

Seeking the Lord Service - 2019

1. Call to Assembly

Leader: We have assembled today, humbly and in hope, as the people of God in order to seek his grace and his healing. The Lord knows the frailness of his people and so out of his great faithfulness and never-ending mercy he issued this great promise.

Leader: ^{NIV} **2 Chronicles 7:13** "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, ¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵ Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

Leader: The New Testament picks up on this great promise and applies it individually to each one who has faith in Christ.

Leader: ^{NIV} **James 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Congregation: ^{NIV} **Joel 1:13** Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God. ¹⁴ Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD

Leader: ^{NIV} **Joel 2:11** The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? ¹² 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' ¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. ¹⁴ Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing-- grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God. ¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. ¹⁶ Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. ¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'' ¹⁸ Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people. ¹⁹ The LORD will reply to them: 'I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.

Leader: Let us begin our assembly by joining our hearts and voices together in praying the prayer our Lord taught us.

All: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Congregation: As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world which some seek to control, and others view with despair we declare with joy and trust: Our world belongs to God!

***Song 1:** This is My Father's World

2. Confession of Sin

Leader: ^{NIV} **1 John 1:8** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Leader: Believing in God's promises and trusting in His grace in Christ Jesus, we now as an assembly confess the sins of humanity, of our nation, and of each one of us here today. We begin by confessing how as humanity we have failed to carry out the responsibilities bestowed on us at creation, namely to walk uprightly with God and to wisely exercise dominion over his creation.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Genesis 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." ²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

Congregation: In the beginning of human history, our first parents walked with God. But rather than living by the Creator's word of life, they listened to the serpent's lie and fell into sin. In their rebellion they tried to be like God. As sinners, Adam and Eve feared the nearness of God and hid.

Leader: When humans deface God's image, the whole world suffers: we abuse the creation or idolize it; we are estranged from our Creator, from our neighbor, from our true selves, and from all that God has made.

Congregation: We lament that our abuse of creation has brought lasting damage to the world we have been given: polluting streams and soil, poisoning the air, altering the climate, and

damaging the earth. We commit ourselves to honor all God's creatures and to protect them from abuse and extinction, for our world belongs to God.

Leader: All spheres of life— family and friendship, work and worship, school and state, play and art— bear the wounds of our rebellion. Sin is present everywhere— in pride of race, arrogance of nations, abuse of the weak and helpless, disregard for water, air, and soil, destruction of living creatures, slavery, murder, terror, and war, worship of false gods, the mistreatment of our bodies, and our frantic efforts to escape reality.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Ezra 9:5** Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God ⁶ and prayed: "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. ⁷ From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today. ⁸ "But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage

Congregation: ^{NIV} **Nehemiah 1:8** "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.' ¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.

Leader: Fallen in that first sin, we prove each day that apart from grace we are guilty sinners: we fail to thank God, we break God's laws, we ignore our tasks. Looking for life without God, we find death; grasping for freedom outside the law, we trap ourselves in Satan's snares; pursuing pleasure, we lose the gift of joy.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Romans 3:9** What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Congregation: In all our striving to excuse or save ourselves, we stand condemned before the God of truth. But our world, broken and scarred, still belongs to God, who holds it together and gives us hope.

Prayer

MERCIFUL LORD,

Pardon all our sins of this day, week, year,

all the sins of our lives,

sins of early, middle, and advanced years,

of omission and commission,

of pessimistic, cranky and angry tempers,

of lip, life and walk,

of hard-heartedness, unbelief, presumption, pride,

of unfaithfulness to the souls of men,

of lack of bold decision in the cause of Christ,

of deficiency in outspoken zeal for his glory,

of bringing dishonour upon your great name,

of deception, injustice, untruthfulness in our dealings with others,

of impurity in thought, word and deed,

of covetousness, which is idolatry,

of substance unduly hoarded, carelessly squandered,

not consecrated to the glory of you, the great Giver;

sins in private and in the family,

in work and recreation,

in the study of your Word and in the neglect of it,

in prayer irreverently offered and coldly withheld,

in time misspent,

in yielding to Satan's wiles,

in opening our hearts to his temptations,

in being unwatchful when we know him to be at hand,

in quenching the Holy Spirit;

sins against light and knowledge, against conscience and the restraints of your Spirit,

against the law of eternal love.

Pardon all our sins, known and unknown, felt and unfelt,

confessed and not confessed,

remembered or forgotten.

Good Lord, hear; and hearing, forgive.

In Jesus name, amen.

***Song 2:** Alas and Did My Savior Bleed

3. Call to Repentance

Leader: The Bible teaches that repentance is a gift granted by God out of his kindness through the working of the Holy Spirit, and so we now as an assembly and as individuals lift our voices to the Lord in repentance.

Congregation: ^{NIV} **Psalm 51:1** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Psalm 51:5** Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. ⁶ Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Congregation: ^{NIV} **Psalm 51:10** Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Psalm 51:14** Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Congregation: We grieve that the church, which shares one Spirit, one faith, one hope, and spans all time, place, race, and language, has become a broken communion in a broken world. When we struggle for the truth of the gospel and for the righteousness God demands, we pray for wisdom and courage.

When our pride or blindness hinders the unity of God's household, we seek forgiveness. We marvel that the Lord gathers the broken pieces to do his work and that he blesses us still with joy, new members, and surprising evidences of unity. We commit ourselves to seeking and expressing the oneness of all who follow Jesus, and we pray for brothers and sisters who suffer for the faith.

Prayer

O GOD OF GRACE,
You have imputed our sin to our substitute,
and have imputed his righteousness to us,
clothing us with bridegroom's robes,
decking us with jewels of holiness.
But in our Christian walk we are still in rags;
our best prayers are stained with sin;
our penitential tears are so much impurity;
our confessions of wrong are so many aggravations of sin;

our receiving the Spirit is tainted with selfishness.

We need to repent of our repentance;
We need our tears to be washed;
We have no robe to bring to cover our sins,
no loom to weave our own righteousness;
We are always standing clothed in filthy garments,
but by grace are always receiving change of apparel,
for you do always justify the ungodly;
We are always going into the far country,
and always returning home as a prodigal,
always saying, Father, forgive us,
and you are always bringing forth the best robe.
Every morning let us wear it,
every evening return in it,
go out to the day's work in it,
be married in it,
be wound in death in it,
stand before the great white throne in it,
enter heaven in it shining as the sun.
Grant us never to lose sight of
the exceeding sinfulness of sin,
the exceeding righteousness of salvation,
the exceeding glory of Christ,
the exceeding beauty of holiness,
the exceeding wonder of grace.
In Jesus name, amen.

***Song 3:** Create in Me a Clean Heart

4. Profession of Faith

Leader: Having confessed our sin, and expressed our repentance, we now as an assembly and as individuals lift our voices to the Lord to profess our faith.

Leader: ^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 15:1** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Congregation: ^{NIV} **Romans 10:6** But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ "or 'Who will descend

into the deep?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Leader:^{NIV} **Romans 10:11** As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there 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.

Prayer

Our God,
We bless you that you have given us the eye
of faith,
to see you as Father,
to know you as our covenant God,
to experience your love planted in us;
For faith is the grace of union
by which we spell out our entitlement to you:
Faith casts our anchor upwards
where we trust in you

and engage you to be our Lord.
Be pleased to live and move within us,
breathing in our prayers,
inhabiting our praises,
speaking in our words,
moving in our actions,
living in our lives,
causing us to grow in grace.
Your generous goodness has helped us believe,
but our faith is weak and wavering,
its light dim,
its steps wobbling,
its increase slow,
its backslidings frequent;
It should scale the heavens, but lies grovelling in the dust.
Lord, fan this divine spark into glowing flames.
When faith sleeps, our hearts becomes unclean things,
the founts of every repugnant desire,
the cages of unclean lusts
Lord help us to continually believe in the heart, resulting in righteousness, and confess with the
mouth, resulting in salvation.
Lord, awaken faith to put forth its strength
until all heaven fills our soul
and all impurity is cast out.
In Jesus name, amen.

***Song 4:** I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace

Offering

5. Seeking Healing

Leader: Having confessed our sin, expressed our repentance, and professed our faith we now as an assembly and as individuals lift our voices to the Lord to seek his healing for our planet, for our nation, for our congregation, for our families, and for each one us here today.

Congregation: ^{NIV} **Deuteronomy 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Romans 8:18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Congregation: Our hope for a new creation is not tied to what humans can do, for we believe that one day every challenge to God's rule will be crushed. His kingdom will fully come, and the Lord will rule.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: There are people here whose families are in need of healing, and there are people here who are in need of healing themselves; physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. The Bible contains many promises of the healing ultimately available in Christ.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Isaiah 53:4** Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

^{NIV} **Psalms 30:1** I will exalt you, O LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. ² O LORD my God, I called to you for help and you healed me.

^{NIV} **Psalms 107:19** Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. ²⁰ He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

^{NIV} **Jeremiah 17:14** Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.

^{NIV} **James 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Congregation: Lord, please release your healing, your love, and the ministry of reconciliation into my family. Please fill us with the love of God, a desire for purity, and with the fullness of Your Holy Spirit. Heal the hearts, minds, and belief system of each of my family members. Let your truth replace the lies of the enemy. Give us revelation so that the enemy is defeated completely. I ask that the power of resurrection life be given to me and my family members to bring healing and total restoration. Let the respect, honor, loyalty and love be restored. Heal our emotions, our memories, our self-image, faith and our trust. In every area where there has been a breach, let it be healed and made whole, filled with the love and Spirit of God.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Revelation 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new

Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Congregation: We long for that day when our bodies are raised, the Lord wipes away our tears, and we dwell forever in the presence of God. We will take our place in the new creation, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, and the Lord will be our light. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Prayer

Dear Lord,

We confess our need for you today. We need your healing and your grace. We need hope restored. We need to be reminded that you work on behalf of those you love, constantly, powerfully, completely.

Forgive us for trying to fix our situations all on our own.

Forgive us for running all different directions and spinning our wheels to find help, when true help and healing must be found first in You.

Forgive us for forgetting how much we need you, above everyone and everything else.

We come to you and bring you the places we are hurting. You see where no one else is able to fully see or understand. You know the pain we've carried. The burdens. The cares. You know where we need to be set free.

We ask for your healing and grace to cover every broken place. Every wound. Every heartache.

Thank you that you are able to do far more than we could ever imagine.

Thank you for your Mighty Power that acts on behalf of your children.

We reach out to you, and know that you are restoring and redeeming every place of difficulty, every battle, for your greater glory.

Thank you that you will never waste our pain and suffering.

We love you. We need you today.

Let us dwell in Your tent forever;

Let us take refuge in the shelter of Your wings.

Heal us, lead us, and restore comfort to us

In Jesus name, amen.

***Song 5:** Children of the Heavenly Father

6. Praising the Lord

Leader: Having confessed our sin, expressed our repentance, professed our faith, and cried out for healing, we now as an assembly and as individuals lift our voices to the Lord to give him the praise he deserves.

Leader: ^{NIV} **Zephaniah 3:14** Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. ¹⁶ On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. ¹⁷ The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

Congregation: From the beginning, through all the crises of our times, until the kingdom fully comes, God keeps covenant forever: Our world belongs to God! God is King: Let the earth be glad! Christ is victor: his rule has begun! The Spirit is at work: creation is renewed! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Leader: ^{NIV} **Revelation 22:1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. ⁶ The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." ⁷ "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." ... ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life ... ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Congregation: With the whole creation we join the song: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" He has made us a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and we will reign on earth. God will be all in all, righteousness and peace will flourish, everything will be made new, and every eye will see at last that our world belongs to God. Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus!

Prayer

O DIVINE REDEEMER,
Great was your goodness
 in undertaking our redemption,
 in consenting to be made sin for us,
 in conquering all our foes;
Great was your strength
 in enduring the extremities of divine wrath,
 in taking away the load of our iniquities;
Great was your love
 in manifesting yourself alive,
 in showing your sacred wounds,
 that every fear might vanish,
 and every doubt be removed;
Great was your mercy
 in ascending to heaven
 in being crowned and enthroned
 there to intercede for us,
 there to help us in temptation,
 there to open the eternal book,
 there to receive us finally to yourself;
Great was your wisdom in devising this means of salvation;
Bathe our souls in the rich comforts of your resurrection life;
Great was your grace
 in commanding us to come hand in hand with you to the Father,
 to be knit to him eternally,
 to discover in him our rest,
 to find in him our peace,
 to behold his glory,
 to honour him who is alone worthy;
in giving us the Spirit as teacher, guide, power,
that we may live repenting of sin, overcome Satan, find victory in life.
When you are absent all sorrows are here,
When you are present all blessings are ours.
Help us to sing of your mercies and praise your name forevermore,
In Jesus name, amen.

Benediction: ^{NAS} **Jude 1:24** Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

***Song 6:** 10,000 Reasons