

Sunday Worship Service – July 5, 2026

Worship words from various resources as indicated in the footnotes.

Welcome and Announcements

A Moment for Reflection

Call to Worship ¹ (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 *"Come, Join the Dance of Trinity"* #412

1. **Come, join the dance of Trinity, before all worlds begun –
 the interweaving of the Three, the Father, Spirit, Son.
 The universe of space and time did not arise by chance,
 but as the Three in love and hope, made room within their dance.**
2. **Come, see the face of Trinity, newborn in Bethlehem;
 then bloodied by a crown of thorns outside Jerusalem.
 The dance of Trinity is meant for human flesh and bone;
 when fear confines the dance in death, God rolls away the stone.**
3. **Come, speak aloud of Trinity, as wind and tongues of flame
 set people free at Pentecost to tell the Savior's name.
 We know the yoke of sin and death, our necks have worn it smooth;
 go tell the world of weight and woe that we are free to move!**

4. **Within the dance of Trinity, before all worlds begun,
we sing the praises of the Three, the Father, Spirit, Son.
Let voices rise and interweave, by love and hope set free,
to shape in song this joy, this life: the dance of Trinity.”**

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Zechariah 9:9–12

The prophet Zechariah proclaims that the coming messianic king will inaugurate an era of disarmament and prosperity. Because of God’s covenant with Israel, the people are designated as “prisoners of hope.” A reading from the Book of Zechariah, the 9th chapter:

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion. Sing aloud, Daughter Jerusalem.

Look, your king will come to you. He is righteous and victorious.

He is humble and riding on an ass, on a colt, the offspring of a donkey.

He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem.

The bow used in battle will be cut off; he will speak peace to the nations.

His rule will stretch from sea to sea,

and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Moreover, by the blood of your covenant,

I will release your prisoners from the waterless pit.

Return to the stronghold, prisoners of hope.

Moreover, declare today that I will return double to you.

Here ends the reading.

Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.

Children’s Message

Children are invited to the front, with Pastor Dennis sharing a message.

Psalm 145:8-16

Great and lov - ing are you, O Ho - ly

One. We praise you with all our hearts.

You are gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and filled with faithful love.

**You, O Holy One, are good to everyone;
compassion abounds in your every act.**

All your works praise you;

your loving, faithful people bless you.

They talk of the glory of your majesty
and speak of the honor of your reign,
to teach all peoples your mighty power
and the majesty of your reign.

Your reign is for all eternity,

your dominion for all generations. (Refrain)

You are truthful in all your words; your works show faithful love.

You lift up all who fall and restore those who are bent low.

All eyes look to you with hope
and you give them food in due season.

You open your hand

and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Refrain)

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:15-25a

Paul has written that in baptism we are admitted to a new way of being, in which sin is no more. But we are yet to enter into this new life fully. We are still, to an extent, under the influence of sin. A reading from the Letter to the Romans, the 7th chapter:

I don't know what I'm doing, because I don't do what I want to do. Instead, I do the thing that I hate. But if I'm doing the thing that I don't want to do, I'm agreeing that the Law is right. But now I'm not the one doing it anymore. Instead, it's sin that lives in me. I know that good doesn't live in me—that is, in my body. The desire to do good is inside of me, but I can't do it. I don't do the good that I want to do, but I do the evil that I don't want to do. But if I do the very thing that I don't want to do, then I'm not the one doing it anymore. Instead, it is sin that lives in me that is doing it.

So I find that, as a rule, when I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me. I gladly agree with the Law on the inside, but I see a different law at work in my body. It wages a war against the law of my mind and takes me prisoner with the law of sin that is in my body. I'm a miserable human being. Who will deliver me from this dead corpse? Thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then I'm a slave to God's Law in my mind, but I'm a slave to sin's law in my body.

Here ends the reading.

Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.

Gospel Acclamation *"The Living Word"*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 11:16-19, 25-30

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 11th chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

² *Gospel Acclamation "The Living Word"* from "Liturgy of the Beloved" © Johnston-Urey Music, All Rights Reserved.
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“To what will I compare this generation? It is like a child sitting in the marketplaces calling out to others, ‘We played the flute for you and you didn’t dance. We sang a funeral song and you didn’t mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ Yet the Human One came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved to be right by her works.”

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you’ve hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have shown them to babies. Indeed, Father, this brings you happiness.

“My Father has handed all things over to me. No one knows the Son except the Father. And nobody knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I’m gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves. My yoke is easy to bear, and my burden is light.”

The gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon: The Yokes On Me

Hymn of the Day “Defender of All”³ (tune #834)

1. **Defender of all who upon your name call,
We ask for your help lest we stumble and fall.
Our enemies threaten us on ev'ry hand.
O, come to support us and help us to stand.**
2. **O Maker of heaven and earth, hear our prayer
And rescue us when we are caught in a snare.
There's evil inside us we don't understand
And good we intend that does not go as planned.**
3. **When sin dwells within us, we long to be free,
Find rescue and pardon and go on to be
Disciples and prophets, alive with your word,
Proclaiming and living the truth we have heard.**

³ Text by Lavon Bayler, © 1986 The Pilgrim Press, New York, NY

4. **When burdened and weak, beaten down and depressed,
We turn to the One who has promised us rest.
As others have learned when the gentle Christ spoke,
Our souls, now refreshed, can take Christ's easy yoke.**

Apostles' Creed

Let us confess our faith together using the words of the Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession ⁴

We praise and thank you, O Lord, that you have fed us with your Word. Grateful for your gifts and mindful of the communion of your saints, we offer to you our prayers for all people.

God of compassion, we remember before you the poor and the afflicted, the sick and the dying, prisoners and all who are lonely, the victims of war, injustice, and inhumanity, and all others who suffer from whatever their sufferings may be called. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

⁴ *Prayers of Intercession* from **The Worship Sourcebook – Second Edition** © 2013 Faith Alive Christian Resources, Grand Rapids, MI.

O Lord of providence holding the destiny of the nations in your hand, we pray for our country. Inspire the hearts and minds of our leaders that they, together with all our nation, may first seek your kingdom and righteousness so that order, liberty, and peace may dwell with your people. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God the Creator, we pray for all nations and peoples. Take away the mistrust and lack of understanding that divide your creatures; increase in us the recognition that we are all your children. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Savior God, look upon your church in its struggle upon the earth. Have mercy on its weakness, bring to an end its unhappy divisions, and scatter its fears. Look also upon the ministry of your church. Increase its courage, strengthen its faith, and inspire its witness to all people, even to the ends of the earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Author of grace and God of love, send your Holy Spirit's blessing to your children here present. Keep our hearts and thoughts in Jesus Christ, your Son, our only Savior, who has taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

**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.**

Offering⁵

With joy, we offer our gifts to God as a sign of our deep devotion and covenant faithfulness.

(an Offering plate is placed on the altar)

Offertory Prayer

Blessed are you, God of all creation; through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. Amen.

⁵ *Offering Invitation and Prayer* from **The Worship Sourcebook – Second Edition** © 2013 Faith Alive Christian Resources, Grand Rapids, MI

Hope Everlasting (Benediction) ⁶

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)

Sending

Go in peace, inspired by Christ to love and serve.

Thanks be to God!

Postlude – Joshua Hendricksen

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