Call To Worship  (based on Eccl 3:1, Mark 1:15, and Gal 6:9)

One:  The Teacher said: To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.

All:  This is a time for worship – this is a season to consider God’s blessings.

One:  Jesus said: The time is up! The Kingdom of God is right next to us!

All:  This is the time for God’s realm to be made visible, with us, through us, around us!

One:  The Apostle said: Let us not grow weary in doing right, for when the season is ripe we will reap bountifully if we don’t give up.

All:  Working together in God’s service we can shoulder the load, gather in the harvest, all in due season, all in God’s time.

One:  Come, let us gather together in the name of the One beyond time, present in all seasons, visible in all hearts.

Unison Invocation

All:  We come together to worship, travelling as many paths as there are faces present here today! For some of us it has been a hectic time. Others among us have experienced peace. Some of us have groaned a good deal in getting ready. Others among us move easily. Some of us bear emotional, physical, or spiritual burdens. For still others the journey has meant light burdens and a light heart.

In each of us the rhythms of life have made themselves felt in our journey of faith and discipleship. Together, in faithful worship of God, our rhythms undergird one great music of faithfulness and love.

God, the great composer of the rhythms of our lives, the author of the song we are living, write a new stanza in the lyric of our lives together, as we celebrate the passage of the seasons of life. Amen.

Hymn of praise:  God of our life  Hymnal: A Worship Book #486
Prayer of Confession  (*listen*)

God of all seasons, God in and beyond time, present in the Word made Flesh, we come before you as a people who share a multitude of experiences, arriving from a variety of backgrounds, fully aware of the truth of your scripture, that to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. Yet despite this truth we complain because we dwell in one season of life and not another.

When we are young we strive to look and act older. When we are older we pretend it is possible for us to look and act younger. When we ought to be silent we speak. When we are led by your Spirit to speak we are silent. When the sorrows of this world beg for us to weep with your suffering people we laugh it off, and when your joy lifts up your people even in the midst of hardship we frown and demand that all should look solemn. We complain about those who wail. We complain about those who dance.

Lord of life and death, sovereign of seedtime and harvest, grant us the wisdom that in all seasons we might be your people, witnessing to your love, sharing in your work, bearing each other’s weakness. So that in war and in peace, where there is love and where there is hate, we might always strengthen the weak in good time and serve you by serving the hungry, the thirsty, then naked, the imprisoned, and the sick in all seasons.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: In birth and in death we praise you, because you are present in all the rhythms of life.

All: While the seed sleeps in the earth, when the tomato vine is bent from the weight of the bright fruit, we thank you with grateful praise.

One: Where there is harm, call us to be present, that healing in its time may return, and all may raise their hands and hearts in thanksgiving.

All: When it is time for the tearing down may our hands stack the bricks, that we may also be busy in building new ministries.

One: May we cry with those who weep, rejoice with those who laugh,

All: Throwing and gathering stones

One: Recognizing boundaries, embracing in due season,

All: Seeking, losing, keeping, and discarding, and in all things thanking you, seeing you in every good purpose, seeking you and aiding you when it is your will to restore and renew.

One: When our hearts are torn in grief, when our lives are reassembled after the dark night is past and joy is renewed with the morning,

All: When it is your will we are silent, when it is your will we speak out,

One: When we love, when we hate the evil that destroys life and seek to conquer it in love,

All: In war, in peace,

One: In war, bringing peace

All: thanking you in time and season for your presence, hear us, receive our heartfelt thanksgiving, bless us with perspective, love, and hope. Amen.
Offering Meditation (listen)

The teacher tells us there is a time to be born and a time to die. We don’t have to be morbid or gloomy to know that we all have a limited time, and there’s no telling how much time we have. Like the poet Andrew Marvell said, “But at my back I always hear, Time’s winged chariot drawing near….”

But what if we didn’t have to think about dying? In a short story titled “The Martyr” by Alan E. Nourse, a few especially talented or gifted individuals are given expensive medications to lengthen their lives. A senator begins an investigation to find out why this serum isn’t given to all, but what he discovers is that the composer in a search for perfection never quite completes his composition. The inventor never finishes an invention. The immortals are accomplishing little or nothing. Without death there seems to be no incentive to get the most out of life.

In our time of offering we need to remember that the only time we can count on is now! This is our opportunity to make a difference in our congregation, in our community, in our world, through our offerings of our wealth, our effort, and our will to be good disciples in the name of Jesus.

Offering Sentence (listen)

To everything there is a season. This is our time for the purpose of changing the world in God’s name.

Offering Prayer (listen)

Receive, Gracious God, giving of all good things, what we have given in your name, for your work, with your heart. In each proper time and season lead those who receive these gifts to use them for your glory. Amen.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Message: Rhythms of Life: for everything there is a season....

Hymn of Service: Will you let me be your servant? Hymnal: A Worship Book #307

Commission Statement (listen)

In season, in time, in all of life’s twists and turns, be present, and share God’s presence in love.
Unison Benediction

All: Go forward in God’s time,
   So that in every season
We might in every beginning and ending
Praise God the Creator,
   Guided by God’s Spirit,
   In the pattern of the Redeemer.
   Amen.

Frank Ramirez is pastor of the Union Center Church of the Brethren, Nappanee, Indiana, and is a well-known and prolific writer. He and his wife Jennie serve as volunteer staff for the denomination’s National Older Adult Conference (NOAC).

Encouraging individuals, families, and congregations to celebrate God’s gift of aging through the observation of Older Adult Month is a ministry of the Church of the Brethren’s Older Adult Ministry. For more information about aging:

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God of the stars

Frank Ramirez

C F G C C

God of the stars, yet God in our home, God who pre-

God who is mystery, God who is might, God who is

God who is laughter, God who is grace, God who is

God of the evening, God of the day, In sunshine

F G C C

cedes us where ever we roam. God who stays

hid - den God here in sight, God who gives

found in each sojourner's face, Where ever life

or shadow please show us the way. God who is

cedes us where ever we roam. God who stays

G F C C

here, yet God ev - ry where, God, be our

guidance, grants us free will, God who gave

leads us, stand by our side, To you praise

breath, whose son shared our death, Will grant resur-

here, yet God ev - ry where, God, be our

F G C

com - fort, God who is care.

Jesus - a - bide with us still.

and honor what - ever betide.

re - c tion and new life to - day.

com - fort, God who is care.

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