



Traditional Worship Service The Third Sunday of Easter

May 4, 2025

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

PRELUDE Processional March

William Harris

Dr. Barbara Thomson, Guest Organist

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Children of God: welcome!

Welcome to this place of love and grace,

Welcome to this place of hope and perseverance.

God invites all of us to be a part of the beloved community,

God invites all of us to share in the good news:

We are welcome, just as we are. We are loved, just as we are.

In gratitude for all of this, let us worship God.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN

Come, Christians, Join to Sing

#150

MADRID

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESS

*Please stand if you are able.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to you the fullness of our lives – that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful. We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do. We love with condition. We judge and condemn. We cast the first stone and keep the logs in our own eyes. We do not turn to You as the source of our healing. Forgive us, we pray. Forgive our sin and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and service. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (responsiveness)

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 27:1-7

Judy Smullen

Selections from Acts 6 and 7

Leader: The word of the Lord;

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Karen Kinney

“The Called Church: Are We Ready?”

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

We often romanticize the Book of Acts which describes a church that cares for all people and is in total agreement. Yet our passage today describes dissension, how to bridge differences, unexpected leadership and service, and proclaiming a prophetic history of Holy Spirit discernment. How does that inform your thinking about the church today? About First Presbyterian of Bethlehem?

*SERMON HYMN

#503

Come, Risen Lord

SURSUM CORDA

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as God's reconciling community. Christ has called the church to this mission and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit. With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

MINUTE FOR MISSION AND OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory Fairest Lord Jesus

arr. Martin How

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

WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Oh holy God, we give you thanks and praise for the gift of creation and for the gift of the new creation, made known to us in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus. We are humbled by this gift of life, by the hope and wonder this gift brings. And so in joy we join our voices to those of the saints who sing these words forever:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is Jesus, the Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lived as we lived; who suffered and died; whom you raised from the dead that we might fear death and sin no more. We proclaim the great mystery of our faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Intercessions

Pour out your Spirit, O God, upon all of those in need in our world: those who are poor or hungry, those made homeless or refugees, those who face violence or oppression, those who are lonely or afraid; all who are ill in body, mind, or spirit; all of those who are grieving. We pray for those known to this community by name...And for all who we hold in the silence of our hearts.

Consecration

Blessed is your Spirit, who comes among us now and upon these gifts of bread and cup, that the bread we break will become for us the Bread of Life, and the cup we bless will become the Cup of Salvation. By your Spirit make us one with each other and with all who share in this feast you have prepared. And hear us now as we say the prayer Jesus taught us:

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.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Unison prayer after communion:

We thank you once again for this meal, this day, this gift of resurrection. Send us out into your world to be the presence of love and hope to all who despair and fear, that all may life, and life abundant. Alleluia, alleluia, amen.

*SENDING HYMN

The Strife Is O'er

#119

VICTORY

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Postlude in D

John Stanley

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