

Year C; Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Liturgical Elements
Developed for September 7, 2025
Prepared by Pastor Andy Smothers

Lectionary Texts

- Jeremiah 18:1-11
- Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
- Philemon 1-21
- Luke 14:25-33

CALL TO WORSHIP (*from Psalm 139*)

One: Our LORD has searched us and knows us.

All: Our LORD knows when each sits down and when each rises up; he discerns our thoughts from far away.

One: Our LORD searches out our paths and our lying down,

All: Our LORD is acquainted with all of our ways.

One: Before a word is on our tongues,

All: Our LORD knows it completely.

One: The knowledge of the LORD is too wonderful for any human;

All: it is so high that no person can attain it.

One: It was the LORD who formed each of our inward parts;

All: the LORD knit each of us together in our mother's womb.

One: We praise you, LORD, for each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made.

All: Wonderful are his works! The LORD is worthy of our worship and wonderful to be praised!

CALL TO CONFESSION (*from Jeremiah 18*)

The prophet Jeremiah describes being led to a potter's house by God with the image used to describe God's efforts to mold God's people Israel. God works to mold each of us into perfection through sanctification. Let us confess where we work against God's transformative work — where we are not soft clay in his hands.

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*from Jeremiah 18; Luke 14*)

Merciful and just God, you work to mold each of us into perfection according to your perfect plan for the redemption of creation and the coming of your kingdom to this place. Too often, though, you find we are uncooperative clay — people who put our own or worldly interests before your coming kingdom and work. We love father and mother, spouse and children, brothers and sisters, even our own life itself greater than we love you. We claim to be your disciples but are unwilling to assess the true cost because it may be more than we would like to bear. Forgive our unfaithfulness, and soften us to be molded into your true perfection. In the name of Jesus, who lived perfectly in your ways. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *(from Jeremiah 18)*

While God does seek justice and his good plans, he also demonstrates mercy. God shares with Jeremiah, also, that should a nation fall under his judgment and even destruction, but turns from its ways, God will change his mind. Let us turn from the ways of evil and of working against God and amend our ways and doings in order to enjoy his perfect plans. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION *(from Jeremiah 18)*

Almighty God, at times, your ways can seem difficult. We resist change — particularly change that comes from without. You, though, have not left us without an example. You, God of the universe, took on human form in the person of Jesus to demonstrate your ways, to offer forgiveness, and to invite us to eternal life. With thankfulness, we offer these tithes as a portion of that which you have provided us. Guide our congregation's leaders to invest it according to your plans. Amen.

Elements in this document are based on the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV). Some portions are direct quotes; though, quotation marks and designations are usually left out for ease of use in bulletins and other worship resources. Usually, the Call to Worship is based upon the Psalm of the day and follows that Psalm very closely but modifying it for a leader vs. congregation responsive setting if necessary. Other elements usually deviate more significantly from the text. While they may quote very short sections, they are generally written in the theme of the text. Elements usually designate the book and chapter from which they are derived.

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