



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

May 17, 2026

Ascension Sunday

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Respect and honor for a ruler supports the good of political authority that benefits not just us but our neighbors. We respect our rulers not because of something inherent in them, but because they are doing a difficult and God-ordained task on our behalf, in a world in which there is always only incomplete knowledge. In calling us to respect our rulers, Paul is inviting Christians not simply to a legal practice but to a cultural one. The habit of observing the laws of the land, and of giving due honor to those who lead, cultivates a good and peaceful social atmosphere. The practice of constructive citizenship, rather than a more cynical or even disobedient approach, serves the common good.”

—MICHAEL JENSEN

COLLECT OF THE DAY

O God, the king of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: We beseech you, leave us not desolate but send your Holy Spirit to comfort us, and exalt us to where our Savior Christ has gone before, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forevermore. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11

PSALM: Psalm 47

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

GOSPEL: Luke 24:44-53

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Doori Na

Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Henry Francis Lyte · John Goss

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To his feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore his praises sing.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favor
To his people in distress.
Praise him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Fatherlike, he tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Widely yet his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon bow down before him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 24

LEADER Lift up your heads, O gates!

PEOPLE **And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.**

LEADER Who is this King of glory?

PEOPLE **The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle!**

LEADER Lift up your heads, O gates!

PEOPLE **And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.**

LEADER Who is this King of glory?

PEOPLE **The LORD of hosts,
he is the King of glory!**

HYMN

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Edward Perronet · Oliver Holden

All Hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!

O that with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!

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

O Lord, we have not longed for your coming and your kingdom as we ought. We have not denied ourselves, taken up the cross and followed you. Instead, clinging to the things of this world and counting them dear, we have grown callous to the needs of the poor, the lonely and the suffering. We have not cried out for justice nor cared about those who are without Christ and without hope in this world. Lord, forgive us for our offenses and grant that by the power of your Spirit, we might live in light of your coming again. We ask this all in the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Isaiah 55:6-7

Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

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

Whom Shall I Fear (God of Angel Armies)

Chris Tomlin

You hear me when I call.
You are my morning song.
Though darkness fills the night,
It cannot hide the light.
Whom shall I fear?

You crush the enemy
Underneath my feet.
You are my sword and shield,
Though troubles linger still.
Whom shall I fear?

*I know who goes before me.
I know who stands behind.
The God of angel armies
Is always by my side.
The one who reigns forever,
He is a friend of mine.
The God of angel armies
Is always by my side.*

My strength is in your name,
For you alone can save.
You will deliver me.
Yours is the victory.
Whom shall I fear? *Chorus*

And nothing formed against me shall stand.
You hold the whole world in your hands.
I'm holding on to your promises.
You are faithful. You are faithful. *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

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS - 10 AM SERVICE

Joanne Redmond Beckham, Lee Beckham, Matt Billard, Jeffrey Chang, Lindsay Earhart, Claire Ellison, Catherine Humphries, Rex Humphries, Catherine Suh

Membership Vows

- 1 Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in God's sight and without hope for your salvation except through his sovereign mercy?
- 2 Do you believe in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
- 3 Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ?
- 4 Do you promise to serve Christ and His church by supporting this congregation in its worship of God and its ministry to others to the best of your ability?
- 5 Do you promise to accept the spiritual guidance of the church, to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation, and to seek those things that make for unity, purity and peace?

Congregational Vow

Will you, the members of this congregation and witnesses of these vows, acting on behalf of yourself and as representatives of the whole body of Christ, do everything within your power to encourage these new members to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

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 AM AND 5:00 PM 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

Beautiful Savior - 10 AND 11:30 AM SERVICES

Arr. Peter Hilliard

Doori Na, Violin

Jon Dykstra, Piano

I Set My Hope on Jesus - 5 PM SERVICE

Matt Boswell · Matt Papa · Keith Getty

When this life of trials tests my faith,
I set my hope on Jesus.
When the questions come and doubts remain,
I set my hope on Jesus.
For the deepest wounds that time won't heal,
There's a joy that runs still deeper.
There's a truth that's more than all I feel.
I set my hope on Jesus.

*I set my hope on Jesus,
My rock, my only trust,
Who set his heart upon me first.
I set my hope on Jesus.*

Though I falter in this war with sin,
I set my hope on Jesus.
When I fail the fight and sink within,
I set my hope on Jesus.
Though the shame would drown me in its sea,
And I dread the waves of justice,
I will cast my life on Calvary.
I set my hope on Jesus. *Chorus*

Though the world call me to leave my Lord,
I set my hope on Jesus.
Though it offer all its vain rewards,
I set my hope on Jesus.
Though this heart of mine is prone to stray,
Give me grace enough to finish
'Till I worship on that final day.
I set my hope on Jesus. *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

Romans 13:1-7

The passage can be found on page 948 of the pew Bible.

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

SERMON

God's Vision for a New Humanity | A Changed Relationship to the State

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

Christus Victor (Amen)

Bryan Fowler · Keith Getty · Kristyn Lennox Getty · Matt Boswell · Matt Papa

O Most High, King of the ages,
Great I AM, God of wonders,
By the blood you have redeemed us,
Led us through mighty waters,
Our strength, our song, our sure salvation.

*Now to the Lamb upon the throne
Be blessing, honor, glory, power,
For the battle You have won.
Hallelujah! Amen!*

O Most High, dwelling among us,
Son of Man sent for sinners,
By your blood you have redeemed us,
Spotless Lamb, mighty Savior,
Who lived, who died, who rose victorious.

*Now to the Lamb upon the throne
Be blessing, honor, glory, power
For the battle you have won.
Hallelujah!*

*With every tribe and every tongue
We join the anthem of the angels
In the triumph of the Son.
Hallelujah! Amen!*

O Most High, King of the nations,
Robed in praise, crowned with splendor,
On that day who will not tremble
When you stand, Christ the Victor
Who was, and is, and is forever? *Chorus*

Amen, amen, amen!
Amen, amen, amen!
Amen, amen, amen! *Chorus*

Sing the victory of the Lamb!
Hallelujah! Amen!

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. ☺

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We welcome anyone who would like to serve in one or more of our volunteer roles, including Sunday Service Teams, Hospitality Team, Children's Ministry, and Youth Ministry. Learn more about volunteer opportunities at centralchurchnyc.org/callforvolunteers.

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 Projected Expenses: \$4,740,000

Year-to-Date Giving: \$1,781,000

2026 Remaining Need: \$2,959,000