

Order of Service

Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us (2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

I. Gathering

Hymns for the gathering will be chosen locally

The Bible or Lectionary is processed into the worship space.

Greeting

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ,
be with you all.

And also with you.

Introductory Words

Dear brothers and sisters **in** Christ, this year many Christians and churches will be commemorating the anniversary of the Reformation. Saint Paul reminds us that God has reconciled us through Jesus Christ and that the love Christ compels us to be ministers of reconciliation. Let us worship and praise God together in the unity of the Holy Spirit!

Sing Psalm 98 or a hymn of praise

II. Divided by our Sins (Confession)

Invitation confession

In the course of history, there have been many renewal movements in the Church, which is always in need of deeper conversion to her head, Jesus Christ. Sometimes these movements have led to unintended divisions. This fact contradicts what Jesus asks the Father in John 17:23: "that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Let us confess our sins and pray for forgiveness and healing for the wounds which have resulted from our divisions. As we name these sins we will see how they become a wall which divides us.

Silence will be kept for a few moments

Let us pray

God and Father in heaven, we come to you in Jesus' name. We experience renewal through your Holy Spirit, and yet we still construct walls that divide us, walls which hinder community and unity. We bring before you now the stones with which we erect our walls and pray for your forgiveness and healing.

Amen.

As each sin is named the corresponding stone with the specific wording is brought forward to build the wall. Following a moment of silence, the stone bearer makes the plea for forgiveness and the congregation responds

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

Instead of the spoken responses, a sung response "Lord, forgive us" may be used.

One stone in our wall is "lack of love". *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for times
when we have failed to love. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "hate and contempt". *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for our hate
and con tempt for one another. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "false accusation." *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for
denouncing and falsely accusing one another. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "discrimination." *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for all forms
of prejudice and discrimination against one another. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "persecution". *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for persecuting
and torturing one another. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "broken communion." *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for perpetuating
broken communion among our churches. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "intolerance". *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for banishing
our brothers and sisters from our common homeland in the past and for acts of
religious intolerance today. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "religious wars". *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for all wars
that we have waged against one another in your name. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "division." *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for living our
Christian lives divided from one another and astray from our common calling for
the healing of all creation. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "abuse of power." *The stone is placed*
Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for our
abuse of power. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "isolation."

The stone is placed

Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for the times when we have isolated ourselves from our Christian sisters and brothers and from the communities in which we live. We humbly pray:

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

One stone in our wall is "pride".

The stone is placed

Gracious God, the love of Christ compels us to ask forgiveness for our pride. We humbly pray:

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

Let us pray:

Lord, our God, look upon this wall that we have built, which separates us from you and from one another. Forgive us our sins. Heal us. Help us to overcome all walls of division and make us one in you.

Amen.

A hymn or song may be sung, or meditative music may be played here.

Ill. Be reconciled to God – Hear God's Word

First Reading: Ezekiel 36:25-27

Responsorial Psalm: 18:25-32 *(may be said or sung)*

Response: I love you, O Lord, my strength.

With the loyal you show yourself loyal;

with the blameless you show yourself blameless;

with the pure you show yourself pure;

and with the crooked you show yourself perverse.

For you deliver a humble people,

but the haughty eyes you bring down.

Response: I love you, O Lord, my strength.

It is you who light my lamp;

the LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.

By you I can crush a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall.

This God — his way is perfect;

the promise of the LORD proves true;

he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

For who is God except the LORD? And who is a rock besides our God?

the God who girded me with strength, and made my way safe.

Response: I love you, O Lord, my strength.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

Alleluia *(sung)*

Gospel **Luke 15: 11-24**

Alleluia *(sung)*

A sermon is preached

IV. Respond in Faith - Live Reconciled

(As the wall is dismantled and the stones are laid in the form of a cross, a song of reconciliation or a hymn of the glory of the cross is sung)

Let us pray

Gracious God and Father in Heaven, we have heard your word that you have reconciled us to yourself through your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. By the power of the Holy Spirit transform our hearts of stone. Help us to become ministers of reconciliation and heal our churches' divisions so that we may better serve as instruments of your peace in the world.

Amen.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Let us give one another a sign of peace.

Hymn – An offering may be taken

V. Respond in Faith - Proclaim Reconciliation

Affirmation of Faith – A Formal Creed or Credal statement is affirmed.

Intercessory Prayers

After each petition, three people light their candles from a central source of light (for example a Paschal candle) and remain standing around the cross until the section headed "Christ's commission."

Almighty God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself. We praise you for those whom you sent in the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel to all nations. We thank you that in all parts of the earth a community of love has been gathered together by their prayers and labours, and that in every place your servants call upon your name. May your Spirit awaken in every community a hunger and thirst for unity in you. Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer. *May be said or sung*

Allow time for the assistants to light their candles from the Paschal candle.

Gracious God, we pray for our churches. Fill them with all truth and peace. Where faith is corrupted, purify it; where people go astray, redirect them; where they fail to proclaim your Gospel, reform them; where they witness to what is right, strengthen them; where they are in need, provide for them; and where they are divided, reunite them. Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer. *May be said or sung*

Allow time for the assistants to light their candles from the Paschal candle.

Creator God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus Christ, your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love. And even in our weaknesses, work to accomplish your purposes on earth, so that every people and nation may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne. Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer. *May be said or sung*

Allow time for the assistants to light their candles from the Paschal candle.

Holy Spirit, Giver of Life, we are created to become whole in you and to share this life on earth with our brothers and sisters. Awaken in each of us your compassion and love. Give us strength and courage to work for justice in our neighborhoods, to create peace within our families, to comfort the sick and the dying, and to share all we have with those who are in need. For the transformation of every human heart. Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, hear our prayer. *May be said or sung*

Allow time for the assistants to light their candles from the Paschal candle.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done,

On earth as it is 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.

V I. Ambassadors for Christ - Ministers of Reconciliation

Christ's Commission for today

The twelve pass the candlelight throughout the congregation until each person has a lighted candle

A lighted candle is a deeply human symbol: it enlightens the darkness, creates warmth, security and community. It symbolizes Christ, the light of the world. As ambassadors for Christ we will carry this light into the world, into the dark places where fighting, discord and division impede our united witness. May Christ's light effect reconciliation in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Receive the Light of Christ and carry it into the dark places of our world. Be ministers of reconciliation! Be ambassadors for Christ!

Blessing and Sending

We call out to you, most merciful God:

Let all who seek reconciliation experience your help so they may proclaim your mighty deeds of Love!

We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the blessing of All mighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit
come upon you and remain with you forever.

Amen.

Go in God's Peace.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn/Song

"Sonne der Gerechtigkeit"; by Christian David ('Rise, O Sun of Righteousness', translated by Frank W. Stoldt), or other song to be selected by the local planning committee.