



ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

February 18, 2026

First Day of Lent · Ash Wednesday

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“To deny ourselves is to behave towards ourselves as Peter did towards Jesus when he denied him three times. The verb is the same. He disowned him, repudiated him, turned his back on him. Self-denial is not denying to ourselves luxuries such as chocolates, cakes, cigarettes and cocktails (though it may include this); it is actually denying or disowning ourselves, renouncing our supposed right to go our own way. To deny oneself is to turn away from the idolatry of self-centeredness.”

—JOHN STOTT

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

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 full of blessing,
'Tis a haven giving 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!

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 103

LEADER The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger
and abounding in steadfast love.

PEOPLE **He will not always chide, nor will he keep his
anger forever.**

LEADER He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor
repay us according to our iniquities.

PEOPLE **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so
great is his steadfast love toward those who fear
him;**

LEADER As far as the east is from the west, so far does he
remove our transgressions from us.

PEOPLE **As a father shows compassion to his children, so
the LORD shows compassion to those who fear
him.**

LEADER For he knows our frame; he remembers that we
are dust.

PEOPLE **But the steadfast love of the LORD is from
everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him.**

HYMN

Before the Throne of God Above

Charities Lees Bancroft · Vikki Cook

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea,
A great High Priest whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on his hands,
My name is written on his heart;
I know that while in heav'n he stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on him and pardon me,
To look on him and pardon me.

Behold him there! The risen Lamb,
My perfect, spotless righteousness;
The great unchangeable "I AM,"
The King of glory and of grace!
One with himself I cannot die,
My soul is purchased by his blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God,
With Christ, my Savior and my God.

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 and Everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our brokenness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

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

There is a Fountain

Joe B. Junior

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.
Wash all my sins away, wash all my sins away;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed ones of God
Be saved, to sin no more:
Be saved, to sin no more,
Be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed ones of God,
Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be 'til I die.
And shall be 'til I die, and shall be 'til I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be 'til I die.

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.

RECEIVING OF ASHES

HYMN

Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

Henry F. Lyte · Bill Moore

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee.
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought or hoped or known.
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.

Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me,
Thou art not, like them, untrue.
O while Thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends disown me,
Show Thy face and all is bright.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure,
Come disaster, scorn and pain.
In Thy service, pain is pleasure,
With Thy favor, loss is gain.
I have called Thee Abba Father,
I have stayed my heart on Thee.
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather,
All must work for good to me.

Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer,
Heavens eternal days before thee,
Gods own hand shall guide us there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

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.

*Please text **centralchurchnyc** to (833) 737-6262 or visit centralchurchnyc.org/give in order to give electronically.*

OFFERTORY

Come Ye Sinners

Robbie Seay Band

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore.
Jesus ready, stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power.

Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify.
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh.

*I will arise and go to Jesus.
He will embrace me in His arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
Oh, there are ten thousand charms.*

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall.
If you tarry 'til you're better,
You will never come at all. *Chorus*

Lo, the incarnate God ascended,
Pleads the merit of his blood.
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude. *Chorus*

THE DOXOLOGY PLEASE STAND

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

Luke 15:11-32

The passage can be found on pages 874-875 of the pew Bible.

¹¹And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ ²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²²But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

SERMON

A Day in the Life of Jesus | The Day Jesus Told a Story
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.

HYMN

Come As You Are

Ben Glover · Matt Maher · David Crowder

Come out of sadness from wherever you've been.
Come broken-hearted, let rescue begin.
Come find your mercy, oh sinner, come kneel:
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal.
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal.

*So, lay down your burdens, lay down your shame,
All who are broken, lift up your face.
Wanderer, come home; you're not too far.
So, lay down your hurt, lay down your heart,
Come as you are.*

There's hope for the hopeless and all those who've strayed.
Come sit at the table, come taste the grace.
There's rest for the weary, rest that endures.
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't cure.
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't cure. *Chorus*

There's joy for the morning; oh sinner be still.
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal.
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven can't heal.

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.