



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

May 2, 2021

Fourth Sunday after Easter

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Suffering grief for being a Christian should not be surprising but is to be expected as a normal part of Christian life. The destiny of Christ is the destiny of the Christian.”

— KAREN JOBES

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you alone can order the unruly wills and passions of sinful men: Grant to your people that they may love what you command and desire what you promise, that so, among the many and varied changes of the world, our heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40

PSALM: Psalm 22:25-31

SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21

GOSPEL: 1 John 4:7-21

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

It Is Well

Horatio G. Spafford · Phillip P. Bliss

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”

*It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! *Chorus*

And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! *Chorus*

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 11

LEADER There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,

PEOPLE And a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

LEADER And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,

**PEOPLE The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.**

LEADER And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

**PEOPLE He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,**

LEADER But with righteousness he shall judge the poor,

PEOPLE And decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

LEADER They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;

**PEOPLE For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.**

HYMN

This is My Father's World

Franklin Sheppard

This is my Father's world,
And to my list'ning ears,
All nature sings and 'round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world,
I rest me in the thought,
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
His hand, the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world,
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white
Declare their Master's praise.
This is my Father's world,
He shines in all that's fair,
In the rustling grass, I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me ev'rywhere.

This is my Father's world,
O let me ne'er forget,
That, though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world,
The battle is not done.
Jesus, Who died, shall be satisfied,
And earth and Heaven be one.

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.

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sins, and whose mercy we forget in the blindness of our hearts: cleanse us from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with reverent and humble hearts we may draw near to you, confessing our faults, confiding in your grace, and finding in you our refuge and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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.

Hebrews 2:17-18

For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

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

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

HYMN

Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul

Anne Steel · Kevin Twit

Dear Refuge of my weary soul, on Thee, when sorrows rise,
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll, my fainting hope relies.
To Thee I tell each rising grief, for Thou alone canst heal.
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief, for ev'ry pain I feel.

But, oh! When gloomy doubts prevail, I fear to call Thee mine.
The springs of comfort seem to fail, and all my hopes decline.
Yet gracious God, where shall I flee? Thou art my only Trust.
And still my soul would cleave to Thee though prostrate in the dust.

Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face, and shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of Sovereign Grace, be deaf when I complain?
No still the ear of Sovereign Grace, attends the mourner's prayer.
Oh may I ever find access, to breathe my sorrows there.

Thy mercy seat is open still, here let my soul retreat,
With humble hope attend Thy will, and wait beneath Thy feet.
Thy mercy seat is open still, here let my soul retreat,
With humble hope attend Thy will, and wait beneath Thy feet.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*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.*

OFFERING

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

OFFERTORY

Look Up, Child

Lauren Daigle · Jason Ingram · Paul Mabury

Where are You now
When darkness seems to win?
Where are You now
When the world is crumbling?

*Oh I, I hear You say,
I hear You say,
“Look up, child!”
“Look up, child!”*

Where are You now
When all I feel is doubt?
Oh, where are You now
When I can't figure it out? *Chorus*

You're not threatened by the war;
You're not shaken by the storm.
I know You're in control.
Even in our suffering,
Even when it can't be seen,
I know You're in control. *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 4:12-17

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

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* | Expect Suffering**

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

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Elisha A. Hoffman · Anthony J. Showalter · Arr. Nolan Williams, Jr.

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. *Chorus*

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. *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.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Central Church Chamber Ensemble