



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“If we open such books as Grimm’s Fairy Tales or Ovid’s Metamorphoses or the Italian epics we find ourselves in a world of miracles so diverse that they can hardly be classified. Beasts turn into men and men into beasts or trees, trees talk, ships become goddesses, and a magic ring can cause tables richly spread with food to appear in solitary places. Some people cannot stand this kind of story, others find it fun. But the least suspicion that it was true would turn the fun into nightmare. If such things really happened they would, I suppose, show that Nature was being invaded. But they would show that she was being invaded by an alien power. The fitness of the Christian miracles, and their difference from these mythological miracles, lies in the fact that they show invasion by a Power which is not alien. They are what might be expected to happen when she is invaded not simply by a god, but by the God of Nature: by a Power which is outside her jurisdiction not as a foreigner but as a sovereign. They proclaim that He who has come is not merely a king, but the King, her King and ours.”

—C.S. LEWIS

COLLECT OF THE DAY

We beseech you, almighty God, to look mercifully upon your people: that by your great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

PSALM: Psalm 130

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11

GOSPEL: John 11:1-45

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Doori Na

Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer

William Williams · Cwm Rhondda

Guide me, O thou Great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy pow'rful hand.
Bread of Heaven, bread of Heaven,
Feed me 'til I want no more;
Feed me 'til I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield;
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the swelling current,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 25

LEADER On this mountain the LORD Almighty will
prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples,

PEOPLE **A banquet of aged wine — the best of meats
and the finest of wines.**

LEADER On this mountain he will destroy the shroud
that enfolds all peoples,

PEOPLE **The sheet that covers all nations; he will swal-
low up death forever.**

LEADER The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears
from all faces;

PEOPLE **He will remove his people's disgrace from all
the earth. The LORD has spoken.**

LEADER So we say: "Surely this is our God; we trusted in
him, and he saved us.

PEOPLE **This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us
rejoice and be glad in his salvation."**

HYMN

You're the Word of God the Father

Keith Getty · Stuart Townend

You're the Word of God the Father
From before the world began.
Every star and every planet
Has been fashioned by your hand.
All creation holds together
By the power of your voice.
Let the skies declare your glory;
Let the land and seas rejoice.

*You're the author of creation.
You're the Lord of every man.
And your cry of love rings out
Across the lands.*

Yet you left the gaze of angels,
Came to seek and save the lost.
And exchanged the joy of Heaven
For the anguish of the cross.
With a prayer you fed the hungry;
With a word you calmed the sea.
Yet how silently you suffered
That the guilty may go free. *Chorus*

With a shout you rose victorious,
Wresting vict'ry from the grave,
And ascended into Heaven
Leading captives in your wake.
Now you stand before the Father,
Interceding for your own.
From each tribe and tongue and nation,
You are leading sinners home. *Chorus*

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 God, we have given more weight to our successes and our happiness than to your will. We have eaten without a thought for the hungry. We have spoken without an effort to understand others. We have kept silence instead of telling the truth. We have judged others, forgetful that you alone are the Judge. We have acted rather in accordance with our opinions than according to your commands. Within your church we have been slow to practice love of our neighbors. And in the world we have not been your faithful servants. Forgive us and help us to live as disciples of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Psalm 103:11-13

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

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

Psalm 34 (Taste and See)

Shane & Shane

I sought the Lord, and he answered me
And delivered me from every fear.
Those who look on him are radiant.
They'll never be ashamed.
They'll never be ashamed.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard me
And saved me from my enemies
The Son of God surrounds his saints.
He will deliver them.
He will deliver them.

*Magnify the Lord with me.
Come exalt his name together.
Glorify the Lord with me.
Come exalt his name forever.*

O taste and see that the Lord is good.
O blessed is he who hides in him.
O fear the Lord, oh all you saints.
He'll give you everything.
He'll give you everything. *Chorus*

Let us bless the Lord every day and night.
Never ending praise, may our incense rise. *Chorus*

O taste and see that the Lord is good.
He'll give you everything.
He'll give you everything.

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

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 - 10:00 AND 11:30 A.M. SERVICES

Largo

Francesco Maria Veracini

Doori Na, violin

Ben Sellick, organ

OFFERTORY - 5:00 P.M. SERVICE

I Believe It (The Life of Jesus)

Jess Cates · Jonathan Smith · David Leonard · Daniel Carson · Jon Reddick

It's not just a story;
It's a livin', breathin', walkin' testimony
Of a God so good, he'd leave his home in glory
For the world he loved, for the world that he so loved.
He's not just a story.

*I believe in the life of Jesus.
I believe that he conquered death.
I believe in the resurrection.
I believe he's comin' back again.
I believe that his Spirit's with us.
I believe that he gives us power.
I believe that he is the son of God.
I believe it, I believe it.*

I can't deny it.
If I said, "I got here on my own," I'd be lyin'.
'Cause my eyes have seen the goodness of the Father.
We're the ones he loves, we're the ones that he so loves.
And I can't deny it. *Chorus*

We cry, “Holy, holy,
Let the earth rejoice!
He is worthy of all praise!”
We cry, “Holy, holy,
Let the earth rejoice!
He is worthy of all praise!” *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 6:30-44

The passage can be found on pages 841-842 of the pew Bible.

³⁰The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on

them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. ³⁵And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. ³⁶Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” ³⁷But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?” ³⁸And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” ³⁹Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. ⁴¹And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²And they all ate and were satisfied. ⁴³And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁴⁴And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

SERMON

A Day in the Life of Jesus | The Day Jesus Fed Thousands

Rev. Andrew Smith

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

We Will Feast

Sandra McCracken · Joshua Moore

*We will feast in the house of Zion!
We will sing with our hearts restored!
He has done great things, we will say together.
We will feast and weep no more!*

We will not be burned by the fire;
He is the Lord our God.
We are not consumed, by the flood;
Upheld, protected, gathered up. *Chorus*

In the dark of night, before the dawn
My soul, be not afraid.
For the promised morning, oh how long?
Oh, God of Jacob, be my strength. *Chorus*

Every vow we've broken and betrayed,
You are the Faithful one.
And from the garden to the grave,
Bind us together, bring shalom. *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.

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

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

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2026 Year-to-Date Giving: \$1,051,000