the assurance that you will not abandon us in our need. Despite your overflowing goodness, we grumble. Rather than rejoice in your grace to us, we resent that you extend kindness to others. Instead of gratitude for your mercy, we question why you would embrace those we think undeserving — forgetting that none of us are righteous, all of us saved by grace. Forgive us for judging others and begrudging your generosity. We thank you for yet again hearing our cries and responding with love. Amen.

Assurance of pardon

The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Jesus Christ came not for the righteous, but to save sinners.

Therefore, we can believe the good news that we are in fact forgiven and even now made new creations in Christ.

Prayer for illumination

Lord, the days run together and our ability to discern your voice through all the world's noise grows difficult. Recognizing that you still speak, no less than to Moses or Mary, we ask you to send your Spirit that we might hear the word you have for us this day. In Christ's name we pray, 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

God provides for us, giving us manna in the wilderness, extending mercy when we fail to follow Jesus, granting grace instead of condemnation. In response to such generosity, we offer our gifts for the sake of making God's love of creation evident to those in need of knowing that the Lord hears their cries and responds with compassion.



Prayer of dedication

Generous God, receive these gifts as an outward sign of our inward gratitude. We cannot repay you for your goodness to us, but we know you accept that which is given in faith. Take and distribute this offering in ways that show forth your mercy and goodness. Multiply what we offer in ways that nourish others hungry to know they are your beloved people. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Lord, we find ourselves weary, wondering if we will dwell in this season of uncertainty and stress forever. Everything feels unsettled and upended. Tasks that used to be accomplished without much thought require planning and additional energy that we do not have to spare. Children attend school in their homes or in buildings with multiple protocols for distance and safety. Parents attempt to work even as they contend with limited or non-existent childcare, helping with online learning and the anxiety of tending to multiple and competing needs. Many among us now face not only unemployment but the end of unemployment benefits. Others struggle with illness or feel overwhelmed with grief. In our worries, we call out to you for help, knowing you hear the cries of your people and respond with compassion.

Your generosity to us is evident even in our anxiety. You give us a community of faith that upholds us in our weakness, encourages us when our hope lags and makes your love tangible when we feel alone. When we struggle to see your providence, you sustain us with your Spirit. When we fear you have forgotten us, you seek us out and enlist us for your work, giving us purpose and meaning no matter our circumstances. When we are overwhelmed by the pain of the world, you reveal your glory in the beauty of creation. When we want to turn away from suffering, you send your Son, showing us your resurrection Word cannot be silenced.

Confident in your mercy and grace, we boldly pray for your people desperate for manna in the desert, relief in the wilderness, a respite from their burdens:

We pray for those reeling from natural disasters; especially we ask you to provide for the victims of the wildfires raging in the West.

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We pray for those facing economic scarcity, those worried about meeting their basic needs. May those of us with two coats give one away and those who have more than their daily bread, share with those who have none, in order that all may know your manna appears new every morning.

We pray for the peacemakers and justice-seekers, the prophets and the policy-makers, the caregivers and the activists. Enlist us all, Almighty God, to work in your vineyard in ways that participate in your will and ways so that all may experience the abundant life your Son came to give. We pray in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father...*

Charge and benediction

Go out into the world in peace. Have courage! Hold fast to what is good. Return no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Honor all people. Love and serve the Lord your God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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.

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Liturgy written by Jill Duffield
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