



Liturgical Service

A Short Service of Reading and Reflection
September 12, 2026

Fall 2026

Preparing

Some people seem especially to be ‘the stranger’ because they are very different from the people I am comfortable with. We all tend to surround ourselves with people who agree with us on the vital issues, people who look like us, smell like us, have similar backgrounds, and hold similar convictions. When we create a life surrounded by people just like ourselves, it is a very narrow life. It comes with a guarantee: We will not be challenged by such a life.¹

Prelude: Adagio – Roger Nyquist

The pastor says:

We welcome You, Sprit of God,
You who seek our company
and choose to make Yourself know to us.

We join in reading the bold type.

**We are grateful for Your many blessings,
including bringing us together
at this time,
in this place.²**

The pastor briefly shares announcements.

Inviting

The liturgist continues:

O God of ever-present love,
help us
to embrace true security,
fleeing from idols
and exposing illusions.

All things are passing,
God never changes.

Amen. Let it be so.³

The cantor sings (to the tune of Hymn #1):

Sing praise to God, who has shaped and sustained all creation!
Sing praise, my soul, in profound and complete adoration!
Gladsome rejoice—organ and trumpet and voice—
Joining God's great congregation.

We join the cantor:

**Praise God, our guardian, who lovingly offers correction.
Who, as on eagle's wings, saves us from sinful dejection.
Have you observed, how we are always preserved
By God's parental affection?⁴**

Praying

The liturgist continues:

From considering your loving creation to be our own,
and forgetting that the earth is yours and all that is in it,

O God, deliver us.

From avoiding our responsibility for the world's care and protection,
and from our destructive greed,

O God, deliver us.

From being content with things as they are
in ourselves, in the church, and in the world,
from confusing faith with good feelings
and love with wanting to be loved—

O God, deliver us.

From everything in us
that hinders or distorts the truths of your love—

O God, deliver us. Amen.

We contemplate our sin and God's grace.

God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us by the measure of our failings.

As vast as the distance from one end of creation to another,
God's love for us is even greater.

As far as east is from west,
from greater than this distance does God remove our sin from us.⁵

Amen.

The liturgist may remind us of special blessings, needs and concerns, and then says:

I invite you to kneel as we pray.

Our holy Guardian God, 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 debts as we forgive our debtors.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

Grant, almighty God, that all who confess your name may be united in
your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray silently.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of
justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common
good.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray silently.

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may
use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and
glory.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray silently.

Give us grace to understand how our lives depend on the courage, the industry, the honesty, and the integrity of all who labor. May we be mindful of their needs, grateful for their faithfulness, and faithful in our responsibilities to them.⁶

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray silently.

Give courage and determination for those who are oppressed and let us remember that “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny.”⁷

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray silently.

Be merciful to those who suffer, in body or in mind, to those who are in danger or distress, and who have suffered loss, (including _____).

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray silently.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who suffered and died, and then rose from the dead to lead us into new life, now and for ever.

Amen.⁸

The congregation sits.

Listening

The lector says:

Listen to the word of God from Exodus, chapter 14, verses 19-31.

Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

After a period of silent reflection on the reading, the pastor says:

Please join in reading from Psalm 114.

1 Hallelujah!

When Israel came out of Egypt,

- the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,**
2 Judah became God's sanctuary
 and Israel God's dominion.
3 The sea beheld it and fled;
 Jordan turned and went back.
4 The mountains skipped like rams,
 and the little hills like young sheep.
5 What ailed you, O sea, that you fled?
 O Jordan, that you turned back?
6 You mountains, that you skipped like rams?
 you little hills like young sheep?
7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
 at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water
 and flint stone into a flowing spring.

After a period of silent reflection on the Psalm, the lector says:

Listen to the word of God from Romans, chapter 14, verses 1-12.

Lesson from the New Testament

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

After a period of silent reflection on the reading, the cantor says:

Please stand and join me in singing ____ stanzas of hymn 170, "Come, You Faithful."

The people continue standing as the liturgist continues:

Listen to the gospel according to Matthew, chapter 18, verses 21-35.

Lesson from the Gospel

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

Offering

After a period of silent reflection, the liturgist continues:

Please be seated.

With gratitude and gladness we reflect on God's goodness and gifts of grace.

Amen.

If you wish to donate financially, you can give at the doors to the sanctuary after the service, or you can visit lasierra.church and click on "Give."

Offertory: I Need Thee Every Hour – Dale Wood

Considering

After a moment of grateful reflection, the homilist prays:

Give your people grace to witness to your word
and bring forth the fruit of your Spirit.

Amen.

Homily

Affirming

The liturgist and people say:

Lord, You have always given bread for the coming day; and though I am poor,

today I believe.

Lord, You have always given strength for the coming day; and though I am weak,

today I believe.

Lord, You have always given peace for the coming day; and though of anxious heart,

today I believe.

Lord, You have always kept me safe from trials; and now, tried as I am,

today I believe.

Lord, You have always marked the road for the coming day; and though it may be hidden,

today I believe.

Lord, You have always lightened this darkness of mine; and though the night is here,

today I believe.

Lord, you have always spoken when time was ripe; and though You be silent now,

today I believe.

Amen.

We join the cantor in singing (to the tune of Hymn #1):⁹

Sing praise to God, with sincere thanks for all your successes.

Merciful God ever loves to encourage and bless us.

Only conceive, what godly strength can achieve:

Strength that would love and caress us.

Sing praise, my soul, the great name of your high God commending.

All that have life and breath join you, their notes sweetly blending.

God is your light! Soul, ever keep this in sight:

Amen, amen never ending.

Responding

The pastor says:¹⁰

Serve your God with patience and passion.

Be deliberate in enacting your faith.

Be steadfast in celebrating the Spirit's power.

And may peace be your way in the world.¹¹

Amen.

Organ chimes

Blessing

Postlude: Trumpet Tune in A Major – David N. Johnson

The pastor says:

Blessed be God of the rivers and of our lives.

Blessed be God of the tides and our thought.

Blessed be God of the wind and our motives.

Bless these steps we have taken.

You have walked in our shoes.¹²

Alleluia! Amen!

Upcoming Texts

Visit <https://lasierra.church/liturgical-service/> to view upcoming texts and participants, download this liturgy, watch online, or sign up for our email newsletter.

September 19: Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Philippians 1:21-30; and Matthew 20:1-16.

September 26: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2:1-13; and Matthew 21:23-32.

¹ *Celtic Daily Prayer Book II* (2015).

² *Celtic Daily Prayer Book II* (2015).

³ *Celtic Daily Prayer Book II* (2015).

⁴ *The New Century Hymnal* (1995).

⁵ *Daily Prayer for All Seasons* (2014).

⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr.

⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (1963).

⁸ Adapted from *the United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992).

⁹ *The New Century Hymnal* (1995).

¹⁰ *Daily Prayer for All Seasons* (2014).

¹¹ From *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992).

¹² Adapted from *Celtic Daily Prayer Book II* (2015).