

Day of Remembrance, June 6, 2021 – Order of Worship Script for a live, In-Person Worship Service

Opening Words

Reader 1:

Greetings, in the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus the Christ!

Today, the people of the Mountain Sky Conference of the United Methodist Church will mark a Day of Remembrance. A day to remember the fourteen months that are now behind us, and a year we will never forget. Let us begin today in prayer.

Prayer:

God of all creation, even in our pain and grief, we offer you our thanks. We know that you have journeyed with us through this last year, giving us comfort and strength when the weeks and months grew long. Your healing love reminded us that the darkness would not overtake us, and that you would guide us with your light. Forgive us, merciful God when we have failed to trust in your love and failed to show compassion to those who suffer. We return to you now. Renew our hope and faith, as we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Reader 2:

Words of Assurance:

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is an everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary,

they shall walk and not faint. (ISAIAH 40:28–31)

In March 2020, churches across this conference suspended in-person worship and began a journey to share the Good News of Jesus, the Christ in new ways. It was a year of struggle and fear of the unknown. A year of accepting some things would never be the same. A year of suffering, loss and grief. Over 560,000 people in the United States have died from the Covid-19 virus since the pandemic began. Today we take this moment together to remember those lives lost, and honor their memories.

Reader 3:

Jesus said, I am the resurrection and I am life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys to hell and death. Because I live, you shall live also.

Although we come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss during this pandemic, may God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, and in death resurrection.

Today we also honor all of those who endured hardship, and sacrificed their personal safety to carry us safely through the pandemic: health care workers, teachers and all school staff, custodians, bus drivers, postal workers, food supply workers, first responders, police and fire fighters, and so many more. We acknowledge so many who suffered at home, and their care givers.

Reader 4

Psalm 30:1-5 NRSV Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness

*¹ I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.*

*² O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.*

*³ O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.^[a]*

*⁴ Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.*

*⁵ For his anger is but for a moment;
his favor is for a lifetime.*

*Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.*

Hymn 1: Morning has Broken, UMH #145

READER 5

Genesis 1:10-12 NRSV

God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together were called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 2:9 In the fertile land, the LORD God grew every beautiful tree with edible fruit, and also he grew the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Message:

READER 6

Dedication of Tree(s):

Trees are recognized as symbols of life and healing throughout the Bible. From the tree of life in Genesis, to Revelation bringing healing for the nations. So we plant trees for the glory of God, as a reminder that in life or death,

nothing can separate us from the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.
We also dedicate ourselves to the service of God,
honoring the memory of those who have passed,
and what they meant to us,
all they cared for and all they loved.
Through our words and actions may God's love take root in our lives,
blossom and grow, sustained in and through the love you give each one of us.

The Pastor places soil and water at the base of the tree and if appropriate directs others to do the same. A symbolic act of planting and nurturing.

Prayer of thanksgiving and remembrance...

Creator God, as your breath of creation blows gently across the face of the earth,
We are reminded our world is ever changing, forming anew as life changes and the world evolves.

As time passes, we see your creation give birth, live life, and die all around us.
We participate in each breath measuring our own mortality and witnessing each heartbeat of nature.

Today we grieve the leaves of passing. The lives of those who have gone before us with whom we no longer can hold hands, hug, laugh with, or talk to. We feel loss in our lives though we know they remain with us in our hearts and in the great cloud of witness that surrounds us and moves as freely as your Holy Spirit among all of creation. We take this moment to reflect, in the peace of this place on those who have joined with you in your heavenly kin-dom and lift their names in prayer.

(A moment of silence may be observed as names are read or said aloud from those gathered, for each a handful of dirt may be dropped upon the planting site.)
AMEN.

Closing Hymn: Hymn of Promise #707

READER 7

Closing Words:

In this sacred place, we recognize the presence of their spirit and dedicate this planting in their memory.

We dedicate this planting where new life may abide, a place where peace is present, and for all to find renewal. May this too be a garden of seasons where we can witness God's creation and participate in all stages of life. Let creation's beauty bless this planting and sanctify this land that God's amazing wonders may continue to bless all with the breath of creation. AMEN.

BENEDICTION

From this place let peace be planted and nurtured to grow and move throughout our community to the world around us. May this be a place of remembrance, respite and of inspiration for new growth of God's love throughout the Kin-dom and here on earth. AMEN.