FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Worship Service
The Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 18, 2025

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

PRELUDE Chanson — Edward Elgar/ arr. Herbert Brewer

*CALL TO WORSHIP

To know the warmth of love,
To have the assurance that someone cares,
To be confident of our worth,
To be bold to love in return,
To be washed over with grace,
To be accepted as we are:
This is to know a bit of God.
Then let us worship our God.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN — #466
O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing — AZMON

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

*Please stand if you are able.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Lord, you are our shepherd, and yet we want. We lie down when we could act, We stir the pot when we could offer peace, we wander tempting paths instead of following you. We see courage and comfort in earthly things rather than in you. We hate our enemies and refuse to break bread with them. We see scarcity even when you offer us abundance. We pray for forgiveness, for your goodness and mercy, so that we might dwell in You, in your grace, forever. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (responsive)

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Alleluia! Amen.**

WE LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 133 Bob Hunsicker and granddaughter

Acts 15:1-18

Leader: The word of the Lord;

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Rev. Karen Kinney

"What's My Identify?"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

Dictionary.com has as one of its definitions of identity this: *condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing*. How do you define your identity? What identity does someone professing the Christian faith have? How do shared identities unite or divide us?

*SERMON HYMN

We're Stronger Together *(on the back page)* ST. DENIO

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from the *Brief Statement of Faith*)

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

MINUTE FOR MISSION AND OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory The Lord is My Shepherd (Psalm 23) Randall Thompson

Chancel Choir

*Doxology #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*SENDING HYMN #424

O Jesus Christ, May Grateful Hymns Be Rising CHARTERHOUSE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Fanfare Kenneth Leighton

You're welcome to stay and enjoy the Postlude or to depart while the music is played.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

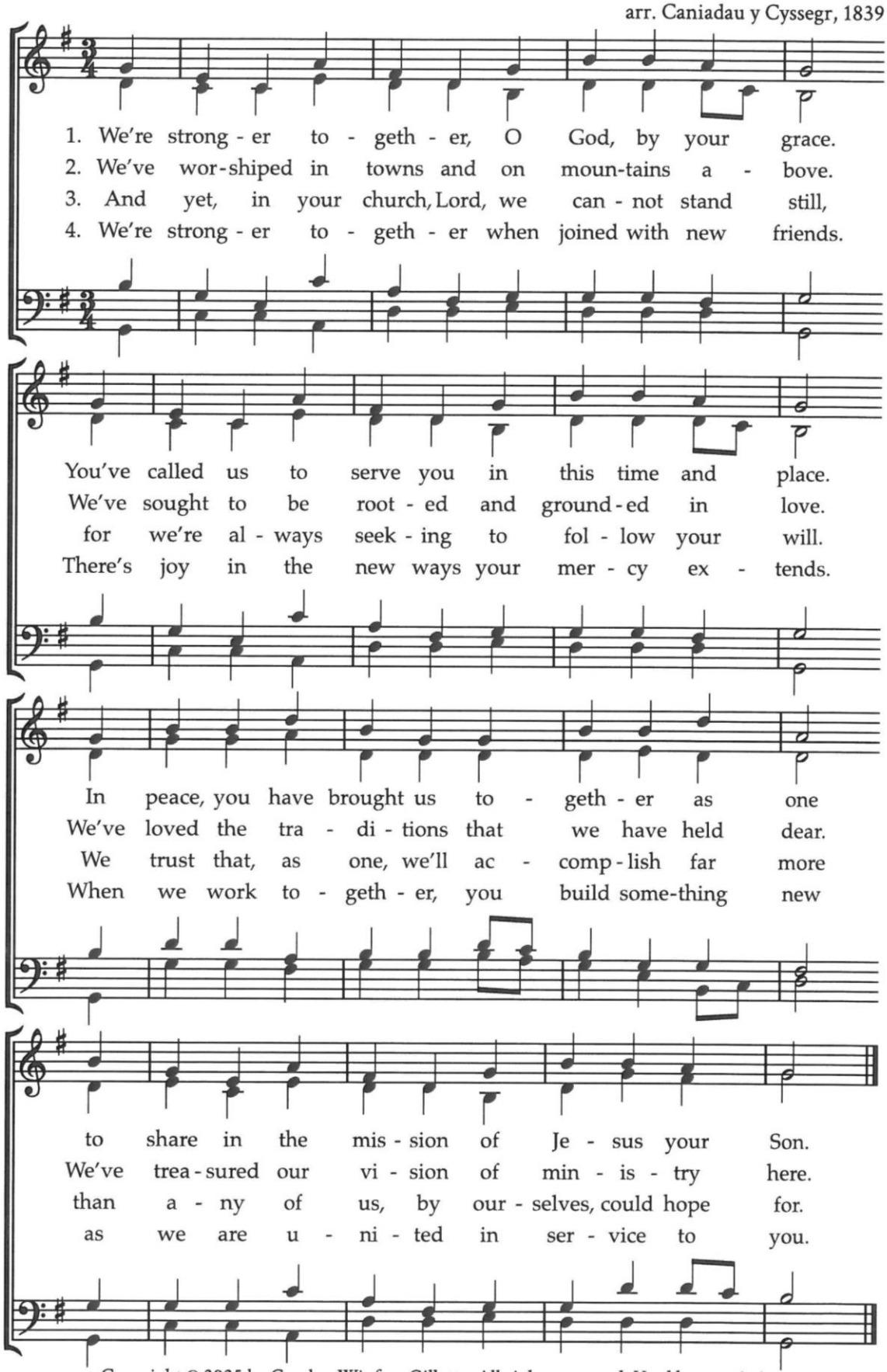
Call to Worship and Prayer of Confession "Written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What Is Good'. Used with permission."

We're Stronger Together

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2025

St. Denio

arr. Caniadau y Cyssegr, 1839



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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com | New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com