



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

June 1, 2025

Ascension Sunday

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Paul’s doctrine of assurance was not simply that [Jesus-followers] would go to heaven when they died - though of course he believed that at death they would be ‘with the Messiah,’ and that the Spirit would then give them new bodily life in the final resurrection. His doctrine of assurance was to confirm that they, the Jesus-believing messianic people, were in fact the true people of the creator God, and that God was being glorified and would be glorified through their suffering and prayerful witness, even in the present time.”

—N. T. WRIGHT

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Grant, we pray, Almighty God, that as we believe your only begotten Son to have ascended into heaven, so we may also in heart and mind there ascend, and with him continually dwell; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11

PSALM: Psalm 47

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

GOSPEL: Luke 24:44-53

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Caroline Cassio

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Henry Francis Lyte · John Goss

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favor
To His people in distress.
Praise Him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Fatherlike, He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows.
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Widely yet His mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon bow down before Him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 50

LEADER He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend
 with me?

PEOPLE **Let us stand up together.**

LEADER Who is my adversary?

PEOPLE **Let him come near to me.**

LEADER Behold, the LORD God helps me;

PEOPLE **Who will declare me guilty?**

LEADER Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment;

PEOPLE **The moth will eat them up.**

LEADER Who among you fears the LORD

PEOPLE **And obeys the voice of his servant?**

LEADER Let him who walks in darkness

PEOPLE **And has no light**

LEADER Trust in the name of the LORD

PEOPLE **And rely on his God.**

HYMN

The Love of God

Bart Millard · Frederick M. Lehman · Jim Bryson

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell.
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child, He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.

*Oh love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.*

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky. *Chorus*

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 God, you have raised Jesus from death to life and crowned him Lord of all. We confess that we have not bowed before him or acknowledged his rule in our lives. We have gone along with the ways of the world and failed to give him glory. Forgive us and raise us from sin, that we may be your faithful people, obeying the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ, who rules the world and is head of the church, his body. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Luke 24:46-47

Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.

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

Psalm 34 (Taste and See)

Shane & Shane

I sought the Lord, and He answered me
And delivered me from every fear.
Those who look on Him are radiant.
They'll never be ashamed.
They'll never be ashamed.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard me
And saved me from my enemies
The Son of God surrounds His saints.
He will deliver them.
He will deliver them.

*Magnify the Lord with me.
Come exalt His name together.
Glorify the Lord with me.
Come exalt His name forever.*

O Taste and see that the Lord is good.
Oh blessed is he who hides in Him.
Oh fear the Lord, oh all you saints.
He'll give you everything.
He'll give you everything. *Chorus*

Let us bless the Lord every day and night.
Never ending praise, may our incense rise. *Chorus*

O Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He'll give you everything.
He'll give you everything.

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.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS - 10 A.M. SERVICE

Kathryn and Nicholas Leon

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 Kate and Nick to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - 10 A.M. SERVICE

Poppy Marie Leon

Daughter of Kathryn and Nicholas Leon

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 her behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for Poppy'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 her a godly example, that you will pray with and for her, that you will teach her the truths of the Christian faith, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring Poppy up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Congregational Vow

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting Kate and Nick in the Christian nurture of their child?

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 - 11:30 A.M. SERVICE

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

In the Hours

Helen L. Parmlee - Kevin Twit

In the hours of pain and sorrow,
When the world brings no relief,
When the eye is dim and heavy,
And the heart oppressed with grief,
While blessings flee, Savior Lord we trust in Thee!
While blessings flee, Savior Lord we trust in Thee!

When the snares of death surround us,
Pride, ambition, love of ease,
Mammon with her false allurements,
Words that flatter, smiles that please,
Then ere we yield, Savior Lord be Thou our shield!
Then ere we yield, Savior Lord be Thou our shield!

When forsaken in distress,
Poor despised and tempest-tossed,
With no anchor here to stay us,
Drifting, sail and rudder lost,
Then save us Thou, who trod this earth with weary brow!
Then save us Thou, who trod this earth with weary brow!

Thou the hated and forsaken,
Thou the bearer of the cross,
Crowned of thorns and mocked and smitten,
Counting earthly gain but loss,
When scorned are we, we joy to be the more like Thee!
When scorned are we, we joy to be the more like Thee!

Thou the Father's best beloved,
Thou the throned and sceptered King,
Who but Thee should we adoring,
All our prayers and praises bring?
So blessed are we, Savior Lord in loving Thee!
So blessed are we, Savior Lord in loving Thee!

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 8:31-39

The passage can be found on pages 944-945 of the pew Bible.

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

SERMON

***Practicing the Resurrection* | Perilous World, Powerful Love**

The Right Reverend N.T. Wright

RT. REV. N.T. WRIGHT'S BIO

The Right Reverend N.T. Wright (Tom) is a leading biblical scholar, retired Bishop of Durham in the Church of England, and Senior Research Fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. He was formerly a Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews. He previously studied for the ministry at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and was ordained at Merton College, Oxford. N.T. Wright holds a D.Phil. from Oxford University in addition to several honorary doctorates. Tom has written over eighty books, including the multi-volume work "Christian Origins and the Question of God." Tom is married to Maggie and they have four grown children and several grandchildren.

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

What a Beautiful Name

Ben Fielding · Brooke Ligertwood

You were the Word at the beginning,
One with God the Lord Most High.
Your hidden glory in creation
Now revealed in You our Christ.

What a beautiful Name it is,
What a beautiful Name it is, the Name of Jesus Christ my King.
What a beautiful Name it is; nothing compares to this.
What a beautiful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

You didn't want Heaven without us,
So Jesus, You brought Heaven down.
My sin was great, Your love was greater;
What could separate us now?

What a wonderful Name it is,
What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus Christ my King.
What a wonderful Name it is; nothing compares to this.
What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

Death could not hold You; the veil tore before You.
You silenced the boast of sin and grave.
The heavens are roaring the praise of Your glory,
For You are raised to life again.

You have no rival; You have no equal.
Now and forever, God You reign.
Yours is the Kingdom, Yours is the glory;
Yours is the Name above all names.

What a powerful Name it is,
What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus Christ my King.
What a powerful Name it is; nothing can stand against.
What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus.

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. ☞

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that (a) the 2025 Annual Meeting of the members of Central Presbyterian Church (“Central Church”), a church affiliated with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and (b) the 2025 Annual Meeting of the members of The Trustees of Central Presbyterian Church of the City of New York, aka Central Presbyterian Church (“Central Corporation”), a New York religious corporation incorporated in 1821 and affiliated with Central Church, will be held in the fellowship hall on the sixth floor of the church building at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 8, 2025.

The purposes of the Annual Meetings are to:

- i. present the reports of the various church committees and respond to questions;
- ii. in the case of the 2025 Annual Meeting of the members of Central Church, to elect: (a) one elder for term expiring in 2026, one elder for term expiring in 2027, and two elders for terms expiring in 2028; and (b) three deacons for terms expiring in 2028;
- iii. in the case of the 2025 Annual Meeting of the members of Central Corporation, to elect two trustees for terms expiring in 2028; and
- iv. 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

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Central Corporation, by its President and Secretary