

Sunday Worship Service – August 30, 2026

Worship words from *Sundays and Seasons* marked with *

Other material from various sources as indicated in the footnotes.

Welcome and Announcements

A Moment for Reflection

Call to Worship¹ (adapted from Psalm 90)

God of our Beginning,

from generation to generation, you have been our dwelling place-

Our home where grace abounds.

Before the mountains were born, before the earth was formed-

You are. Timeless and Eternal.

We first dwelled with you as divine thought, then as children,

born of love and breathed into fertile earth.

We, your children, bear your image.

Now, here, we gather in praise and remembrance of the First Love.

Humbled in the expanse of your sovereignty, we seek to begin anew.

What first you dream, O God, help us to awaken...

Pause for Reflection

In the silence of our understanding,

when words fail and hearts yearn to be made new,

We hear you calling from the kingdom of heaven within,

"My children. Return."

Return & Renewal (Confession & Forgiveness)

Return to the Lord your God who is gracious,

and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

God of all mercy and consolation,

your love is steadfast. Your love is patient.

God of our near and far, you meet us where we are –

each peak and valley of our lives.

Restore us by your Spirit's power.

Open our eyes to you, our source of life.

Come sanctify our hearts and minds.

May we walk your pathways to the glory of your name!

¹ *Call to Worship; Return & Renewal*, and *Words of Assurance* from "Liturgy of the Beloved" © Johnston-Urey Music, All Rights Reserved. Used with Permission.

As in the Garden of our Unknowing,
 We found division in worldly wisdom.
 Long have we wandered from the wisdom of your love-
 Help us to find our way back home.

Forgive us, Lord, as we forgive,
 heeding the call to love as you have loved.
 Let Mercy reign in ev'ry heart.
 May the Way of Christ be the pattern of our lives.

Down through the ages, your love is changeless-
 across the nations, each generation.
 You are the cleansing rain. You wash away our pain,
 and by your grace we have been saved.

Words of Assurance

God of our Unending, your love is as boundless as the heavens.
 Your grace is a river that flows without ceasing.
 In Jesus, you weave yourself into the fabric of our humanity-
Divine Mercy made manifest in our own time.

Therefore, Beloved, hear the good news:
 In love you were made, and to love you shall return.
 In the name of †Jesus Christ every distance is bridged,
 Every division is healed, and every heart is made whole.
 May Christ be your heart's everlasting desire.
 May the Words of Life be ever upon your lips!
Amen.

Hymn of Praise “For the Beauty of the Earth” #879

1. **For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies,
 for the love which from our birth over and around us lies:
 Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**
2. **For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
 hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
 Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**
3. **For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
 for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight:
 Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**

4. **For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above; for all gentle thoughts and mild:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**
5. **For each perfect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
for thyself, best gift divine, to our world so freely giv'n:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**

Prayer of the Day *

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

**O God, we thank you for your Son,
who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world.
Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience,
and give us strength to follow your commands,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:9-21

In preceding chapters, Paul has explained what God has done for those who have faith in Christ. He has begun to tell us what our response should be, what is involved in living the ethical life and what obedience to God means – in other words, what it means to serve Christ. A reading from the Letter to the Romans, the 12th chapter:

Love should be shown without pretending. Hate evil, and hold on to what is good. Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other. Don't hesitate to be enthusiastic – be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord! Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you're in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer. Contribute to the needs of God's people, and welcome strangers into your home. Bless people who harass you – bless and don't curse them. Be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying. Consider everyone as equal, and don't think that you're better than anyone else. Instead, associate with people who have no status. Don't think that you're so smart. Don't pay back anyone for their evil actions with evil actions, but show respect for what everyone else believes is good.

If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people. Don't try to get revenge for yourselves, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. It is written, *Revenge belongs to me; I will pay it back, says the Lord.*

Instead, If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. By doing this, you will pile burning coals of fire upon his head. Don't be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with good.

Here ends the reading.

Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.

The Living Word (Gospel Acclamation) ²

**In the beginning was the Word,
the Living Word of God, the Light of Life Unending.**

**You shine in us on ancient starlight,
in our Book of Memories and Future Dreams.**

**Sing we halle, hallelu! You are the Word of Life Eternal.
Holy Wisdom, found within!**

You speak to us and we remember:

**"I am the Book no one can close,
The Story of our time, before all time, together.
I am the Voice that never falters, I, the Echo of Beyond.
I am the Way, the Truth, the Life." The Living Word.**

Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:21-28

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 16th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and legal experts, and that he had to be killed and raised on the third day. Then Peter took hold of Jesus and, scolding him, began to correct him: "God forbid, Lord! This won't happen to you." But he turned to Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are a stone that could make me stumble, for you are not thinking God's thoughts but human thoughts."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me will find them. Why would people gain the whole world but lose their lives? What will people give in exchange for their lives? For the Human One is about to come with the

² *Gospel Acclamation "The Living Word"* from "Liturgy of the Beloved" © Johnston-Urey Music, All Rights Reserved.
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majesty of his Father with his angels. And then he will repay each one for what that person has done. I assure you that some standing here won't die before they see the Human One coming in his kingdom."

The gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon: The List

Hymn of the Day *"O God, the Things That Make for Peace"*³ (tune #249)

1. O God, the things that make for peace
seem hidden, distant, out of reach.
Our world is violent, bent on war;
Lord, show us peace worth struggling for.
2. Your peace begins when we embrace
your Son — your wondrous gift of grace.
For peace with others surely starts
when we find peace within our hearts.
3. Yet peace is not a quiet thing,
an inward gift to which we cling.
For Jesus blessed the ones who share
your peace and justice everywhere.
4. We thank you that your love extends
beyond the circle of our friends.
You teach us: Give the stranger bread
and see that enemies are fed.
5. We long to live your way, O Lord,
to see relationships restored;
May we, in all we say and do,
seek peace and therefore honor you.

Affirmation of Faith⁴

We join together in a contemporary Affirmation of Faith:

**We believe in God the Creator,
who created and is creating everything:**

³ Words © 2012 Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (www.carolynshymns.com)

⁴ *Affirmation of Faith* written by Lisa Frenz, from a **Thanksgiving Liturgy** written for the Mount Carmel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Portland, Oregon. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission.

**the universe, the world, the plants and animals, and us;
each of us, unique, individual and beloved of God.**

**We believe in God the Christ, who saved and is saving everything:
the universe, the world, the plants and animals, and us:
each of us; unique, individual and beloved of the Christ.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who guided and is guiding everything:
the universe, the world, the plants and animals, and us;
each of us, unique, individual and beloved of the Spirit.**

**We believe that this one God in three persons,
is present among us, working directly in our lives
and the lives of all who are born into this world,
striving to bring us back into harmony with all creation and with God:
forgiving, healing, touching everyone,
never rejecting any who willingly receive
this freely offered gift of love and grace and eternal life.**

Prayers of Intercession ⁵

With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation. Each petition will end with "Come, Prince of Peace" and the congregational response "and heal your world."

Lord, we pray for peace between nations, that you will move the leaders of nations to seek to end the struggle for power as they bring an end to the corruption and injustice which fan the flames of war and are a barrier to peace. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

Lord, we pray for peace in our homes, that your grace will transform our attitudes to one another, and that we shall learn to treat each other with respect; for homes where there is bitterness and anger and for families where only harsh words are ever heard. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

Lord, we pray for peace in our communities that are places where inequalities create resentment and where people feel excluded from life's opportunities; for places where poverty and lack of employment leave many feeling unwanted, unnecessary, and inferior and for communities where drugs rule the streets and violent crime is easily bred. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

⁵ *Prayers of Intercession* written by David Clowes, from **500 Prayers for the Christian Year** © 2020 David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO

Lord, we pray for peace in the dark places of life where people are hurting and no one seems to care; for those whose lives are in turmoil at the death of someone they loved and for those who have lost a child to drink or to drugs or to crime; for those whose longing for a child has remained unfulfilled and for those who are single in our family-orientated society. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

Lord, we pray for peace in the life of your church as we find ways to accept and affirm one another; for an end to the false divisions of faith we erected and a removal of the barriers we still retain; for an end to the sin of separation we perpetuate and a new openness for everyone at the table of the Lord. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

Lord, we pray for those whose personal peace has been interrupted by illness or grief. We pray for those in hospital or care homes (*names*). We pray for those who have recently experienced the death of a loved one (*names*). May the presence of your Spirit restore a sense of peace in their lives, even in the midst of these difficult days. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

Lord, we bring before you those known to us who long for peace and for those whom your love has laid on our hearts... (*a moment of silence*) We also pray for ourselves, that we may experience the peace that passes all understanding that comes from the heart of the Lord. Come, Prince of Peace, **and heal your world.**

We bring all our prayers for peace in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace *The Assembly greets one another with a word of peace.*

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Offering / Offering Prayer *

(an Offering plate is placed on the altar)

Let us pray:

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts.

**Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love,
so that all creation can taste your abundance.**

We ask this in the name of Jesus,

through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving ⁶

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

O God triune, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Over the eons your merciful might evolved our home, a fragile tree of life.

Here by your wisdom are both life and death, growth and decay,
the nest and the hunt, sunshine and storm.

Sustained by these wonders, we creatures of dust join in the ancient song:

The earth is full of your glory:

The earth is full of your glory.

O God triune, you took on our flesh in Jesus our healer.

In Christ you bring life from death;

we remember his cross, we laud his resurrection.

Broken like bread, he enlivens our body.

Outpoured like wine, he fills the earth with goodness.

Receiving this mystery, we mortals sing our song:

The earth is full of your glory:

The earth is full of your glory.

We praise you for the heart of Jesus,

so filled with your love for this earth.

On the night before he died, he took bread, and gave thanks,

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered around this table, we your children unite in this song:

The earth is full of your glory:

⁶ From **Pray, Praise, and Give Thanks: A Collection of Litanies, Laments, and Thanksgivings at Font and Table** by Gail Ramshaw, copyright © 2017 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.

The earth is full of your glory.

O God triune, you create the worlds,

you uphold the living, you embrace the dead.

Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

Strengthen us for our journey with this meal, the body and blood of Christ.

Give us a future that trusts in you and cares for your earth.

Empowered by your promises, we rise from our deaths to praise you again:

The earth is full of your glory:

The earth is full of your glory.

Amen, and amen.

Amen, and amen.

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Communion Invitation

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

Communion Instructions

Communion Distribution (begin with communing the online congregation)

Hymn during Communion "O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts" #658

1. **O Jesus, joy of loving hearts, the fount of life, the light of all:
from ev'ry bliss that earth imparts we turn, unfilled, to hear your call.**
2. **We taste you, ever-living bread, and long to feast upon you still;
we drink of you, the fountainhead;
our thirsting souls from you we fill.**
3. **For you our restless spirits yearn, where're our changing lot is cast;
glad, when your smile on us you turn,
blest, when by faith we hold you fast.**

4. **O Jesus, ever with us stay! Make all our moments fair and bright!
Oh, chase the night of sin away! Shed o'er the world your holy light.**

Hymn during Communion "Blest Be the Tie that Binds" #656

1. **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**
2. **Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.**
3. **We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.**
4. **From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.**

Communion Blessing

May the precious body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
strengthen you, and keep you in his grace now, and unto life everlasting.

Prayer after Communion *

Let us pray:

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled
with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy
meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in
the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.

***Hope Everlasting* (Benediction) ⁷**

Oh, where do we go from here?

Whom do we follow, which path do we take?

**We'll follow wherever You lead. We'll follow Your heart's desire,
And seek to be Your peace for a world in need.**

**Now, may the God of all hope fill you with joy and peace, by faith,
And may your hope everlasting, by the power of the Spirit, abound!**

(repeat song)

Commission

**Go in peace, inspired by Christ, to love and serve!
Thanks be to God.**

⁷ *Hope Everlasting* from "Liturgy of the Beloved" © Johnston-Urey Music, All Rights Reserved. Used with Permission.