



**Reformation Day 2021: Order of Worship  
Being Reformed in a Time of COVID-19 and Beyond**

*Welcome and Greetings* (Share the importance of celebrating the significance of the Reformation.)

**Leader:** Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth.

**People:** Yes, our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth.

*Hymn*

*Prayer of Celebration*

**Leader:** Let us rejoice that the Light has come into our world and  
no amount of darkness can overcome the Light.

**People:** God of Life, we celebrate you.

**Leader:** In the midst of a culture of silence,  
we celebrate you for being the Word of Life.  
In the midst of the grayness of our homes,  
we celebrate you for your gift of colors.  
In the midst of our distorted relationships,  
we celebrate you for your gift of life in abundance.

**People:** God of Life, we celebrate you.

**Leader:** In the midst of the hierarchies of our society,  
we celebrate you for your creation of equals.  
In the midst of a pandemic that sickens and causes death  
we celebrate the gift of life  
In the midst of the abuse of power and money,  
we celebrate you for your gift of justice.  
In the midst of our society where everything comes with a price,  
we celebrate your gifts of abundant grace.

**People:** God of Life, we celebrate you.

**1st Reader:**

We light this candle in the name of God who illumines the world  
and inspires us with the breath of life. (First candle or lamp is lit.)

**2nd Reader:**

We light this candle in the name of the Son who has come  
that all may have life in its fullness. (Second candle or lamp is lit.)

**3rd Reader:**

We light this candle in the name of the Holy Spirit  
which embraces the world and fills our souls with love. (Third candle or lamp is lit.)

**All: We have lit three candles for the God who creates,  
redeems, and sustains us.**

**Leader:** God of Life: may your light shine on your people today,  
May the light of your presence inspire our worship,  
and inspire our lives, to praise you and recognize you,  
as source of all creation, as strength that sustains,  
as sap that nurtures, as wisdom that foresees,  
as clarity that discovers, as love that understands,  
as mercy that forgives...  
May the light of your eternal presence shine through us now and forever  
till the dawn of your Kingdom. Amen.

*Litany: The Spirit Gives Us Ears*

**Leader:** Listen

The Spirit gives us ears  
Hear the voices  
A mother crying for her lifeless child  
A wife moaning after another beating  
A child begging as people are passing by  
Doctors giving more bad news in clinics  
Market traders selling crops  
For less than they cost to grow  
Politicians doing deals, pocketing bribes  
Prayers and whisperings  
As the time of detonation nears

(Quiet)

Listen  
The Spirit gives us ears  
Hear the sounds  
Footsteps dragging  
Carrying water, collecting firewood  
Dumping the body of a trade unionist  
In a lonely spot

Trees crashing and logging lorries idling  
The quiet ooze of factory waste  
Sewing machines humming, land mines clicking  
Bombs bursting, Earth shattering  
Listen.....Hear the Spirit's voice  
Hear her weep

(Quiet)

Listen  
The Spirit gives us ears  
Hear the voices, hear the sounds  
Campaigners shouting slogans  
Protestors demonstrating  
Workers negotiating  
Governments conceding  
People changing  
Earth sighing

Listen  
Hear the Spirit's voice, hear her sing

**All: Life Giving Spirit, help us to  
treat the earth gently and each other justly;  
bind us together to work for justice  
in the economy and on the earth;  
seal us in a Covenant  
that gives dignity to all women and men  
young and old, black and white,  
seal us in a Covenant  
that anoints the wounded, humbles the proud,  
and resists evil without doing harm.  
seal us in a Covenant  
that cherishes the earth, challenges injustice,  
and promises Life in fullness.**

*God's Word Liberates*

Old Testament: Psalm 46

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-11

*Sermon*

*Prayers of the People*

**ALL: God, I ask you, what is our purpose?  
At such a time as this Lord, what is our role?**

**Leader:** When my brother cannot breathe, Lord, what should I do?  
When the police put a knee to my brother's neck Lord,  
When the oxygen runs out in the hospitals Lord,  
When the air pollution suffocates Lord,  
When the funeral pyres burn Lord,  
When my brother cannot breathe Lord, what should I do?

**ALL: God, I ask you, what is our purpose?  
At such a time as this Lord, what is our role?**

**Leader:** When my sister is beaten and bruised, Lord, what should I do?  
When she fears the jealous wrath of her husband Lord,  
When the police show impunity Lord,  
When her children go hungry Lord,  
When the pandemic impacts her the most Lord,  
When my sister is beaten and bruised Lord, what should I do?

**ALL: God, I ask you, what is our purpose?  
At such a time as this Lord, what is our role?**

**Leader:** When the earth cries out, Lord, what should I do?  
When the greed of humanity has made Your creation vulnerable Lord,  
When the indigenous rights of the people are denied Lord,  
When the privatization of healthcare denies the poor life Lord,  
When the vaccine warfare continues Lord,  
When the earth cries out Lord, what should I do?

**ALL: God, for just such a time as this,  
We have assembled the people.  
We need actions not just words.  
We need repentance, not just lament.  
At such a time as this Lord, help us to act.**

*Prayer of Confession*

**Leader:** We have each of us been shaped by different forces; some of us have been ground down, whilst others have been built up. Some of us have been worn away, or have become fractured and broken. Some of us have found life a burden rather than a joy. Some of us have inherited power, whilst others of us have inherited powerlessness.

**ALL: We come now to pray: your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven and to offer ourselves once more to live out your coming kingdom of equality and justice in our lives, in our churches, and in our communities.**

**Leader:** And so we confess our own complicity in the status quo which divides and distorts humanity. As we pray, we ask that you will release us from guilt and will help us to find ways of laying down the burdens we have inherited.

**ALL: Help us to discover our true and rightful place within the new humanity created in Christ Jesus. All people together, we confess that we have sinned, and that we have fallen short of the glory of God.**

**Leader:** We confess our failures to speak out against injustice. We confess those times when, as individuals and as churches, we have witnessed the fracturing of humanity along ethnic grounds, and yet have remained silent. We confess those times when we have been the powerful ones and have chosen to withhold that power whilst another human suffered.

**ALL: We confess the sin of the abuse of power to oppress and demean. May those of us who have ourselves experienced exclusion be the first to speak up for others. May we create spaces for reconciliation.**

**Leader:** We pray for our churches. May they become places of reconciliation, where each human soul is valued, and where equality in Christ is a reality in our midst. Forgive us those times where we do not live out our calling as your people. May our churches model the new humanity of Christ to those in the communities where we live.

**ALL: We pray for our communities. Where there is division, may we bring restoration. Where there is inequality may we bring justice. Where there is powerlessness may we lift up the broken hearted. Where there is damage may we bring healing.**

**Leader:** Loving and forgiving God, hear our confession, hear the desires of our hearts to be different, grant us your forgiveness, and remake us according to the likeness of Christ.  
Amen.

#### *Granting of Peace*

**Leader:** Grant us peace that will break our silence in the midst of violence so prophetic voices shall rise up. Grant us peace that will pull us down from our pride so that we will learn to wash each other's feet. Grant us peace that will empty us of hate and intolerance so that we will set aside our fears and prejudices. Grant us peace that will close our mouths when we speak too much, so that we will learn to listen and understand what others are saying. Grant us peace so that we will become instruments of your peace.

#### *Sharing the Peace with Each Other*

**Leader:** Now may God go with us as a reforming presence in our community. God has guided and sustained our ancestors in all generations. May God inspire and empower this generation to make visible justice and peace in our community, through the power of Christ the risen Lord. Amen.