



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

May 18, 2025

Fifth Sunday of Easter

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“When Jesus breathed his Spirit on his followers, he said, ‘As the Father sent me, so I send you.’ And where had the Father sent him? To the place where the world was in direst pain, so that he could take it upon himself. Our vocation, by the Spirit, places us, right now, where the world is in pain, *so that...we can be in prayer right there.*”

—N. T. WRIGHT

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 11:1-18

PSALM: Psalm 148

SECOND READING: Revelation 21:1-6

GOSPEL: John 13:31-35

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Ben Sellick

Come Down, O Love Divine

Bianco da Siena · Vaughan Williams

Come down, O Love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till Love create a place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 139

LEADER Where shall I go from your Spirit?

PEOPLE **Or where shall I flee from your presence?**

LEADER If I ascend to heaven, you are there!

PEOPLE **If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!**

LEADER If I take the wings of the morning

PEOPLE **And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,**

LEADER Even there your hand shall lead me,

PEOPLE **And your right hand shall hold me.**

HYMN

Approach, My Soul, the Mercy Seat

John Newton

Approach, my soul, the mercy seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there.

Thy promise is my only plea,
With this I venture nigh;
Thou callest burdened souls to Thee,
And such, O Lord, am I.

Be Thou my Shield and hiding Place,
That, sheltered by Thy side,
I may my fierce accuser face,
And tell him Thou hast died!

O wondrous love! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead Thy gracious Name.

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

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

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

Come Unto Jesus

Jordan Kauflin · Keith Getty · Kristyn Getty · Laura Story

Come unto Jesus, all you who are weary.
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded heart, broken and needy.
Come unto Jesus, mighty to heal.

Joy of the comfortless, light for the straying,
Hope of the penitent, peace in our strife.
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
"My yoke is easy, My burden is light."

*Come unto Jesus, come unto Jesus.
Lay down your burdens, He is enough.
Come unto Jesus, rest in His love.*

Come, taste the Bread of Life broken for sinners.
Drink from the cup of His promise made sure.
Feast at His table as sons and as daughters.
Grace overflowing is yours evermore. *Chorus*

Come now and follow Him, this life forsaking.
All that was gained count as nothing but loss.
Trade all this world for His kingdom unfading.
Come unto Jesus, and take up your cross.
Come unto Jesus, and take up your cross.
Life everlasting He offers to us. *Chorus*

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,

And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

TESTIMONY OF GOD'S WORK

Ilyse Soutine

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS - 10 AM SERVICE

Sean Foss-Skiftesvik, Victoria Mackay, Annie Mondock,
Natalie Rye, Ilyse Soutine, Jack Tedischi, Mac Trivedi,
Meredith Trivedi, Jonah Wu

Membership Vows

- 1 Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in God's sight and without hope for your salvation except through his sovereign mercy?
- 2 Do you believe in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
- 3 Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ?
- 4 Do you promise to serve Christ and His church by supporting this congregation in its worship of God and its ministry to others to the best of your ability?
- 5 Do you promise to accept the spiritual guidance of the church, to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation, and to seek those things that make for unity, purity and peace?

Congregational Vow

Will you, the members of this congregation and witnesses of these vows, acting on behalf of yourself and as representatives of the whole body of Christ, do everything within your power to encourage these new members to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

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.

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

Seasons

Chris Davenport · Benjamin Hastings · Ben Tan

Like the frost on a rose,
Winter comes for us all.
Oh, how nature acquaints us
With the nature of patience.
Like a seed in the snow,
I've been buried to grow,
For Your promise is loyal
From seed to sequoia.

I know

*Though the winter is long, even richer
The harvest it brings.
Though my waiting prolongs, even greater
Your promise for me like a seed.
I believe that my season will come.*

Lord, I think of Your love
Like the low winter sun.
As I gaze, I am blinded
In the light of Your brightness.
Like a fire to the snow,
I'm renewed in Your warmth.
Melt the ice of this wild soul
Till the barren is beautiful. *Chorus*

I can see the promise.
I can see the future.
You're the God of seasons,
I'm just in the winter.
If all I know of harvest
Is that it's worth my patience,
Then if You're not done working,
God I'm not done waiting.

You can see my promise,
Even in the winter.
Cause You're the God of greatness,
Even in a manger.
For all I know of seasons
Is that You take Your time.
You could have saved us in a second;
Instead You sent a child. *Chorus*

And when I finally see my tree,
Still I believe there's a season to come.

Like a seed, You were sown
For the sake of us all.
From Bethlehem's soil
Grew Calvary's sequoia.

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

Romans 8:22-27

The passage can be found on page 944 of the pew Bible.

²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

SERMON

Practicing the Resurrection | Groaning Together
Rev. Jason Harris

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

This Is Our God

Reuben Morgan

Your grace is enough, more than I need;
At Your word I will believe.
I wait for You, draw near again;
Let your spirit make me new.

And I will fall at Your feet,
I will fall at Your feet,
And I will worship You here.

Your presence in me, Jesus light the way
By the power of Your word.
I am restored, I am redeemed;
By Your spirit I am free.

And I will fall at Your feet,
I will fall at Your feet,
And I will worship You here.

*Freely You gave it all for us,
Surrendered Your life upon that cross.
Great is the love poured out for all:
This is our God.*

*Lifted on high from death to life,
Forever our God is glorified.
Servant and King rescued the world:
This is our God.*

And I will fall at your feet
We sing I will fall at your feet
And I will worship you here. *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. ☺