



CENTRAL  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

# PREPARATION

**April 21, 2024**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

## WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.”

—C.S. LEWIS

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you alone can order the unruly wills and passions of sinful men: Grant to your people that they may love what you command and desire what you promise, that so, among the many and varied changes of the world, our heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Acts 4:5-12

PSALM: Psalm 23

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:16-24

GOSPEL: John 10:11-18

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## PRELUDE

### Instrumental Prelude

*Marta Bagratuni*

### Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Henry van Duke · Ludwig van Beethoven

A Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee,  
Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the dark of doubt away.  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day!

Thou art giving and forgiving,  
Ever blessing, ever blest,  
Well-spring of the joy of living,  
Ocean depth of happy rest!  
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,  
All who live in love are thine;  
Teach us how to love each other,  
Lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus  
Which the morning stars began;  
Love divine is reigning o'er us,  
Leading us with mercy's hand.  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
Victors in the midst of strife;  
Joyful music leads us sunward,  
In the triumph song of life.

## WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

### Psalm 36

LEADER      Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to  
the heavens,

PEOPLE      **Your faithfulness to the clouds.**

LEADER      Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;

PEOPLE      **Your judgments are like the great deep.**

LEADER      How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

PEOPLE      **The children of mankind take refuge in the  
shadow of your wings.**

LEADER      For with you is the fountain of life;

PEOPLE      **In your light do we see light.**

# HYMN

## 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?

*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!*

## **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**

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sin, and whose mercy we forget in the blindness of our hearts: Forgive us our sin. Cleanse us from all our offenses. Deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with reverent and humble hearts we may draw near to you, confessing our faults, finding in you our refuge and strength, and being showered by your grace. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **SILENT CONFESSION**

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**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

## Divine Exchange

Charity Gayle

On the cross hung my pain  
And the guilt and the shame.  
Jesus bore my suffering  
To the grave to make me free.

Oh the blood that was shed,  
It now flows to cover sin.  
It washes clean and purifies  
In its healing crimson tide.

*Jesus, He took my place in divine exchange;  
Hallelujah! Grace is mine.  
Now I will live by faith for the One who saves.  
He gave all to give me life.*

His Spirit is my present help;  
I'd be lost all by myself.  
He resurrects; He sanctifies.  
He takes His power and makes it mine.    *Chorus*

I lay down all lesser things for greater gain;  
He is alive inside of me.    *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.

## 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](https://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](https://centralchurchnyc.org/give).*

# OFFERTORY

## First Things First

Edward Mote · Eric Liljero · Jonas Myrin · Reuben Morgan

All the things that I have held dear,  
The vanities that whispered in my ear,  
What would I do if they all disappeared?

Riches and fame and all that they could buy,  
I've come to find they never satisfy.  
What would I gain if my soul's the price?

I don't wanna love what the world loves.  
I don't wanna chase what the world does.  
I only want you.  
I only want you.

*First things first,  
I seek Your will,  
Not my own.  
Surrender all my wants to you.  
Keep the first thing first.  
To live Your truth,  
Walk Your ways,  
Set my eyes,  
Lord I fix my face on you.  
All my desires reversed,  
To keep the first thing first.*

I give it all,  
My life an offering.  
My heart is yours,  
So have Your way in me.  
Your kingdom's all I wanna see.

I don't wanna love what the world loves.  
I don't wanna chase what the world does.  
I only want you.  
I only want you. *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 8:34-38

The passage can be found on page 844 of the pew Bible.

<sup>34</sup>And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup>For what can a man give in return for his soul? <sup>38</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

## SERMON

### *Good For You?* | Is Christianity Repressive?

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.*



# 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. ∞*

## SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTERS

*Our weekly newsletter is sent out every Friday morning. Be sure to subscribe to stay up to date on everything happening at Central!*

*Ministry and special series newsletters and posts from our journal Christ & Contemporary Culture are sent out on a monthly or quarterly basis.*

## CONGREGATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Have you experienced a major life event such as a birth, marriage, or baptism that you would like to share with the Central community? Fill out our online form at [centralchurchnyc.org/announcements](http://centralchurchnyc.org/announcements). All submissions are reviewed by Central staff before being published in the Sunday bulletin. Announcements are shared on the first Sunday of each month.*