

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: **Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

Pastor: God of every nation, as we remember those that gave their life for our sake, let us be stirred to action in their memory. We confess that we have not done all that is possible to promote peace and justice in our world. We have not loved our neighbors, let alone our enemies. Almighty God, you love us, but we do not love you fully. You call, but we do not always listen. We often walk away from our neighbors in need, wrapped up in our own concerns. We often condone evil, hatred, warfare, and greed. God of grace, help us to admit our sin, so that as you move toward us in mercy, we may repent, turn to you, and receive forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Pastor: Are you truly sorry for your sins? If so, answer by saying I am.

Congregation: **I am!**

Pastor: Do you believe that God Sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to take your sin upon Himself, to die in your place as the innocent sacrifice for that sin, and that God raise Him up on the third day as proof that life has now been redeemed through Him? If so, answer by saying, I do.

Congregation: **I do.**

Pastor: Is it your sincere intention, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to amend your sinful life? If so, answer by saying, it is.

Congregation: **It is.**

ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: **Amen.**

LITANY FOR VETERANS

Pastor: God of love, peace and justice, it is Your will for the world that we may live together in peace. You have promised through the prophet Isaiah that one day the swords will be beaten into ploughshares. Yet we live in a broken world, and there are times that war seems inevitable. Let us recognize with humility and sadness the tragic loss of life that comes in war. Even so, as we gather here free from persecution, we may give thanks for those that have served with courage and honor. To You, Lord,

Congregation: **be all glory, honor and praise.**

Pastor: God, we praise You for those that are willing to serve. Let all soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and Coast Guardsmen serve with honor, pride, and compassion. Do not let their hearts be hardened by the actions they must take. Strengthen their families. Keep them surrounded in Your love and peace. To You, Lord,

Congregation: **be all glory, honor and praise.**

Pastor: God, we praise You for those that have served in the military. We thank You for those who put the welfare of others ahead of their own safety. May we all be inspired by their self-sacrifice in service to those who needed protection. To You, Lord,

Congregation: **be all glory, honor and praise.**

Pastor: God, we praise You for those that have made the ultimate sacrifice. We ask that You comfort those that still feel the pain of their loss. Keep us mindful that You have promised to comfort those that mourn. To You, Lord,

Congregation: **be all glory, honor and praise.**

Pastor: God, we praise You for granting us these freedoms. Let us honor those who have served by working for peace. Let us never forget those that have served, and let us never let go of Your promise of peace. Amen.

PRAYER

Loving God, the framers of our Declaration of Independence claimed that you have endowed us with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet there are those who would take these from us.

This week we remember all those who have served in our country's armed forces to preserve the freedoms you have granted us, to make it impossible for those who would take away our freedoms from prevailing.

For the men and women who serve in the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, we ask your blessing. For the family members who have made great sacrifices in order to make it possible for their service members to be on watch at home or around the world or to go into harm's way, we ask your blessing.

For the families who grieve the death of a member who went in harm's way, never to return, we ask your blessing. Jesus tells us that no one has greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. For all those veterans who have been willing to lay down their lives for us, we ask you blessing.

For the veterans of past wars who bear scars in their bodies and spirits, we ask your blessing. For veterans who came home but couldn't "fit in" with their families or communities anymore, we ask you blessing.

Keep all our veterans in your care today. Grant them the peace they sought to preserve for others. As we honor our veterans, we also pray for peace. Teach all your people the ways of peace that those who have sacrificed so much for peace and freedom will not have done so in vain. We pray all these things in the name of your son, our savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

God Bless America

While the storm clouds gather far across the sea
Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free.
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.

God bless America; land that I love;
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above.
From the mountains to the prairies;
To the oceans white with foam;
God bless America, my home sweet home!
God bless America, my home sweet home!

From the mountains to the prairies;
To the oceans white with foam;
God bless America, my home sweet home!
God bless America, my home sweet home!

INTROIT

Isaiah 2:4

Pastor: He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Congregation: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 1:12-26

Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” (Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;
and
“Let another take his office.’

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.
Congregation: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

1 Peter 4:12-14

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.
Congregation: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 17:1-11

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the seventeenth chapter.
Congregation: Glory to You, O Lord.

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me that they may be one, even as we are one.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Congregation: Praise to You, O Christ.

America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies; for amber waves of grain;
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plane;
America! America! God shed His grace on thee;
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for heroes proves with liberating strife;
Who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine;
Till all success be nobleness and every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years;
Thine alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears;
America! America! God shed His grace on thee;
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

SERMON

Tomorrow is Memorial Day. It is the day that we set aside each year as a nation to remember the men and women who have given their lives to keep our country free. Memorial Day is not nearly so much a celebration as it is a commemoration. Memorial Day reminds us of the true cost of freedom. As the saying goes, "Freedom isn't free". It comes at a great cost.

In our nation's first 100 years of existence, over 683,000 Americans lost their lives, with the Civil War accounting for over 90% of the total. We compare that to the next 100 years when an additional 626,000 died through two world wars, Korea, Vietnam, several regional conflicts, and the Middle East.

Those are the official numbers taken from the U.S. Army Military History Institute. That's over 1.3 million American lives sacrificed for our freedom and the freedom of others around the world. It is because of their sacrifice that we are able to sit here in our homes today as free men and women. They died for our country so that we can have the freedom to live, freedom to make our own decisions, and freedom to worship. We are humbled by their sacrifice.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt said: **"Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them."**

This weekend, and tomorrow in particular, thousands of Americans will make pilgrimages to cemeteries across our land to remember loved ones lost. They will decorate their graves with flowers. But all of us, as Americans should take time to remember that the freedoms we enjoy are owed to the brave men and women who have died in service to our country, and to those who are serving today. Because of them, we can freely proclaim the Word of God. We have the right to live at peace in our homes. We have the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Remembering is to be a common spiritual exercise in our lives as Christians. Time and again the people of God are exhorted and commanded to remember. Over 100 times the word "remember" is mentioned in scripture. More than once God has instituted memorials so His people would remember. We have the giving of a Rainbow as a remembrance that God will never again flood the earth. That's Genesis 9. We have the Passover in Numbers 9. Remembering that the angel of death passed over the homes that had the blood of a lamb on the doorposts. We have the stones from the Jordan River in Joshua 4, plus a number of other rituals and sacrifices. All given with the element of remembrance. Our devotion tomorrow will focus on remembering.

But tomorrow as we celebrate Memorial Day, I want you to remember more than just the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice that we might be one nation under God. I also ask that you make tomorrow a reminder of what Jesus did for us. I want tomorrow to be a reminder to us of the cost of freedom for our Christian life.

You are free from the consequences of sin and the fear of death today because Jesus, God's only Son, became one of us. He gave His life so we could have ours spared. We who've come to faith in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit owe to Him all glory and praise for what He did for us. Don't take for granted the great salvation that we have today!

Only God knows how many have had their blood shed for the cause of Christ in the last two thousand years. It's fitting for us this morning to likewise remember their sacrifice. It is still, more fittingly, and important for us to remember the One in whom they believed. The one who shed the purity of His blood for freedom's cause. For without the sacrifice of our Risen Lord, we in America would not enjoy the freedoms we love and know so well.

For us, as believers in Jesus, every Sunday is a memorial to our Lord Jesus Christ. Because He gave His life for us, we can have freedom from sin and eternal life with Him. We celebrate Memorial Day once a year as a nation, but every week we hold a memorial of Christ. Every Sunday is Memorial Day for the Christian.

In our memorial to Christ, we mourn His loss, we remember His life, and we are thankful for His sacrifice. We are to examine our responsibility to Christ. It is because of our sins that He had to die on the cross. Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We must recognize that we are as much to blame as the Jews who cried out for His crucifixion. He was humiliated, beaten, spit upon, and hung on the cross because we have sinned. We must recognize that He would have died to save even just one sinner. That is how great His love for us is.

Matthew 18:12-14 reads, **“Jesus died so that we could all have the chance at eternal life. He did it freely and willingly. He died to defeat sin once and for all that it would no longer reign over us, but that through the blood of Christ, we could have righteousness.”**

To the church in Rome Paul wrote in chapter 6:3-4, **“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”**

And then he goes on to say, **“So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”**

And he concludes by saying, **“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

NUMBER TWO: We Remember His Life. What must we remember about Jesus? We remember how He lived and what He taught. He set a glorious example of how to live life through love. Our lives, in Him, are to reflect that love. Jesus lived a life that is full of instruction for us. He showed love to everyone He came into contact with. He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He taught by example how to live a righteous life before God. He experienced pain, hunger, loneliness, temptation, joy, happiness, and all of the other emotions that we experience. He did this so that we would have a sympathetic High Priest, who understands what we are going through because He also experienced it. He came to serve. Our lives in Christ are to be marked by service as well.

Matthew 20:28 **“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** If He came to serve, what must we do? I will share with you two contrasting views of service.

**“I gave a little party this afternoon at three
'Twas very small
Three guests in all
Just I, Myself, and Me
Myself ate up the sandwiches
While I drank up the tea
And it was I who ate the pie
And passed the cake to Me.”**

That's the way it is for some people. It's not just me first, it is me alone. This is the way it is with most folks. But because we're in Christ and Christ is in us, we think about others!

**Lord, help me to live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for others.**

**Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true
And know that all I'd do for you
Must needs be done for others.**

Let "self" be crucified and slain
And buried deep, and all in vain
May efforts be to rise again
Unless to live for others.

And when my work on earth is done
And my new work in heaven's begun
May I forget the crown I've won
While thinking still of others.

Others, Lord, yes, others
Let this my motto be,
Help me to live for others
That I may live like Thee.

We are Thankful for His Sacrifice. The price Jesus paid on the cross has afforded us salvation. We have the promise of salvation and we did nothing to deserve it. That is the definition of grace: unmerited favor. For this we are thankful. Look at Hebrews 9:11-13, "**But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**"

NUMBER THREE: Now here's the question: What will our memorial be? When people remember you, just what will they remember first? What will they remember the most? How will others summarize the life you lived?

Our influence doesn't end when we die. It lives on in the lives of those we have touched. The Bible clearly teaches that our influence continues after we are gone. Just look at the examples of faithful service given in Hebrews 11. These lived many, many years ago, yet they are still influencing our lives today by the example that they gave.

We can all look back on our lives and remember people who have influenced our lives. We will all influence the lives of others, and especially our children and grandchildren. Our influence will live on in them for generations to come. What kind of influence will that be? Will it be a good influence or a bad influence? The decisions and actions we take today, will influence lives for years to come. We all need to ask ourselves this question: What influences am I setting in motion which for each of us. What kind of legacy will we leave behind?

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

O Spirit, whom the Father sent
To spread abroad the firmament;
O Wind of heaven, by Thy might
Save all who dare the eagle's flight,
And keep them by Thy watchful care
From ev'ry peril in the air.

O Trinity of love and pow'r,
Our people shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad praise from air and land and sea.

APOSTLES' CREED (spoken in unison)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Guard Your people, O Lord, and grant us unit of faith and singleness of heart, as we come to You in prayer.

Pastor: Lord, You have promised not to abandon Your people but to be with us always. Grant us grace to hear Your Word with faith and with repentant hearts, and to keep what we hear and receive upon our lips in holy lives. Lord, in Your mercy,

Congregation: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Lord, You have delivered the saints from fiery trial and raised up the martyr from the darkness of death to everlasting life. Give us courage, that we may give bold witness to the truth in our own day and proclaim Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. Lord, in Your mercy,

Congregation: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Lord, You have pledged to us Your Spirit and promised to supply Your Church with pastors who will preach and teach Your Word. Give us ears to hear and hearts to believe Your Word. Raise up those who will serve Your Church in generations to come, that we may never be without the aid of those to serve us in Your name. Lord, in Your mercy,

Congregation: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Lord, You have power over all things and appoint an order on earth for the protection of the weak, the punishment of evildoers and the encouragement of virtue. Bless our president; our governor; and all who make, administer and judge our laws. Give them wisdom for the challenges of our times, and preserve them from self-serving concerns. Give us grace, that we may honor the gift of liberty and be good citizens and neighbors to all. Lord, in Your mercy,

Congregation: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Lord, You have compassion upon all who suffer. Give grace to the sick, to those with mental illness, to the dying in their last hours and to those who grieve. Hear us, especially for _____ and those we name in our hearts before You. Grant them patience in their afflictions and deliver them according to Your gracious will. Lord, in Your mercy,

Congregation: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: God of power and mercy, You destroy war and put down earthly pride. Banish violence from our midst and wipe away our tears, that we may all deserve to be called Your sons and daughters. Keep in Your mercy those men and women who have died in the cause of freedom and bring them safely into Your kingdom of justice and peace. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (spoken in unison)

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 forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless you and keep you.

Congregation: Amen.