

# GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

[This parable is] about Jesus. He is the one who sets out to find each one of us, regardless of the shame or cost to himself. He is the everlasting Father [Isaiah 9:6] who is always eagerly waiting, anxious for us to show the slightest sign of sorrow for our ingratitude, our rebellion, our wasting of his gifts, and our disobedience to his commandments. He is the one who humbles himself for our sake, who runs to meet us, who pleads with us to be reconciled with himself and to one another. He is the one who counts himself proud to know us, no matter what anyone else thinks about us. He is the one who endures mistreatment and disregard from sinners and yet is full of mercy, kindness, and gentleness. He is the one who starts the party in heaven and who welcomes us to his banquet feast.

*Jerram Barrs,*  
Learning Evangelism from Jesus

MARCH 30, 2025  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

# WELCOME TO WORSHIP

We are glad you decided to come and worship our God and Father through his Son Jesus Christ by His Spirit with us today!

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We want you to feel welcome, and we've prepared this guide to help you enter body and soul into worship. We deeply believe that worship is not just watching and listening; we are called to be active and engaged in the dialog between the covenant God who speaks and his people who respond. Please note:

- the words of Scripture are in *italics*,
  - **boldface type** indicates congregational participation,
  - words in *red* are guides to what's happening, and
  - the † symbol means everyone stands, as able.
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If you are a visitor, please take a moment to scan the QR code below and fill out the form. We want to acknowledge your presence today with a note of thanks. Please let us know if there is a way we may be of help or encouragement to you today.



Also, we have coffee and snacks in the fellowship hall following worship. We hope you will stay for a while so that we can get to know one another a little bit.

# LORD'S DAY DIVINE SERVICE

## The Welcome and Announcements

*Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and  
passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?  
~ Micah 7:18a*

## The Prelude

*Take a moment to prepare in silence for worship  
and to pray for God's assistance to worship him rightly.*

GOD CALLS US | WE GATHER TOGETHER AND PRAISE HIM

## The Apostolic Greeting

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!*

## † The Call to Worship

*Psalm 34:1-3, 22*

*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,  
**Amen!***

*The LORD be with you!*

***And with your spirit!***

*I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

***My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.***

*Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!*

***The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be  
condemned.***

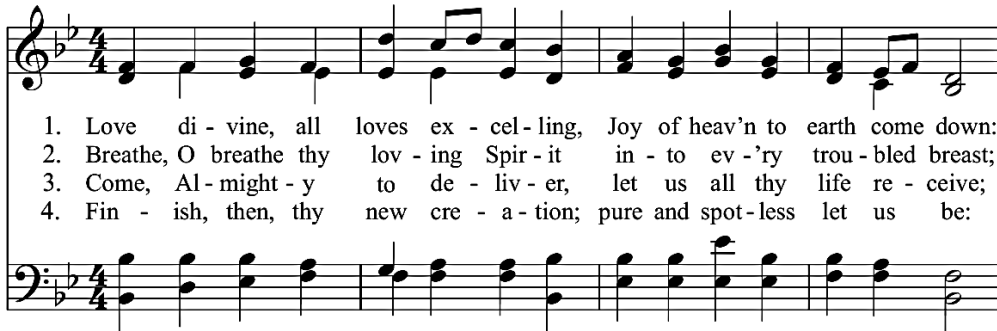
*Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth. Let us worship God.*

## † The Hymn of Praise

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

† Please stand, as able

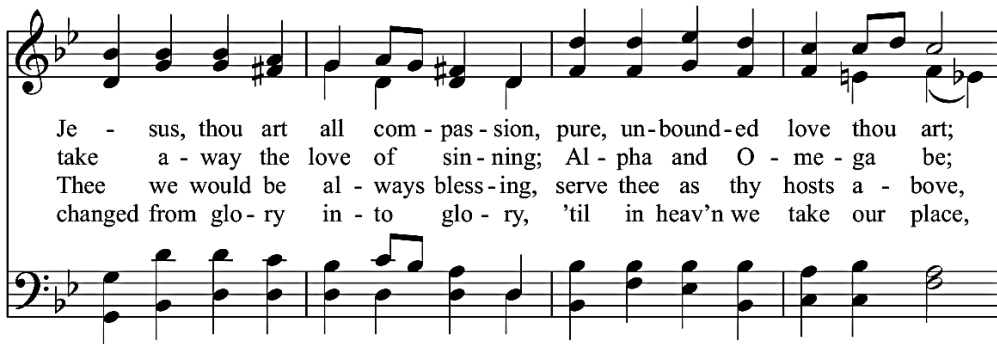
## Love Divine, All Loves Excelling



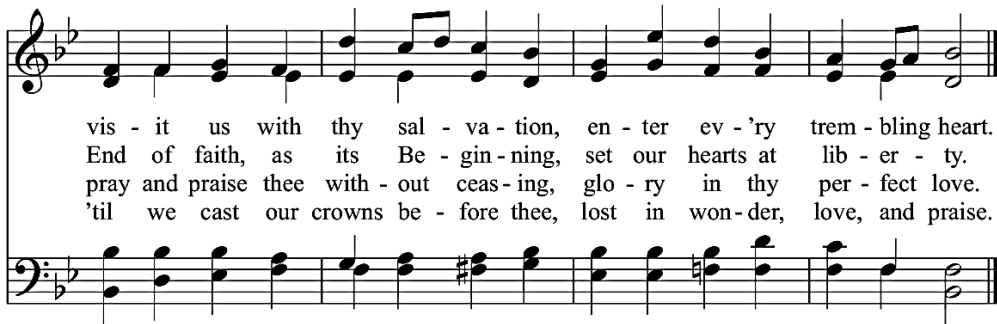
1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down:  
 2. Breathe, O breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry trou - bled breast;  
 3. Come, Al - might - y to de - liv - er, let us all thy life re - ceive;  
 4. Fin - ish, then, thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less let us be:



fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy faith - ful mer - cies crown:  
 let us all in thee in - her - it, let us find the prom - ised rest:  
 sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er - more thy tem - ples leave.  
 let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect - ly re - stored in thee;



Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion, pure, un - bound - ed love thou art;  
 take a - way the love of sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;  
 Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing, serve thee as thy hosts a - bove,  
 changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, 'til in heav'n we take our place,



vis - it us with thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.  
 End of faith, as its Be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.  
 pray and praise thee with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.  
 'til we cast our crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

†**The Opening Prayer**, *in unison* *Book of Common Worship (1993), alt.*  
*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:8, 10)*

Lord our God, praise to you, who are not far off, but near to bless. Out of the silence you have answered our cry. You are the fountain of life, and we are parched with thirst. You offer the living water of grace which springs up from the Rock, our Savior Jesus Christ. Grant your people the gift of the Spirit as we come in the name of Christ to worship you in spirit and truth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God forever. Amen.

†**The Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. AMEN.

## GOD CLEANSSES US | WE CONFESS OUR SINS

**The Call to Confession**

*Joel 2:13, Hosea 6:1*

When Jesus said that we must repent, he intended that the whole life of his believers on earth should be one of constant repentance. Let each of us sincerely acknowledge our sins, come humbly before God, and believe that the heavenly Father wills to be gracious in Jesus Christ.

*Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.*

*Come, let us return to the LORD..., that he may heal us; ...he will bind us up.*

**The Confession of Sin**, *in unison*

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all people: We acknowledge and confess our manifold sins, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against your divine majesty. We do earnestly repent, and are sincerely sorry for our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous to us. Have mercy on us, most merciful Father, for the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may from now on serve and please you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord...

*Take a moment of silence to confess your particular sins to God through Jesus Christ our Advocate and Shield who sits at the God's right hand.*

## **The Proclamation of Forgiveness**

*Jeremiah 31:34c*

*I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be shaken, forgive you your sins, open your eyes to his truth, strengthen you to do his will and give you the joy of his kingdom. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. **AMEN.**

## **The Prayer for Grace**

*Order of Worship, Reformed Church in the US (1866)*

*Let us lift up our hearts to God in heaven.*

*To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.*

Let us pray together to the Lord:

**O Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness: do not enter into judgment with your servants, we beseech you, but be pleased of your great kindness to grant that we, who are now righteously afflicted and bowed down by the sense of our sins, may be refreshed and lifted up with the joy of your salvation. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.**

GOD CONSECRATES US | WE RESPOND IN PRAYER AND OFFERING

## **The Offering Prayer and Collection of Tithes and Offerings**

### **The Offertory**

GOD SPEAKS TO US | WE HEAR IN FAITH

### **The Scripture Readings for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent**

The Old Testament Reading: *Joshua 5:2-12*

The Epistle Reading: *2 Corinthians 5:16-21*

The Gospel Reading: *Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*

### **The Old Testament Reading: Joshua 5:2-12**

*The Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.” So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord; the Lord swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.*

*When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **The Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

## †The Gospel Reading: *Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*

*Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable:*

*"There was a man who had two sons. And 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. Not 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. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.*

*"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! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' And 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. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But 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. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.*

*"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And 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.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but 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. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

†**The Psalm**

*Psalm 32:1-7, 10-11: How Blest Are They*

**The Sermon Text:** *Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*

**The Prayer for Illumination**

## Psalm 32:1-7, 10-11: How Blest Are They



1. How blest are they whose tres-pass has free - ly been for - giv'n,
2. While I kept guilt - y si - lence, my strength was spent with grief:
3. So let the god - ly seek you in times when you are near;
4. The sor - rows of the wick - ed in - crease from year to year,



whose sins are whol - ly cov - ered be - fore the sight of heav'n.  
your hand was heav - y on me; my soul found no re - lief.  
no whelm-ing floods shall reach them or cause their hearts to fear.  
but those who trust the LORD God know love in - stead of fear.



Blest they to whom the LORD God does not im - pute their sin,  
But when I owned my tres - pass and did not hide my sin,  
O LORD, you are my ref - uge, you are my hid - ing place,  
Then in the LORD be joy - ful, in song lift up your voice;



who have a guile - less spir - it, whose heart is true with - in.  
then you for - gave my guilt, LORD, re - stored my life with - in.  
and you sur-round me al - ways with songs of sav - ing grace.  
be glad in God, you right-eous: re - joice, O saints, re - joice!



## **The Sermon: The Two Lost Sons—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly**

GOD COMMUNES WITH US | WE EAT AND DRINK  
WITH THE LORD AND ONE ANOTHER

**The Invitation to the Meal and Fencing of the Table**

**Prayers for Those Not Communing**

*If you are not able to receive Communion, please use the time to pray and meditate.*

**For Those Searching for the Truth**

Lord Jesus Christ: You have said you are 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 indeed you are the Savior of the World, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are and of what you have done. Give me an understanding of you that is true, coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you have promised to give to all who seek you. Amen.

**For Those Now Receiving Christ**

Lord Jesus Christ, I recognize that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserve in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

**For Those Struggling with Sin**

*If you are a baptized believer in Christ and are struggling with sin, you should still come forward for Communion. As it says in our Larger Catechism 172:*

One who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he is not yet assured thereof; and in God's account has it, if he is duly affected with the apprehension of the lack of it, and sincerely desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, *for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians*) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be further strengthened.

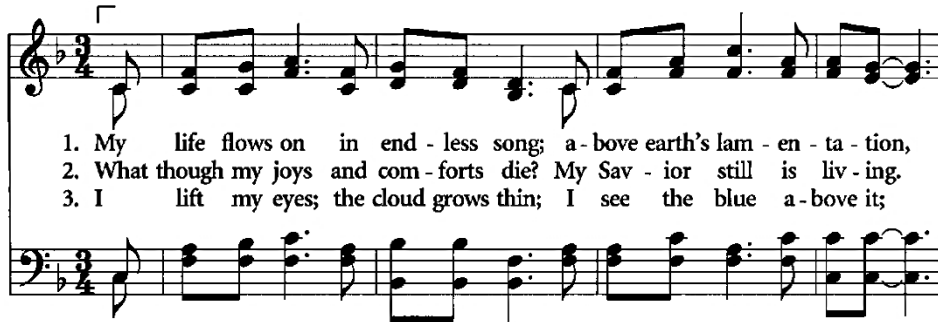
**†The Hymn of Preparation**

How Can I Keep from Singing

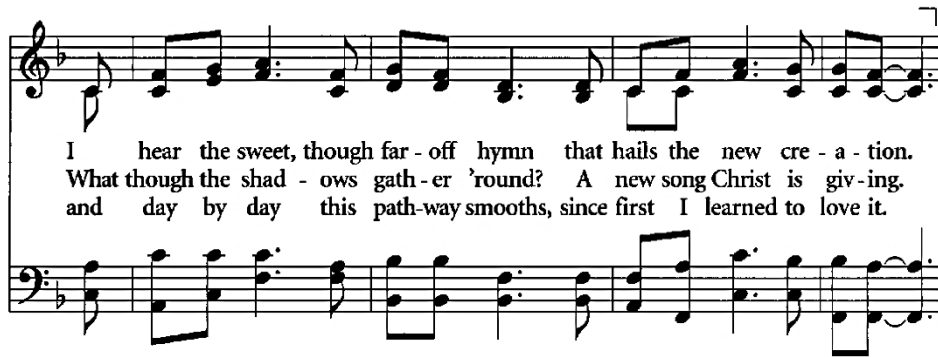
**†The Confession of Our Faith, *in unison***

The Nicene Creed

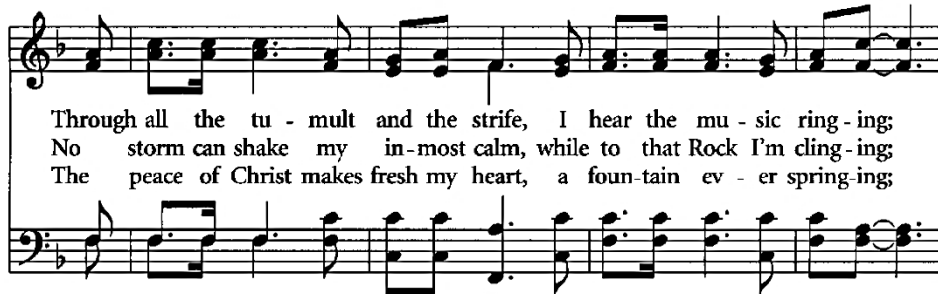
## How Can I Keep from Singing



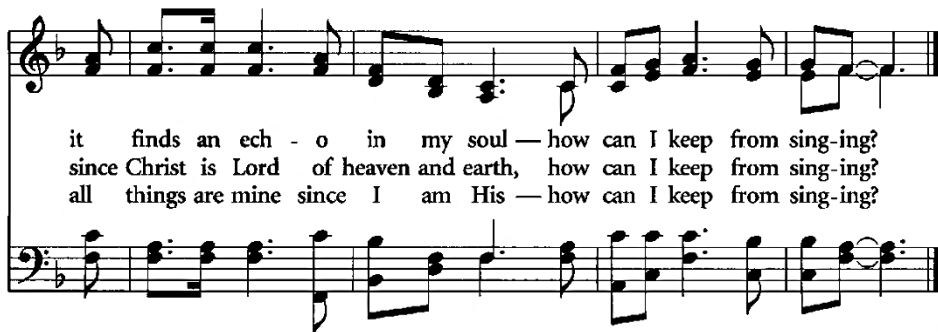
1. My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion,  
2. What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is liv - ing.  
3. I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a - bove it;



I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that hails the new cre - a - tion.  
What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A new song Christ is giv - ing.  
and day by day this path - way smooths, since first I learned to love it.



Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing;  
No storm can shake my in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing;  
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing;



it finds an ech - o in my soul — how can I keep from sing - ing?  
since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?  
all things are mine since I am His — how can I keep from sing - ing?

## The Nicene Creed

WE BELIEVE IN one God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.

AND IN one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of his Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father;  
by whom all things were made;

Who for us, and for our salvation came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered and was buried;  
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And he shall come again, with glory,  
to judge both the living and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.

AND WE BELIEVE IN the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;  
who with the Father and the Son  
together is worshipped and glorified;  
who spoke by the prophets;

AND WE BELIEVE IN one holy catholic and apostolic Church;  
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;

AND WE LOOK for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

**†The Passing of the Peace**

*1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 5:1*

*You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

**And also with you.**

**†The Words of Institution**

*Luke 22:14, 19-20*

**†The Prayer of Humble Access, *in unison***

*Book of Common Prayer (1552)*

**We do not presume to come to this your table, O Merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your many and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord who ever loves to show mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his cup, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. AMEN.**

**The Prayer of Consecration**

*Book of Common Prayer (1552)*

**The Serving of the Elements**

*Brothers and sisters, lift your eyes from the visible elements and lift up your heart to heaven, where Christ is now, seated at the right hand of the Father, from where he will come again to complete our redemption. In him alone are all the promises of God fulfilled and all Spiritual blessings found.*

*Come to the Table now in joy of heart, in Spirit-wrought unity, in holy love, and partake of the Feast of Christ, giving thanks for the great love that God has shown us.*

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!*

**†The Hymn of Response**

**Yet Not I, but Through Christ in Me**

## Yet Not I, but Through Christ in Me



1. What gift of grace is Je - sus my Re - deem - er, there is no  
 2. The night is dark but I am not for - sak - en, for by my  
 3. No fate I dread, I know I am for - giv - en, the fu - ture  
 4. With ev' - ry breath I long to fol - low Je - sus, for He has



more for hea - ven now to give; He is my joy, my right - eous - ness, and  
 side, the Sav - ior He will stay. I lab - or on in weak - ness and re -  
 sure, the price it has been paid. For Je - sus bled and suf - fered for my  
 said that He will bring me home; And day by day I know He will re -



free - dom, my stead - fast love, my deep and bound - less peace. To this I  
 joic - ing for in my need, His pow - er is dis - played. To this I  
 par - don, and He was raised to o - ver - throw the grave. To this I  
 new me, un - til I stand with joy be - fore the throne. To this I



hold, my hope is on - ly Je - sus, for my life is whol - ly bound to  
 hold, my Shep - herd will de - fend me; through the deep - est val - ley He will  
 hold, my sin has been de - feat - ed; Je - sus now and ev - er is my  
 hold, my hope is on - ly Je - sus; All the glo - ry ev - er - more to



His. Oh, how strange and di - vine, I can sing: all is mine!  
 lead. Oh, the night has been won, and I shall o - ver - come!  
 plea. Oh, the chains are re - leased, I can sing: I am free!  
 Him. When the race is com - plete, still my lips shall re - peat:



Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

## The Prayers of the People

### The Church Around the World

Dawson and Shanna Bean and their children, at Faith Community Church (IPC) in Prague, a mission church in the capital and largest city of the most atheist country in the world, the Czech Republic—Dawson is their pastor & Shanna serves in evangelism & discipleship.

### PCA Churches and Pastors in New York State Presbytery

Westminster PCA in Rock Tavern, NY—currently w/o a pastor. Pray for Steve Froehlich, Pastor Emeritus of New Life Ithaca who will begin serving as Interim Pastor in May.

New Life Church, Canton (our mother church)—Pastor Larry Veinott

### Agencies Grace Supports Financially

Care Net of NNY—Christian support for those with unplanned pregnancies

Geneva Benefits Group—assistance to those who minister in the PCA

### Government and Political Leadership—Jefferson County Elected Officials

Gizelle J. Meeks, County Clerk; Stefanie L. LaPier, Auditor; David A. Renzi, County Court Judge; John L. Sabik, County Attorney; Kristyna S. Mills, District Attorney

### Grace Church

Mark Saltzman, Elder Emeritus from New Life Canton, who is battling a resurgent leukemia and waiting for a bone marrow transplant

Taya Crego, Becky Crego's daughter—that God would intervene in her life.

Joshua Marvel, has written a book and would like to have it published.

## The Lord's Prayer, *in unison*

*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.*

GOD COMMISSIONS AND BLESSES US | WE GO OUT TO SERVE GOD

†Closing Hymn

May the Grace of Christ Our Savior

May the grace of Christ our Savior  
and the Father's boundless love,  
with the Holy Spirit's favor,  
rest upon us from above.

Thus may we abide in union  
with each other and the Lord,  
and possess, in sweet communion,  
joys which earth cannot afford. Amen.

†The Song of Simeon, *in unison*

Luke 2:29-32

*Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. AMEN.*

†The Commission

Matthew 28:18-20

†The Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26

*The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

†The People's Amen

A - men, a - men, a - - - men.

## Why Should You Practice Daily Prayer?

In a discussion of worship (of which prayer is a type), James Torrance likens it to marriage. Why do people get married?

There is only one supreme reason for getting married—for love’s sake, for the other’s sake, for mutual love, self-giving, a longing for intimate communion, and sharing of everything. So in Christian worship, we worship God for God’s sake; we come to Christ for Christ’s sake, motivated by love. An awareness of God’s holy love for us, revealed in Jesus Christ, awakens in a longing for intimate communion—to know the love of the Father, to participate in the life and ministry of Christ. Worship in the Bible is always presented to us as flowing from an awareness of who God is and what he has done: I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob . . . I have loved you and redeemed you . . . I will be your God and you will be my people. Therefore this is how you will worship me.

As I indicated above, what Torrance says about worship is true also for our life of prayer. It isn’t all about me and my needs. We pray because we love the God who redeemed us with his own blood and so adopted us as beloved children.

It’s unfortunate that many believers think—even if they would never say it out loud—that prayer is a burden, something to be gotten through as quickly as possible so that they can get on with the really important things of life.

It’s true that prayer can be hard work. Praying requires you to be quiet, to stop your own strivings and know that the Lord is God. Prayer requires you to admit that you’re not the strong, self-sufficient person you’d like to be—or at least to have others think you are. Prayer confirms to you the truth of Jesus’ saying: *apart from me, you can do nothing (John 15:5)*. Thus, as Calvin says, prayer is the chief act of faith—it requires you to leave off your own efforts, to confess that you are neither all powerful nor in control of things, to admit that God is these things, and that he wills to be so for you.

For this reason, prayer is called a spiritual **discipline**: you have to learn how to pray (*Lord, teach us to pray*, the disciples ask in Luke 11:1). In the habit of prayer, you learn to live by faith, to rest in Christ alone, and to have your attitudes, thoughts, and desires remade into ways that are Christ-like and pleasing to God our Father.

Another reason people find it hard to pray, perhaps, is that we don’t recognize what a stupendous gift we’ve been given in our freedom to pray. *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*, Hebrews 4:16 says. God’s invitation to pray is an invitation for you to enter into the central mystery of your salvation, your free union and communion with God in Christ.

This is the greatest blessing of salvation, the one from which all the other blessings flow—union and communion with God bought at the expense of Jesus’ blood. When the baptized and believing people of God pray, either privately or corporately, we enter into—and in some measure experience—the inner life of the Triune God. When you pray, you experience the reality that Jesus is presenting you to the Father as you participate—humbly, wonderingly, joyfully, sometimes painfully—through the Spirit. At the right hand of God our Father, at this very moment, Jesus your Elder Brother is praying on your behalf. And whenever you pray, the Spirit of Christ is helping you, even as Jesus is perfecting your prayers and presenting them to the Father. But, in a very real sense, your experience of Christ is less important than the Christ of your experience, for it is only through the whole Christ—his true divinity and true humanity—the One who is your perfect Mediator, that you are able freely to commune with God in prayer. Indeed, one can say that the life of faith is summed up in prayer to the Father through the Son in the Holy Ghost.

### What Is the Morning Prayer Service?

Traditionally, the Morning Prayer service has confession of sin, psalms, scripture readings, and prayers of thanks, supplication and intercession. In the form we will use here, it should last about 20 minutes. The schedule of readings comes from the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship: Daily Prayer* and the written prayers come from various sources. The service follows what Jesus teaches us in the Lord’s Prayer and involves seven distinct activities:

- **approaching** God in adoration and trust;
- **acknowledging** his work and his worth in praise and worship;
- **admitting** our sin and seeking his pardon;
- **asking** that our needs be met, for ourselves and others;
- **arguing** with God for blessing, wrestling with God as Jacob did in Genesis 32;
- **accepting** from God our situation as he has providentially shaped it;
- **adhering** to God through thick and thin.

These seven activities (described in *Growing in Christ* by J. I. Packer, 157) together constitute faithful biblical prayer.

# LIFE TOGETHER AT GRACE

## THURSDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP

Thursday night fellowship will meet at the Harryman's for supper at 6:00 p.m. This is a time for all. Soup and bread for women, children, men, and strangers. The men's Bible study will follow at 7:00 in Bob's study.

## MORNING PRAYER AND PASTOR FRANK'S "OFFICE HOURS"

Beginning Tuesday, April 2, join us in the Sanctuary on Tuesdays and Fridays at 7:30 a.m. for a short service of prayer. We will be using the traditional form for Morning Prayer, which has confession of sin, psalms, scripture readings, and prayer. Our time together should last about 20 minutes. Immediately after the service on Tuesdays, Pastor Frank will be available for coffee, consultation, or conversation. For more information, see pages 20-21 of the bulletin.

## NEXT FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

Plan on staying after the service on Sunday, April 6 to enjoy our monthly meal together. It might be the perfect time for you to invite someone.

## NOTES ON COMMUNION

- The inner rings of cups contain wine, the outer ring grape juice.
- Gluten-free bread is available.
- Our custom is to wait until everyone has been served, whereupon we eat and drink together.
- After the service, please place your empty cup in the basket provided near the entrance.
- Non-communing children are encouraged to come to the Table with their parents, where they will receive a prayer of blessing.

# CONTACT US

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## Please let us know you worshiped with us today!

We would like to acknowledge your presence with us today. You will not be added to any mailing lists without your permission, and we will not share your information with anyone. Please fill this out and put it in the offering plate when it comes by.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- I am an out of town visitor.
- I live in the area and am visiting for the first time today.
- I would like more information about Grace. Please have someone contact me.
- Please send me more information about \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to meet the pastor for coffee or lunch.

*We are God's people.  
We proclaim Christ,  
who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.  
In him we are  
Taught by the Truth and  
Liberated by the Life to  
Walk in the Way.  
The goal of our instruction is love  
for God and neighbor  
that flows from a pure heart and  
a clear conscience and  
a sincere faith.*



*A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America*

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