



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

March 8, 2026
Third Sunday of Lent

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“The Jesus who has authority to teach people...also has authority over disease both close at hand and at a distance; over the lives of people who want to follow him; and over the winds and the waves on the lake, and over the shadowy forces of evil, however we think about them or describe them. That’s what we need to know as we ourselves sign on to follow him. He isn’t just somebody with good ideas. He isn’t just somebody who will tell us how to establish a better relationship with God. He is somebody with authority over everything that the physical world on the one hand, and the non-physical world on the other, can throw at us. This is a Jesus we can trust with every aspect of our lives.”

—N.T. WRIGHT

COLLECT OF THE DAY

We beseech you, almighty God, look on the heartfelt desires of your servants, and stretch forth the right hand of your majesty to be our defense against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Exodus 17:1-7

PSALM: Psalm 95

SECOND READING: Romans 5:1-11

GOSPEL: John 4:5-42

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Caroline Cassio

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Isaac Watts · Traditional Irish Tune

Alas! and did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For sinners such as I?
Was it for crimes that I have done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in
When Christ, the mighty Maker,
Died for man, the creature's sin.
Thus might I hide my blushing face while
His dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt my eyes in tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.
Alas! and did my Savior bleed
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For sinners such as I?

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 139

LEADER Where shall I go from your Spirit?

PEOPLE **Or where shall I flee from your presence?**

LEADER If I ascend to heaven, you are there!

PEOPLE **If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!**

LEADER If I take the wings of the morning

PEOPLE **And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,**

LEADER Even there your hand shall lead me,

PEOPLE **And your right hand shall hold me.**

LEADER If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,

PEOPLE **And the light about me be night,"**

LEADER Even the darkness is not dark to you;

PEOPLE **The night is bright as the day,
 for darkness is as light with you.**

HYMN

Go to Dark Gethsemane

James Montgomery · Kevin Twit · Sandra McCracken

Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power.
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with him one bitter hour.
Turn not from his griefs away;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

See him at the judgment hall,
Beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned!
O the wormwood and the gall!
O the pangs his soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
Learn of Christ to bear the cross;
Learn of Christ to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
There, adoring at his feet.
Mark that miracle of time,
God's own sacrifice complete.
"It is finished!" hear him cry;
Learn of Jesus Christ to die;
Learn of Jesus Christ to die.

Early hasten to the tomb
Where they laid his breathless clay.
All is solitude and gloom.
Who has taken him away?
Christ is risen! He meets our eyes;
Savior, teach us so to rise;
Savior, teach us so to rise.

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; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Romans 8:34

Who 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.

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

Heal Us

William Cowper · Kevin Twit · Lucas Morton

*Heal us, Emmanuel, here we are.
We long to feel thy touch.
Deep wounded souls to thee we fly.
O Savior, hear our cry.*

Our faith is feeble, we confess.
We faintly trust thy word.
But will you pity us the less?
Be that far from you Lord!

Remember him who once applied
With trembling for relief,
“Lord, I believe,” with tears he cried.
“O help my unbelief!” *Chorus*

She, too, who touched you in the press,
And healing virtue stole
Was answered, “Daughter, go in peace.
Thy faith has made thee whole.”

Like her, with hopes and fears we come.
To touch you if we may,
O send us not despairing home.
Send none unhealed away. *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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to fill out this year's congregational survey at centralchurchnyc.org/survey.

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.

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

Healer

Kari Jobe

You hold my every moment.
You calm my raging seas.
You walk with me through fire
and heal all my disease.
I trust in you.
I trust in you.

*I believe you're my healer.
I believe you are all I need.
I believe.
I believe you're my portion.
I believe you're more than enough for me.
Jesus, you're all I need.*

You hold my every moment.
You calm my raging seas.
You walk with me through fire
and heal all my disease.
I trust in you.
Lord, I trust in you. *Chorus*

Nothing is impossible for you.
Nothing is impossible.
Nothing is impossible for you.
You hold my world in your hands. *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

Mark 5:1-20

The passage can be found on page 840 of the pew Bible.

¹They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ²And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. ³He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, ⁴for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." ⁸For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." ¹⁰And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

¹¹Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹²and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” ¹³So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

¹⁴The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ¹⁶And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. ¹⁷And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. ¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.”

SERMON

A Day in the Life of Jesus | The Day Jesus Met a Demon

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

Healing Is In Your Hands

Nathan Nockels · Christy Nockels · Chris Tomlin · Daniel Carson · Matt Redman

No mountain, no valley,
No gain or loss we know
Could keep us from your love.

No sickness, no secret,
No chain is strong enough
To keep us from your love,
To keep us from your love.

*How high? How wide?
No matter where I am,
Healing is in your hands.*

*How deep? How strong?
Now by your grace I stand.
Healing is in your hands.*

Our present, our future,
Our past is in your hands.
We're covered by your blood.
We're covered by your blood. *Chorus*

In all things we know that
We are more than conquerors.
You keep us by your love.
You keep us by your love. *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.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2026 Year-to-Date Giving: \$890,000