



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

August 24, 2025

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Paul never in his life forgot the sheer lunatic joy and astonishment of that moment. He was blind as a bat for three days afterward, but he made it to Damascus anyway and was baptized on the spot. He was never the same again, and neither, in a way, was the world.”

—FREDERICK BUECHNER, FROM *PECULIAR TREASURES*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Let your merciful ears, Lord God, be open to the prayers of your people; and so that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as will please you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 1:4-10

PSALM: Psalm 71:1-6

SECOND READING: Hebrews 12:18-29

GOSPEL: Luke 13:10-17

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Doori Na

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

Isaac Watts · John Hatton

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
'Til moons shall wax and wane no more.

To Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.

People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Let ev'ry creature rise and bring
Honors peculiar to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 42

LEADER I am the LORD; I have called you in
 righteousness;

PEOPLE **I will take you by the hand and keep you;**

LEADER I will give you as a covenant for the people,
 A light for the nations,

PEOPLE **To open the eyes that are blind,**

LEADER To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,

PEOPLE **From the prison those who sit in darkness.**

LEADER I am the LORD; that is my name;

PEOPLE **My glory I give to no other.**

HYMN

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

Samuel Trevor Francis · Thomas J. Williams

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me!
Underneath me, all around me,
Is the current of Thy love,
Leading onward, leading homeward
To Thy glorious rest above!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Spread His praise from shore to shore!
How He loveth, ever loveth,
Changeth never, nevermore!
How He watches o'er His loved ones,
Died to call them all His own;
How for them He intercedeth,
Watcheth o'er them from the throne!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Love of ev'ry love the best!
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing,
'Tis a haven sweet of rest!
O the deep, deep love of Jesus,
'Tis a Heav'n of Heav'ns to me;
And it lifts me up to glory,
For it lifts me up to Thee!

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

Merciful God, you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you. We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy. We have not loved you with a pure heart, nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. We have not done justice, loved kindness, or walked humbly with you, our God. Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness. In your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not cast us from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Colossians 1:13-14

God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

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

Cornerstone

Edward Mote · Eric Liljero · Jonas Myrin · Reuben Morgan

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

*Christ alone, Cornerstone.
Weak made strong in the Savior's love.
Through the storm, He is Lord,
Lord of all.*

When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In ev'ry high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.
My anchor holds within the veil. *Chorus*

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found!
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne! *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.

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

New Name Written Down in Glory

Charity Gayle · David Gentiles · Hannah Liliana Rivas

I was lost in shame,
Could not get past my blame,
Until He called my name.
I'm so glad He changed me.
Darkness held me down,
But Jesus pulled me out.
And I'm no longer bound,
I'm so glad He changed me.

*See, I'm now a new creation in Christ.
The old has gone, there's new life.
I live by faith, not by sight.*

*There is a new name written down in glory,
And it's mine; yes, it's mine.
I've met the Author of my story,
And He's mine; yes, He's mine.*

Sin had left me blind,
But Jesus opened my eyes.
Now I see the light.
I'm so glad He changed me.
Now I'm walking free.
I've got the victory.
See, it's all over me.
I'm so glad He changed me *Chorus*

I am who I am because the I Am tells me who I am. *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 9:1-19a

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.”

SERMON

Sent By God | Who Are You, Lord?

Rev. Aaron Baker

Rev. Baker's bio can be found on page 17 of the bulletin.

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

Divine Exchange

Charity Gayle

On the cross hung my pain
And the guilt and the shame.
Jesus bore my suffering
To the grave to make me free.

Oh the blood that was shed,
It now flows to cover sin.
It washes clean and purifies
In its healing crimson tide.

*Jesus, He took my place in divine exchange;
Hallelujah! Grace is mine.
Now I will live by faith for the One who saves.
He gave all to give me life.*

His Spirit is my present help;
I'd be lost all by myself.
He resurrects; He sanctifies.
He takes His power and makes it mine. *Chorus*

I lay down all lesser things for greater gain;
He is alive inside of me. *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. ☺

REQUEST FOR CARE

If you have a financial or practical care need for which you'd like to request assistance from Central, our deacons are readily available to discuss that with you. Please email care@centralchurchnyc.org and detail your situation so one of our deacons can contact you directly.

CALL FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

As we define and expand our emergency protocol at Central, we hope to intentionally connect with medical professionals in our congregation who could provide on-site guidance and assistance in the event of an emergency during one of our services. If you are a doctor, nurse, EMT, or other trained medical professional who regularly attends service, please email Twaambo Moyo at tmoyo@centralchurchnyc.org so we can build out our list and communicate with you accordingly.

REV. AARON BAKER'S BIO

Aaron is the senior pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Chicago where he's served in that role since 2006. He's been married to Allison since 1996, and they have three daughters (23, 20, and 18).