



Order of Worship

5th Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026

Call to worship (based on Psalm 31:1–5, 14–15)

Our God refuses to shame us. God's justice delivers us.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

Our God listens to us. God rescues us from danger.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

Our God renews our spirits. God is always faithful.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

We trust our God. Let us worship God, whom we call ours.

Praise God, in whom we seek shelter and guidance!

Call to confession

We all err from doing God's justice. When we confess our sins, we tell the truth and admit our own power to enact injustice that harms others. Let us pray:

Prayer of confession

God of compassionate mercy, your grace and love extend to all people. We are called to forgive others, as you forgive us. Far too often, however, we wield forgiveness like a weapon. We see others doing wrong and feel haughty when we grant them grace. We call out the sins of the powerful but fail to notice our own power. We become narrow in our quest for truth, and ignore other people, in other rooms, crying out for your justice. Help us search ourselves and seek forgiveness from those we have made beg us for mercy. Connect us to others and guide us to share power and grace as we follow you.

Assurance of pardon

Jesus promised his followers there are many rooms in a world filled with God's justice. When we speak truth to our own power, we make room for God's just world. This is the good news: God raised Jesus and made room for us, calling us to live out of God's forgiveness by making sure there is room for all. Alleluia, Amen!



Prayer for illumination

Your Word, O God, is a source of refuge and guidance. Lead us, and inspire our hearts and souls as we engage holy Scripture with our minds and spirits. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith (excerpted from portions of the Belhar Confession and updated with gender-expansive language)

We believe in the triune God, Parent, Child, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects, and cares for the church through the Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.

We believe

- that God has revealed themselves as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people
- that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged
- that God calls the church to follow them in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry
- that God frees the prisoner, supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, and blocks the path of the ungodly
- that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream

Therefore, we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.

To the one and only God, Parent, Child, and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.

Call for the offering

The psalmist calls God a source of refuge. In hope that the church can be a refuge for us and others, let us give our tithes and offerings to God.

Prayer of dedication

God, who faithfully fortifies the world you created, bless our gifts and use them to protect all creation and allow us all to flourish in Your justice and love. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

God, whom Scripture shows offering refuge for those who suffer, we know you search for and call those whose suffering goes unnoticed. We pray that you help us sense suffering and decry injustice.





Remembering your promises to people forced to be “aliens and foreigners,” dispersed across an empire that was not their home, we sense the suffering of people today who are trying to make a home in places far from where they were born or raised. We pray especially for those who have come to the United States seeking refuge and opportunity, only to find hate and harm. We pray for an end to our government’s persecution and prosecution of immigrants, and we pray for an end to their violent actions and rhetoric designed to intimate and make our neighbors feel unsafe and unwelcome. We pray with gratitude for all those working against detentions and deportations and all those finding ways to show hospitality in the midst of hostility. We decry these injustices and pray that you grant justice.

In the midst of many who cry “persecution,” we sense the suffering of those whose cries and persecution have no platform. We pray for trans folks who fear going out in public in states where laws have been passed to prosecute their access to bathrooms, identification and healthcare. As the media speaks of cancel culture, we pray for those whose lives and livelihoods have been canceled with no fanfare — especially due to the defunding of diversity initiatives designed to empower equity for BIPOC, trans and queer people. We mourn the perspectives that have been erased and excluded because they have been considered too risky or niche. We decry these injustices and pray that you grant justice.

As we commemorate May Day and labor rights and advocacy, we sense the suffering of workers and those seeking work. We remember scriptural stories that highlight unjust conditions that ancient laborers faced in homes, vineyards and fields. We pray that you sit in solidarity with those who work, with those who demand better pay, hours and labor conditions. Amid economic uncertainty, we pray for those who are struggling to find work, for those worried they could lose their job, and for those who work jobs that drain and strain their bodies, minds and souls. We decry the injustices of poor and stressed labor conditions and pray that you grant justice.

God, we sense suffering and decry injustice even as we sense the warmth of spring and visible signs of new life that reminds us of the resurrection we continue to celebrate. In this time of Easter, we affirm that, even when faced with brutal injustice, your justice rises for all, as we know from the teachings of Jesus, who taught us to pray: “Our parent, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ...”

Charge and benediction

God summons us to speak truth to power, even when that power is our own. Friends, in the name of God who acts faithfully, Christ who serves humbly, and the Spirit who inspires creatively, go out and embody the justice our Triune God proclaims radically. Amen.

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Liturgy written by Jimmy Hoke and provided for free distribution.

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