



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

January 25, 2026

Third Sunday After Epiphany

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“I am loved. Therefore, I am. And I put it that way rather than ‘I love. Therefore, I am,’ though I would say that as well, because it seems to me that as humans, we discover who we are when somebody loves us or some creature loves us, it might be.”

—N.T. WRIGHT

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities; and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth your right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:1-4

PSALM: Psalm 27:1, 4-9

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Doori Na

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Joachim Neander · Catherine Winkworth · Christy Nockels · Arr. Seth Ward

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation!
O my soul praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near;
Praise him in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth.
Shelters thee under his wings, yea so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what he ordaineth?

*[Chorus during 5 p.m. service only:
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!]*

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If in his love he befriend thee. *[Chorus]*

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again;
Gladly, for aye, we adore him. *[Chorus]*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 43

LEADER But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,

PEOPLE He who formed you, O Israel:

LEADER “Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

PEOPLE I have called you by name, you are mine.

LEADER When you pass through the waters, I will be with
you;

**PEOPLE And through the rivers, they shall not over-
whelm you;**

LEADER When you walk through fire you shall not be
burned,

PEOPLE And the flame shall not consume you.

LEADER For I am the LORD your God,

PEOPLE The Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

LEADER You are precious in my eyes,

PEOPLE And honored, and I love you.”

HYMN

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Aaron Sensman · Arr. Dr. Seth Ward

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My Great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life and health and peace.

My Gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
The honors of thy name.

He breaks the pow'r of canceled sin,
He sets the pris'ner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avails for me.

Look unto him, ye nations, own
Your God, ye fallen race;
Look, and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace.

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My Great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

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

Father, we have sinned times without number, and have been guilty of pride and unbelief, and of neglect to seek you in our daily lives. Our sins and shortcomings present us with a long list of accusations, but, by your grace, they will not stand against us, for they all have been laid on Christ, our sacrifice and our advocate. Deliver us from every evil habit, every interest in former sins, everything that dims the brightness of your grace in us, everything that prevents us from taking our deepest delight in you. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

John 1:12-13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

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

Great Are You, Lord

Jason Ingram · David Leonard · Leslie Jordan

You give life, you are love,
You bring light to the darkness.
You give hope, you restore
every heart that is broken.
And great are you, Lord.

*It's your breath in our lungs,
So we pour out our praise, we pour out our praise.
It's your breath in our lungs,
So we pour out our praise to you only.*

You give life, you are love,
You bring light to the darkness.
You give hope, you restore
Every heart that is broken.
And great are you, Lord. *Chorus*

All the earth will shout your praise.
Our hearts will cry, these bones will sing.
Great are you, Lord. *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.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - 10 A.M. SERVICE

Mary Margaret Howell

Daughter of Jackson and Sarah Howell

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 Mary Margaret'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 Mary Margaret up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Congregational Vow

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting Jackson and Sarah 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. AND 5 P.M. SERVICES

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

Known

Tauren Wells · Jordan Douglas Sapp · Ethan Gregory Hulse

It's so unusual, it's frightening.
You see right through the mess inside me,
And you call me out to pull me in.
You tell me I can start again,
And I don't need to keep on hiding.

*I'm fully known and loved by you.
You won't let go no matter what I do.
And it's not one or the other;
It's hard truth and ridiculous grace
To be known, fully known, and loved by you.
I'm fully known and loved by you.*

It's so like you to keep pursuing.
It's so like me to go astray.
But you guard my heart with your truth,
A kind of love that's bulletproof.
And I surrender to your kindness. *Chorus*

How real, how wide,
How rich, how high is your heart.
I cannot find the reasons why
You give me so much.
How real, how wide,
How rich, how high is your heart.
I cannot find the reasons why
You give me so much. *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 4:1-7, 5:10-16

The passage can be found on pages 561-562 of the pew Bible.

4 ¹Behold, you are beautiful, my love,
 behold, you are beautiful!

Your eyes are doves
 behind your veil.

Your hair is like a flock of goats
 leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

²Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
 that have come up from the washing,
all of which bear twins,
 and not one among them has lost its young.

³Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
 and your mouth is lovely.
Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
 behind your veil.

⁴Your neck is like the tower of David,
 built in rows of stone;
on it hang a thousand shields,
 all of them shields of warriors.

⁵Your two breasts are like two fawns,
 twins of a gazelle,
 that graze among the lilies.

⁶Until the day breathes
 and the shadows flee,
I will go away to the mountain of myrrh
 and the hill of frankincense.

⁷You are altogether beautiful, my love;
 there is no flaw in you.

5 ¹⁰My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
 distinguished among ten thousand.

¹¹His head is the finest gold;
his locks are wavy,
black as a raven.

¹²His eyes are like doves
beside streams of water,
bathed in milk,
sitting beside a full pool.

¹³His cheeks are like beds of spices,
mounds of sweet-smelling herbs.
His lips are lilies,
dripping liquid myrrh.

¹⁴His arms are rods of gold,
set with jewels.
His body is polished ivory,
bedecked with sapphires.

¹⁵His legs are alabaster columns,
set on bases of gold.
His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as the cedars.

¹⁶His mouth is most sweet,
and he is altogether desirable.
This is my beloved and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

SERMON

The Song of Songs | A Theology of Identity

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

Who You Say I Am

Brooke Ligertwood · Michael Guy Chislett

Who am I that the highest King would welcome me?
I was lost but he brought me in; oh, his love for me!
Oh, his love for me!

*Who the Son sets free, oh, is free indeed!
I'm a child of God! Yes, I am!*

Free at last, he has ransomed me; his grace runs deep.
While I was a slave to sin, Jesus died for me.
Yes, he died for me.

*Who the Son sets free, oh, is free indeed!
I'm a child of God! Yes, I am!
In my Father's house is a place for me;
I'm a child of God! Yes, I am!*

I am chosen, not forsaken; I am who you say I am!
You are for me, not against me; I am who you say I am!
I am who you say I am! *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.

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.