

CALL TO WORSHIP

WEEK A:

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord always.

People: Let us say it again: Rejoice.

Leader: Whatever is true, just, and pleasing, think about these things,

People: and the God of peace will be with you.

WEEK B:

Leader: Come, let us worship and bow down.

People: Let us call upon God and listen for God's voice.

Leader: The Lord declares:

People: Be still and know that I am God.

WEEK C:

Leader: Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.

People: Come into God's presence with singing.

Leader: Worship the Eternal One in the beauty of holiness.

People: God draws near to the humble.

OPENING PRAYER

God of all ages and nations, God of all rulers, and languages, and identities: Visit us with your grace in this hour of worship. Turn us away from the vain things that distract us or frighten us, and hold us safely in your peace, so that we might go from this place with your joy in our hearts and share it with all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN 331

God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand

Please stand as you are able when the hymn is announced.

CALL TO PRAYER

God draws near to those who struggle. God is close to all who doubt. God hears the prayer of all who confess their faults. Relying on God's nearness and love, let's let go of any burdens we carry. Together, let us say:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy, forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen. [Silent prayers]

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

"Neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ: In him we are forgiven. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE (“GLORIA”): HYMN 583

Please stand as you are able.

THE PEACE

Please greet your neighbors, saying, “Peace be with you.”

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Open to us your wisdom, O God, in the reading of these words, so that they might become for us your living Word of truth, giving us inspiration and guidance for the living of these days. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Song of Songs 2:8-13

The voice of my beloved!

Look, he comes,
leaping upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle
or a young stag.

Look, there he stands
behind our wall,
gazing in at the windows,
looking through the lattice.

My beloved speaks and says to me:

“Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away,

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Reader: Holy wisdom, holy Word.

People: Thanks be to God.

HYMN 339

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Please stand as you are able when the hymn is announced.

SERMON

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Deacon Brian Vertz, Esq.

Brian Vertz is an ordained deacon at Bower Hill Church and an MDiv student preparing for professional ministry at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

THE APOSTLES' CREED: PAGE 35 in the hymnal. *Please stand as you are able.*

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 at 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.

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS

Pass the Handheld Mic

Before we pray, is there anyone who would like to share their joys or concerns? Be mindful that this service is being recorded. [*Carry the mic to anyone who raises their hand.*]

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER: PAGE 35 in the hymnal.

Let us pray:

Good and mighty God, you have given us this land and called us to be stewards of its riches and sharers of its resources. In humility and gratitude, let us always be a people who seek the wellbeing of the stranger, for we have come to this place from many kindreds and tongues, and all are sojourners before you. Save us from greed, and violence, discord and confusion. Save us from arrogance and pride and every evil way. Defend our liberties, and enable us to love as we have been loved, to give as generously as we have received, and to cast on you our every care. Grant your wisdom and goodwill to our leaders. Let them seek the wellbeing of all citizens, and not merely those of their own class and clan. Let there be justice in all corners of our land—and of our world—and let your peace rule in our hearts, so that it might also rule our behaviors at home and abroad. In times of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness and an awareness that all things come to us as gifts from your hand. In the day of trouble, do not let our trust in you fail. We give you grateful thanks for your many gifts to us as individuals—the small graces of ordinary life as well as the freedoms, and blessings, and riches we enjoy as a nation. Guide us. Keep us faithful in your service. And hear us as we pray for...Faye Cunningham, Isabella Duchene, Ruth Fleming, Nancy Green, the family of Ryan Jenny, Joann McAnulty, Darenda's sister Michelle, Barb Oram, Resa Walsh, Phyllis Yohe. In the silence of this moment, we bring before you our other concerns...

And we ask you to hear us, even as together we say the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please review the announcements in your bulletin. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated next week. The Pastor's Summer Bible Study will begin next week in his office, and it will run four weeks through August 2. We will be reading through the book of Philippians together. All are welcome.

OFFERINGS & GIFTS OF SELF

Let us worship now with the giving of gifts. Not all gifts are financial. If you'd like to promise something to God for the days ahead—something like more prayer, or patience, or openness—write it on the card marked "Gifts of Self," and drop it in the offering plate.

OFFERTORY / SPECIAL MUSIC

SUNG RESPONSE ("DOXOLOGY"):

HYMN 606 (gendered) or 607 (non-gendered) *Please stand as you are able.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bless these offerings and these intentions to the use of your kingdom. Let them be a blessing to our neighbors far and near; through Christ, in whose name we give them. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 340

This Is My Song

Please stand as you are able when the hymn is announced.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make their face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up their countenance upon you and give you peace, in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

POSTLUDE

[Please remember to gesture for people to stand for hymns, the gloria, and the doxology. Be sure to announce the hymn numbers. THANK YOU FOR COVERING!]