

Sunday Worship Service – July 26, 2026

Worship words from various sources as indicated in the footnotes.

Welcome and Announcements

A Moment of Reflection

Call to Worship ¹

Waiting and hoping, we gather together,
seeking God's presence and singing God's praise.

Waiting and hoping, we come now to worship,
praying and listening for the Spirit's guidance.

Waiting and hoping, we gather together,
seeking God's presence and singing God's praise.

Gathering Song *"Come, Now is the Time to Worship"* ²

Chorus: **Come, now is the time to worship.
Come, now is the time to give your heart.
Come, just as you are to worship.
Come, just as you are before your God, Come.**

- 1. One day every tongue will confess you are God.
One day every knee will bow.
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
who gladly choose you now. (*Chorus*)**
- 2. Willingly we choose to surrender our lives.
Willingly our knees will bow.
With all our heart, soul, mind and strength
we gladly choose you now. (*Chorus*)**

Prayer of Confession ³

We join in a prayer of confession:

**Lord Jesus Christ, we remember with gratitude those people who generously
sowed the seeds of faith in our lives. Above all, we recognize how you have
blessed our lives with the gift of the Holy Spirit so that our faith has
miraculously and mysteriously grown.**

**We confess the times we fail to involve ourselves in planting any seeds of
faith in the lives of others;**

¹ written by B.J. Beu and Mary J. Scifres, from **The Abingdon Worship Annual 2017** © 2016

² Words and Music by Brian Doerksen © 1998, Vineyard Songs (UK/EIRE) (PRS), admin. In North America by Music Services.

³ written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on **Liturgies Online**. (www.liturgiesonline.com.au)

- the times when our personal agendas become more important than yours;
- the times when we have denied others the opportunity to expand their faith through our lack of interest or involvement;
- the times when our lives become so entangled with the values of the world that we forget what you have said and done and promised.

Lord Jesus Christ, we know that when we become disconnected from you, our lives becomes parched and unfruitful and our faith becomes stunted and dry.

Bless and renew our lives, we pray, so that we remain connected to you at all times and in all places, strengthening our faith to expand and, growing strongly and vigorously, to bear the fruit of your mercy, your love, your undying life. Amen.

Words of Assurance ⁴

My friends, these words are faithful and true, even when we aren't really sure: Nothing—absolutely nothing in all of creation, in all of our histories, in all of our actions, and in all of our world—can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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.

⁴ written by Mary Scifres, from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2026* © Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN.

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalm 119:129-136 *(read responsively with a sung refrain)*



Your decrees are wonderful;

I keep them with my whole being.

**The unfolding of your words brings light,
gives understanding to the simple.**

With open mouth I sigh,

longing for your commandments.

**In your gracious mercy turn to me,
as you do for those who love you.**

Steady my footsteps, as you promise.

Do not let evil dominate me.

**Redeem me from hostile oppressors,
that I may observe your precepts.**

May your face shine upon you servant;
teach me your laws.

Tears stream from my eyes

because people do not follow your teaching. (Refrain)

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:26-39

The Apostle Paul concludes his teaching on Salvation with a glorious vision of the triumph of God's love overcoming whatever obstacles may face us. It seems clear the Church in Rome was facing antagonism and persecution. A reading from the Letter to the Romans, the 8th chapter:

In the same way, the Spirit comes to help our weakness. We don't know what we should pray, but the Spirit himself pleads our case with unexpressed groans. The one who searches hearts knows how the Spirit thinks, because he pleads for the saints, consistent with God's will. We know that God works all things together for good for the ones who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose. We know this because God knew them in advance, and he decided in advance that they would be conformed to the image of his Son. That way his Son would be the first of many brothers and sisters. Those who God decided in advance would be conformed to his Son, he also called. Those whom he called, he also made righteous. Those whom he made righteous, he also glorified.

So what are we going to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He didn't spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. Won't he also freely give us all things with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's elect people? It is God who acquits them. Who is going to convict them? It is Christ Jesus who died, even more, who was raised, and who also is at God's right side. It is Christ Jesus who also pleads our case for us. Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

We are being put to death all day long for your sake.

We are treated like sheep for slaughter.

But in all these things we win a sweeping victory through the one who loved us. I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.

Here ends the reading.

Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.

Gospel Acclamation "Voice of Creation"

Voice of creation, open our ears to hear your word.

Source of salvation, open our hearts to hold your love.

Soul's inspiration, open our minds to know your grace.

Three in relation, transform our lives with your embrace.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 13th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

He told another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and planted in his field. It’s the smallest of all seeds. But when it’s grown, it’s the largest of all vegetable plants. It becomes a tree so that the birds in the sky come and nest in its branches.”

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that somebody hid in a field, which someone else found and covered up. Full of joy, the finder sold everything and bought that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one very precious pearl, he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that people threw into the lake and gathered all kinds of fish. When it was full, they pulled it to the shore, where they sat down and put the good fish together into containers. But the bad fish they threw away. That’s the way it will be at the end of the present age. The angels will go out and separate the evil people from the righteous people, and will throw the evil ones into a burning furnace. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

They said to him, “Yes.”

Then he said to them, “Therefore, every legal expert who has been trained as a disciple for the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings old and new things out of their treasure chest.”

The gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon: The Greatest Treasure

Hymn of the Day “*Be Thou My Vision*” #793

1. **Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

2. **Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**
3. **Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
4. **Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Apostles' Creed

We 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 ⁵

As we reach out our thoughts and our energies beyond the walls of this gathering space, hoping that God's reign may be the deepest desire of every human heart, let us pray. Each petition will end with "In the Spirit we plead" and the response "**hear us, O God.**"

⁵ from *Intercessions for The Christian People: Prayers of the People for Cycles A, B, and C of the Roman, Episcopal, and Lutheran Lectionaries*, edited by Gail Ramshaw. © 1990 The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN.

O God, may your dominion grasp us and fill the hearts and shape the lives of all who claim Christ as Lord. In the Spirit we plead: **hear us, O God.**

O God, make your justice grow in our land, that the victims of this age will find shelter in its branches. In the Spirit we plead: **hear us, O God.**

To you, Abba, we raise our eyes in hope. Inspire those whose decisions influence the lives of others, that they may discern wisely and act compassionately. In the Spirit we plead: **hear us, O God.**

O God, imaginative Creator, bless artists, poets, and writers with the creative touch of your word. Make them avenues of your vision. In the Spirit we plead: **hear us, O God.**

O God, we pray for all the oppressed, all the needy, all in terror, all the sick. Give health and peace to all. In the Spirit we plead: **hear us, O God.**

O God, we pray for those who grieve, those in places of care, those in prison, those who are addicted, those who are despondent. In the Spirit we plead: **hear us, O God.**

O Master of might and merciful Judge, in our weakness we turn to you for help. You have promised to hear our prayers if we raise them in the name of Jesus, and so we do. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

God's kingdom is like treasure hidden in a field. Through today's offering, we can help others find treasure in their lives. Come enter into the mystery of kingdom building and treasure hunting as we collect today's offering.

(an Offering plate is placed on the altar)

Offering Prayer⁶

Let us pray:

Miraculous God, bless these gifts with your miraculous love. Bless our offerings with the mystery of an abundance that expands and grows, so that all may know the truth of your love—a love that cannot be stopped no matter what. Bless us to bring forth your miraculous love in all that we say and do. Amen.

(The Creedance Table is moved to the center)

⁶ written by Mary Scifres, from **The Abingdon Worship Annual 2026** © Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN.

The Great Thanksgiving ⁷

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.

Holy God,

our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,

in the harmonious world of your creation the plants and animals,

the seas and stars

were whole and well in your praise.

When sin had scarred the world, you sent your Son

to heal our ills and to form us again into one.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus 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.

Remembering, therefore, his acts of healing

his body given up, and his victory over death,

we await that day when all the peoples of the earth

will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

Send your Spirit upon us and this meal:

as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,

so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth,

that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father,

with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

Amen.

⁷ From **With One Voice** (Eucharistic Prayer G – Summer) © 1995 Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN

The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

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

All has been prepared. Come, share in the feast!

Communion Instructions

Communion Distribution (begin with communing the online congregation)

Hymn during Communion "Accept, O Lord, the Gifts We Bring" #691

1. **Accept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place upon your table.
We do not worship as we ought but only as we're able.**
2. **The vines were planted, seeds were sown.
They grew in your good pleasure.
What once was common, daily food becomes a holy treasure.**
3. **Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares
we lift in prayer before you.
Lord, by your grace now come to us,
as humbly we adore you.**

Hymn during Communion "Children of the Heavenly Father" #781

1. **Children of the heav'nly Father safely in his bosom gather;
nestling bird nor star in heaven such a refuge e'er was given.**
2. **God his own doth tend and nourish, in his holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things he spares them, in his mighty arms he bears them.**
3. **Neither life nor death shall ever from the Lord his children sever;
unto them his grace he showeth, and their sorrows all he knoweth.**
4. **Though he giveth or he taketh, God his children ne'er forsaketh,
his the loving purpose solely to preserve them pure and holy.**

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 Communion⁸

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.

Blessing

The God who calls across the cosmos
and speaks in the smallest seed
✠ bless, keep, and sustain you
now and to the end of the age.
Amen.

Benediction Song *“May the Grace of Christ Attend Us”* (#963 Voices United)

**May the grace of Christ attend us, and the love of God surround us,
and the Holy Spirit keep us, now and ever. Amen.**

Commission

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

Postlude – Beth Hendricksen

⁸ *Prayer after Communion* and *Blessing* from **Sundays and Seasons** © Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN