



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

January 11, 2026

First Sunday After Epiphany

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Sadly, our society as a whole does not know what to make of the body. People disagree on what it is, what it is meant to do, and how it is to be regarded. That is not new. The human body has always been a matter of contention, most of all with regard to its sexual character—perhaps never more so than in Western societies today, in which some of the sharpest social, moral, and religious conflicts have to do with the body!”

—JOHN KLEINIG

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Lord, we beseech you mercifully to receive the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that we may both perceive and know what things we ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Isaiah 42:1-9

PSALM: Psalm 29

SECOND READING: Acts 10:34-43

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:13-17

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Ben Sellick

For the Beauty of the Earth

Folliott S. Pierpoint · William Chatterton Dix

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.
Christ, our Lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight,
Christ, our Lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise.

For each perfect gift of thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flow'rs of Earth and buds of Heav'n,
Christ, our Lord, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 139

LEADER For you formed my inward parts;

PEOPLE **You knitted me together in my mother's womb.**

LEADER I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

PEOPLE **Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.**

LEADER My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,

PEOPLE **Intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

LEADER Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,

PEOPLE **The days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.**

LEADER How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

PEOPLE **How vast is the sum of them!**

LEADER If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

PEOPLE **I awake, and I am still with you.**

HYMN

All Creatures of Our God and King

St. Francis of Assisi · David Crowder · Arr. Dan Galbraith

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice, and with us sing;
O praise him! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam.
O praise him! O praise him!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

All ye who are of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O praise him! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God, and on him cast your care!
O praise him! O praise him!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship him in humbleness;
O praise him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, three in One!
O praise him! O praise him!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

Lord, though you should guide us, we inform ourselves; though you should rule us, we control ourselves; though you should fulfill us, we console ourselves. We think your truth too high, your will too hard, your power too remote, your love too free. But they are not! And without them, we are of all people most miserable. Now heal our confused minds with your word, heal our divided wills with your law, heal our troubled consciences with your love, heal our anxious hearts with your presence, all for the sake of your Son, who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

1 John 4:9-10

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our 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

Build my Life

Matthew Redman · Kirby Kaple · Brett Younker · Joseph Barrett · Karl Martin

Worthy of every song we could ever sing,
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring,
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe,
We live for you.

Jesus, the name above every other name.
Jesus, the only one who could ever save.
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe,
We live for you.

*Holy, there is no one like you.
There is none beside you,
Open up my eyes in wonder.
Show me who you are and fill me
With your heart and lead me
In your love to those around me.*

Jesus, the name above every other name.
Jesus, the only one who could ever save.
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe,
We live for you. *Chorus*

I will build my life upon your love.
It is a firm foundation.
I will put my trust in you alone,
And I will not be shaken. *Chorus*

Worthy of every song we could ever sing,
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring,
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe,
We live for you.

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

Your Love is Extravagant

Darrell Evans · Casting Crowns

Your love is extravagant.
Your friendship, it is intimate.
I feel like moving to the rhythm of your grace.
Your fragrance is intoxicating, in our secret place.
Your love is extravagant.

*Spread wide in the arms of Christ
Is the love that covers sin.
No greater love have I ever known.
You considered me your friend.
Capture my heart again.*

Your love is extravagant.
Your friendship, it is intimate.
I feel like moving to the rhythm of your grace.
Your fragrance is intoxicating in our secret place.
Your love is extravagant. *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

Song of Songs 1:1-6

The passage can be found on page 560 of the pew Bible.

¹The Song of Songs, which pertains to Solomon.

Beloved

²Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!

For your love is better than wine;

³ your anointing oils are fragrant;

your name is oil poured out;

therefore the maidens love you.

⁴Draw me after you; let us run.

The king has brought me into his chambers.

Friends

We will exult and rejoice in you;

we will extol your love more than wine;

rightly do they love you.

Beloved

⁵I am very dark, but lovely,

O daughters of Jerusalem,

like the tents of Kedar,

like the curtains of Solomon.

⁶Do not gaze at me because I am dark,

because the sun has looked upon me.

My mother's sons were angry with me;

they made me keeper of the vineyards,

but my own vineyard I have not kept!

SERMON

The Song of Songs | A Theology of the Body

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 near each station. Your communion server can point you to them if desired.

COMMUNION HYMN

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

Charles Wesley · Greg Thompson

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
'Til life's storm is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
I helpless, hang on thee;
Leave, oh leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
In the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, are all I want,
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart;
For all eternity.

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.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Central's Nominating Committee, chaired this year by John Moon, enthusiastically encourages members of the congregation to offer recommendations for the positions of elder, deacon, and trustee to serve the church. Given the essential work of the officers, all individuals recommended to the committee should demonstrate an unabashed commitment to Jesus Christ and to the ministry of Central, as evidenced by active involvement in the life of the church as well as personally appropriate levels of financial support; to reformed theology as expressed in the Scriptures, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms of the Church; to the Presbyterian form of government and the polity of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; along with proven leadership ability in areas necessary for a church officer and a willingness to serve.

Please note that, in accordance with our by-laws, all potential candidates must undergo a course of instruction and be approved by the Session before being nominated and presented to the congregation. We invite you to contact John Moon (moonjohnj@gmail.com) or Jason Harris (seniorpastor@centralchurchnyc.org) if you have any questions, if you would like to recommend an individual, or if you personally would like to participate in a course of instruction covering topics such as: church government, the sacraments, the faith of the church, the worship of the church, the discipline of the church, the history of the church, and an understanding of the various offices of the church. We highly value and deeply appreciate your active involvement in this important process.