WORSHIP LITURGY: APRIL 26TH, 2026

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: Come, let us worship Jesus the Christ who calls out to us, “I am the gate.” Not a wall to keep us out, but a doorway into life.

People: Through Christ, no one is turned away; all are welcome!

Leader: Come, let us listen for the voice of the Shepherd who calls us by name and invites us in.

People: As we gather today, may we listen for that voice within and among us.

Leader: Come, let us worship the One who calls us, the one who leads us, and the one who restores us.

People: We come into this sacred space with hope, ready to receive and to serve others. May we live fully, love deeply, and serve boldly. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER:

Holy One,

We come into this moment from a variety of spaces and places: some of us are weary, some of us are hopeful, and some of us are guarded. As we gather for worship this day, may you be our Gate and our Shepherd: opening what has been shut within us. May you guide us into spaces of grace and lead us beyond what we thought possible. May you root us in love that cannot be stolen or destroyed. May you shape us into a people who reflect your ways in how we speak, in how we listen, and in how we live. Be present among us now and make us attentive to your Spirit moving in and amongst us. In the name of the One who calls us into fullness of life, we pray. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Friends, Jesus reminds us that the shepherd knows his sheep and that he calls them each by their names. Yet, there are times when we listen to the voices that distract us and pull us away from love and pull us toward fear and division. Even still, the gate remains open. Jesus does not abandon us and invites us continually to return, to listen again, and to be restored. Friends, let us come honestly before God, trusting in the grace that seeks us out and calls us back.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Gracious God,

You call us by our names and desire to lead us toward life, but we confess that all too often we do not listen for your voice. In its place, we follow the noises that promise security but lead us to exclude our neighbors. We have trusted systems and leaders that promise protection for some while causing harm to others. Too often, we have chosen our own personal comfort over compassion for others. Forgive us, O God. May you quiet the noises within and around us so that we may hear your voice again. Restore us, guide us, and open us so that we may follow you wherever you call us. In Christ name we pray, Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE:

Hear the Good News: Christ is our shepherd who has set us free. In him we are forgiven, thanks be to God!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

Holy One, our Shepherd and our gate,

As we open your word this day, may you help us to recognize the voice of Christ. Open our ears so that we may hear beyond the noises within and around us. As we encounter your word, may you open the gates of our hearts so that we might receive what you have for us this day. May these sacred stories come alive within us and guide us toward a wholeness only found in you. As we approach your word, may we trust, follow and embody your voice. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)

God of all Things,

You call us into a life that is not meant to be held on to tightly, but one that is to be shared freely. As we offer our gifts of time, talent, and resources this day, may we continue to answer your call to participate in your work of love and justice in and around the world. Guide us to move beyond our comfort zones, to move beyond fear, and to trust your love and compassion. May these gifts reflect the voice we choose to follow today, now, and always. The voice that calls us by name. We dedicate all that we are and all that we have to you. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

LEADER: May you go into the world, trusting the voice of Jesus who has called you by name.

PEOPLE: We go into the world, following the voice that calls us to love, not fear.

LEADER: May you go into the world, offering love to all you meet along your way.

PEOPLE: We go into the world, offering love and compassion to neighbors and enemies alike.

ALL: May the Good Shepherd who calls you by name,
The open Gate that welcomes you home,
The great love that sustains you
Always be with you, within you, and before you,
Today, now, and always. Amen.