



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

September 1, 2024

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Divine grace does not trample on human personality. Rather the reverse, for it enables human beings to be truly human. It is sin which imprisons; it is grace which liberates. The grace of God so frees us from the bondage of our pride, prejudice and self-centredness, as to enable us to repent and believe. One can but magnify the grace of God that he should have had mercy on such a rabid bigot as Saul of Tarsus, and indeed on such proud, rebellious and wayward creatures as ourselves.”

—JOHN STOTT

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, grant that we may grow in faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promised, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Song of Solomon 2:8-13

PSALM: Psalm 15; Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9

SECOND READING: James 1:17-27

GOSPEL: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Marta Bagratuni

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Traditional Welsh · Walter C. Smith

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes.
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above,
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all.
Thy wisdom so boundless, Thy mercy so free,
Eternal Thy goodness for naught changeth Thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Romans 11:33-36

LEADER Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

PEOPLE **How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!**

LEADER “For who has known the mind of the Lord,

PEOPLE **Or who has been his counselor?”**

LEADER “Or who has given a gift to him

PEOPLE **That he might be repaid?”**

LEADER For from him and through him and to him are all things.

PEOPLE **To him be glory forever. Amen.**

HYMN

O Worship the King

Robert Grant · William Gardiner

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love.
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, and sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light and canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

Love lifted me, Love lifted me.
When nothing else could help, Love lifted me.
Love lifted me, Love lifted me.
When nothing else could help, Love lifted me.

O Measureless Might, Ineffable Love,
While angels delight to worship above.
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways, like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are repentant, according to your promises declared to humankind, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may from now on live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Ephesians 2:4-5

God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

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

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

LEADER The peace of the Lord be with you always.

ALL **And also with you.**

HYMN

Yet Not I, But Through Christ in Me

Michael Farren · Rich Thompson · Jonny Robinson

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer.
There is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom,
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
For my life is wholly bound to His.
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing, "All is mine."
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark but I am not forsaken,
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay.
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing,
For in my need, His power is displayed.

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me.
Through the deepest valley, He will lead.
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome,
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven.
The future sure, the price it has been paid.
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon,
And He was raised to overthrow the grave.

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated.
Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh the chains are released, I can sing, "I am free,"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

With every breath I long to follow Jesus,
For He has said that He will bring me home.
And day by day I know He will renew me,
Until I stand with joy before the throne.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus.
All the glory evermore to Him,
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat,
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
The only Son of God,
Eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God,
Begotten, not made,
Of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven:
By the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was
made man.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
And His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN

All preschool and elementary age children are invited to the front of the church and will be dismissed to Children's Church with their teachers where they will read, sing, learn, and play in an environment suited to their language and style. Alternatively, children are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary to worship alongside the adults for the duration of the service.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We regularly pray for needs in our congregation, our neighborhood and city, and the world. Please submit prayer requests to centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest.

OFFERING

If you are our guest today, please feel no obligation to give. For members and regular attenders of Central, give generously as you are able. We give because all we have has been graciously given to us by God. Our offerings express our joyful dependence upon God and our commitment to join God in his work of renewal.

*You can give online by texting **centralchurchnyc** to **833-737-6262** or visiting centralchurchnyc.org/give.*

OFFERTORY

Not Guilty

Mandisa · Matthew West · Samuel Mizell

I stand accused.
There's a list a mile long
Of all my sins,
Of everything that I've done wrong.

I'm so ashamed.
There's nowhere left for me to hide.
This is the day
I must answer for my life.

My fate is in the Judge's hands,
But then He turns to me and says,

I know you.
I love you.
I gave My life to save you.
Love paid the price for mercy.
My verdict: not guilty.

How can it be?
I can't begin to comprehend
What kind of grace
Would take the place of all my sin?

I stand in awe
Now that I have been set free.
And the tears well up as I look at that cross,
'Cause it should have been me.

My fate was in the nail scarred hands.
He stretched them out for me and said, *Chorus*

I'm falling on my knees to thank You.
With everything I am I'll praise You.
So grateful for the words I heard You say, *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

Acts 9:1-20

The passage can be found on page 917 of the pew Bible.

¹But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the

sake of my name.” ¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹and taking food, he was strengthened.

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. ²⁰And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

SERMON

People Who Met Jesus | From Villain to Evangelist
Alan Charnock

THE THANKSGIVING

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.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

We do not presume to come to this, your Table, O Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but solely in your great mercy. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your Table, but you are the same Lord who always delights in showing mercy. Grant us, therefore gracious Lord, that we who now receive these gifts of bread and wine, according to our Savior's Word, may share in the body and blood of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we may dwell in him forever and he in us. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

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.

*Communion is served with wine and gluten-free bread.
Individually wrapped wafers and grape juice are available at
each station.*

COMMUNION HYMN

All Hail King Jesus

Jeremy Riddle · Steffany Gretzinger · Randy Matthew Jackson · Peter Mattis

There was a moment when the lights went out,
When death had claimed its victory.
The King of Love had given up His life,
The darkest day in history.

There on the cross they made for sinners,
For every curse His blood atoned.
One final breath and it was finished,
But not the end we could have known.

For the Earth began to shake,
And the veil was torn.
What sacrifice was made
As the Heavens roared.

All hail King Jesus.
All hail the Lord of Heaven and Earth.
All hail King Jesus.
All hail the Savior of the world.

There was a moment when the sky lit up,
A flash of light breaking through.
When all was lost, He crossed eternity.
The King of Life was on the move.

For in a dark, cold tomb
Where our Lord was laid,
One miraculous breath
And we're forever changed. *Chorus*

Let every knee come bow before the King of kings.
Let every tongue confess that He is Lord.
Lift up your shout, let us join with all of Heaven
Singing holy,
Singing holy,
Cry out holy,
Singing holy. *Chorus*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

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

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

Members of our prayer team will be available immediately following the service at the front of the sanctuary to pray confidentially for you about any need or concern you might have. We encourage you to avail yourself of this opportunity to receive prayer. ☞

CONGREGATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Have you experienced a major life event such as a birth, marriage, or baptism that you would like to share with the Central community? Fill out our online form at centralchurchnyc.org/announcements. All submissions are reviewed by Central staff before being published in the Sunday bulletin. Announcements are shared on the first Sunday of each month.

NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting of the members of the congregation of Central Presbyterian Church, an unincorporated ecclesiastical body, will be held in the church sanctuary at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10, 2024.

The purposes of the meeting are:

- i. to present and take action on a motion, in accordance with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Book of Order 14-1(B), for the congregation to concur with the request for dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the Associate Pastor Christopher Hildebrand put forth by the Session and the Associate Pastor, following his acceptance of a call to be Senior Pastor of Church of the Redeemer of Atlanta, Georgia; and
- ii. to transact any other business that may properly come before such meetings.

On behalf of the Session of Central Church by its Moderator and Clerk of Session