



CENTRAL  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

# PREPARATION

March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday in Lent

## WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one’s feet... Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole.”

— FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, grant that we, who justly deserve to be punished for our sinful deeds, may mercifully be relieved by the comfort of your grace; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

## THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4-9

PSALM: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:1-10

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

*In Scripture, the Call to Worship comes from God. We need to be called because it is not our natural response to come to God. God takes the initiative, moves towards us with grace, and invites us to worship him.*

### Isaiah 53

LEADER Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;

**PEOPLE Yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.**

LEADER But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;

**PEOPLE Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.**

LEADER All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;

**PEOPLE And the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.**

LEADER He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;

**PEOPLE Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.**

LEADER Although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

**PEOPLE Yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.**

## **HYMN**

### **Hallelujah! What a Savior**

Phillip P. Bliss · Arr: Ron McGee

“Man of sorrows!” What a name  
For the Son of God, Who came,  
Ruined sinners to reclaim.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

*Hallelujah, Hallelujah!*  
*Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He,  
Full atonement can it be?  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;  
“It is finished!” was His cry,  
Now in Heav’n exalted high.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! *Chorus*

When He comes, our glorious King,  
All His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew this song we’ll sing:  
Hallelujah! What a Savior! *Chorus*

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Aware of God's holiness and our sinfulness, the Prayer of Confession invites us to honestly confess our sins. We are free to confess even our most grievous faults because no matter how deep our sin may be, God's grace in Jesus Christ is deeper still. Confession both acknowledges our need for grace and celebrates its abundant provision in Christ.*

Holy and merciful God, in your presence we confess our sinfulness, our shortcomings, and our offenses against you. You alone know how often we have sinned in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love. Have mercy on us, Lord, for we are ashamed and sorry for all we have done to displease you. Forgive our sins, and help us to live in your light and walk in your ways, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

## SILENT CONFESSION

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*The Words of Assurance should be received with gratitude and joy because these words of Scripture assure us that God has promised to forgive and restore those who confess their sins through the finished work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.*

### 1 John 1:5-8

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

**LEADER** Hear and receive the good news of the gospel:  
in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**ALL** **Thanks be to God!**

## **HYMN**

### **The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power**

Andrae Crouch

The blood that Jesus shed for me,  
Way back on Calvary;  
The blood that gives me strength  
From day to day,  
It will never lose its pow'r.

*It reaches to the highest mountain,  
And it flows to the lowest valley;  
The blood that gives me strength  
From day to day,  
It will never lose its pow'r.*

It soothes my doubts and calms my fears,  
And it dries all my tears;  
The blood that gives me strength  
From day to day,  
It will never lose its pow'r. *Chorus*

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 10:00AM**

*We regularly pray for needs in our congregation, our neighborhood and city, and the world.  
Please let the prayer ministry know of your prayer requests by visiting [centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest](http://centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest).*

## **SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM 11:30AM**

Clark Elliott Feltes

Son of Kevin Feltes and Monica Allison

### **Baptismal Vows**

- 1 Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?
- 2 Do you claim God's covenant promises on his behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for Clark's salvation, as you do for your own?
- 3 Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon divine grace, that you will endeavor to set before him a godly example, that you will pray with and for him, that you will teach him the truths of the Christian faith, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring Clark up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

### **Congregational Vow**

- 1 Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting Kevin and Monica in the Christian nurture of their child?

## **OFFERING**

*Please text [centralchurchnyc](https://www.centralchurchnyc.org) to 77977 or visit our website in order to give electronically.*

## OFFERTORY

### My Feet Are On The Rock

Abbie Parker · Josh Bronleewe · Lindsey Sweat · Matthew Hein

I can see the clouds roll in.  
I can feel the winds, they try to shake me.  
I will not be moved;  
My feet are on the rock!

I can feel the waters rise.  
I can hear the howling lies that haunt me.  
Fear won't hold me now;  
My feet are on the rock!

*When I feel my hope about to break,  
I will cling to Your unchanging grace.  
Let the waters come and the earth give way:  
I'll be dancing in the rain.  
My feet are on the rock!*

I can see the morning light.  
I can feel the joy on the horizon.  
Here my faith is found;  
I stand on solid ground. *Chorus*

On Christ the solid rock I stand.  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
So stomp your feet and clap your hands.  
Our feet are on the rock! *Chorus*

## THE DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth LM

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye Heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READING

*The Word of God is the primary means by which God speaks to us and the ultimate authority for what we believe and how we live. All Scripture passages are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.*

### 1 Peter 2:18-3:7

<sup>18</sup>Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup>For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup>For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

<sup>21</sup>For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup>When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

<sup>1</sup>Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see your respectful and pure conduct. <sup>3</sup>Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— <sup>4</sup>but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. <sup>5</sup>For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

<sup>7</sup>Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

## SERMON

*The Spirit makes the reading and preaching of God’s Word a powerful means of challenging, comforting, and strengthening God’s people and awakening people to new faith.*

### **A Better Resistance | Christianity Isn’t for Wimps**

Rev. Jason Harris

## THE THANKSGIVING

*From the earliest days of the church a prayer of Thanksgiving preceded Holy Communion. The Thanksgiving includes the "Sursum Corda" which means "Lift up your hearts" or literally, "Hearts lifted," in Latin. The Thanksgiving bids us to acknowledge our absolute dependence on the God who desires to commune with us.*

**LEADER** Lift up your hearts.

**PEOPLE** **We lift them up to the Lord.**

**LEADER** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**PEOPLE** **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

**LEADER** It is indeed right, our duty and joy, that we should  
at all times and in all places give thanks to you,  
Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*Holy Communion (also called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist) is the family meal of baptized Christians. We invite all to partake of this sacrament who trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to use the prayers printed below and spend this time in reflection or prayer. We hope that this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with his people, the church. For health reasons, an individually packaged wafer and cup can be found in the pew for those who wish to participate in the Lord's Supper. Once consumed, please place empty cups in the back of the pew.*

*We take it as a sign of a healthy congregation to have regular attenders who love our community but who do not profess faith in Christ and so refrain from receiving the elements. If you are a Christian and have not yet been baptized, please talk with our pastors. We would be honored to baptize you.*

*Children are welcome to partake of communion. To receive the Lord's Supper, a child must have been baptized and been formally received as a communing member by the Session of this church or the governing body of the church to which you belong.*

### **Prayer for Those Searching for Truth**

Lord Jesus Christ, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

### **Prayer of Belief**

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that you are so holy and I am so sinful that you had to die for me. Yet you are so merciful and I am so loved that you were willing to die for me. I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have failed to do. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

### **Prayer of Commitment**

Lord Jesus, I know that if I do not love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that by loving you first I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties and have you as my first love, my chief good, and my final joy. Amen.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*We sing the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray to our Heavenly Father.*

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 debts as we forgive our debtors,  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen.

## **HYMN**

### **Who You Say I Am**

Brooke Ligertwood · Michael Guy Chislett

Who am I that the highest King would welcome me?  
I was lost but He brought me in; oh, His love for me!  
Oh, His love for me!

*Who the Son sets free, oh, is free indeed!  
I'm a child of God! Yes, I am!*

Free at last, He has ransomed me; His grace runs deep.  
While I was a slave to sin, Jesus died for me.  
Yes, He died for me.

*Who the Son sets free, oh, is free indeed!  
I'm a child of God! Yes, I am!  
In my Father's house is a place for me;  
I'm a child of God! Yes, I am!*

I am chosen, not forsaken; I am who You say I am!  
You are for me, not against me; I am who You say I am!  
I am who You say I am *Chorus*

## **BENEDICTION**

*We begin our worship with God's gracious invitation, and we conclude with God's blessing, his good word. It is appropriate to look up and open our palms as we receive the Benediction to symbolize how Jesus Christ lifts our heads and to demonstrate our eagerness to receive God's blessing.*

## **DISMISSAL**

*God never draws us into relationship with himself without also sending us out into the world to be his representatives and ambassadors.*

**LEADER** Let us go forth to serve the world as those who  
love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Thanks be to God!**