FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Worship Service
Seventh Sunday of Epiphany

February 23, 2025

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE O Give Thanks — Wayland Rogers

Madison Zahorsky, soprano

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: How lovely is God's dwelling place!

All: The places where we're at home with God and with one another.

One: How lovely is God's dwelling place!

All: The places where we discover the joy of life and the strength for each day.

One: How lovely is God's dwelling place!

All: The places where we are grounded in the truth of God's love for all creation.

One: O God, let this be one of your dwelling places today.

All: A place where we can offer our worship and praise to you.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN — #207

How Lovely, Lord — MERLE'S TUNE

*Please stand if you are able.

1 How lovely, Lord, how lovely
Is Your abiding place;
My soul is longing, fainting,
To feast upon Your grace.
The sparrow finds a shelter,
A place to build her nest;
And so Your temple calls us
Within its walls to rest.

2 In Your blest courts to worship,
O God, a single day
Is better than a thousand
If I from You should stray.
I'd rather keep the entrance
And claim You as my Lord
Than revel in the riches
The ways of sin afford.

3 A sun and shield forever
Are You, O Lord Most High;
You shower us with blessings;
No good will You deny.
The saints, Your grace receiving,
From strength to strength shall go,
And from their life shall rivers
Of blessing overflow.

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, our sun and shield, we may long to be in your house, but our deeds show how difficult it is for us to live there. Called to follow, we search for paths to take us back to our old ways; given the words of eternal life, we weakly proclaim the gospel; offered the path of love to walk upon, we stumble down the rocky roads of indifference and judgment. Forgive us, O God, and strengthen us with your Spirit, so we may serve your people with all that brings them life. Let your Word, Jesus Christ, the One we have come to believe and follow, be confirmed in us in every word, every deed, every thought, every moment in the days to come.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

WE LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Psalm 84; Ephesians 6:10-20 Evelyn Kuserk

Leader: The word of the Lord;
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Rev. Lindsey Altvater Clifton

"From Strength to Strength"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

*SERMON HYMN #420

God of Grace and God of Glory CWM RHONNDA

1 God of grace and God of glory,
On Thy people pour Thy power;
Crown Thine ancient church's story;
Bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
For the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us
Scorn Thy Christ, assail Thy ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
Free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
For the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

3 Cure Thy children's warring madness,
Bend our pride to Thy control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal,
Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal.

4 Set our feet on lofty places;
Gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christ-like graces,
Pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
That we fail not them nor Thee!
That we fail not them nor Thee!

5 Save us from weak resignation
To the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of Thy salvation
Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Serving Thee whom we adore,
Serving Thee whom we adore.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

John Alvin Ross V, Madison Zahorsky-Ross and Cynthia Weber

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

One: We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.
All: Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives.
One: We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

All: In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image to live as one community.

One: We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

All: The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.

One: With believers in every time and place,

All: we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory Emerald Stream — Seth Houston

Chancel Choir

*Doxology — #592

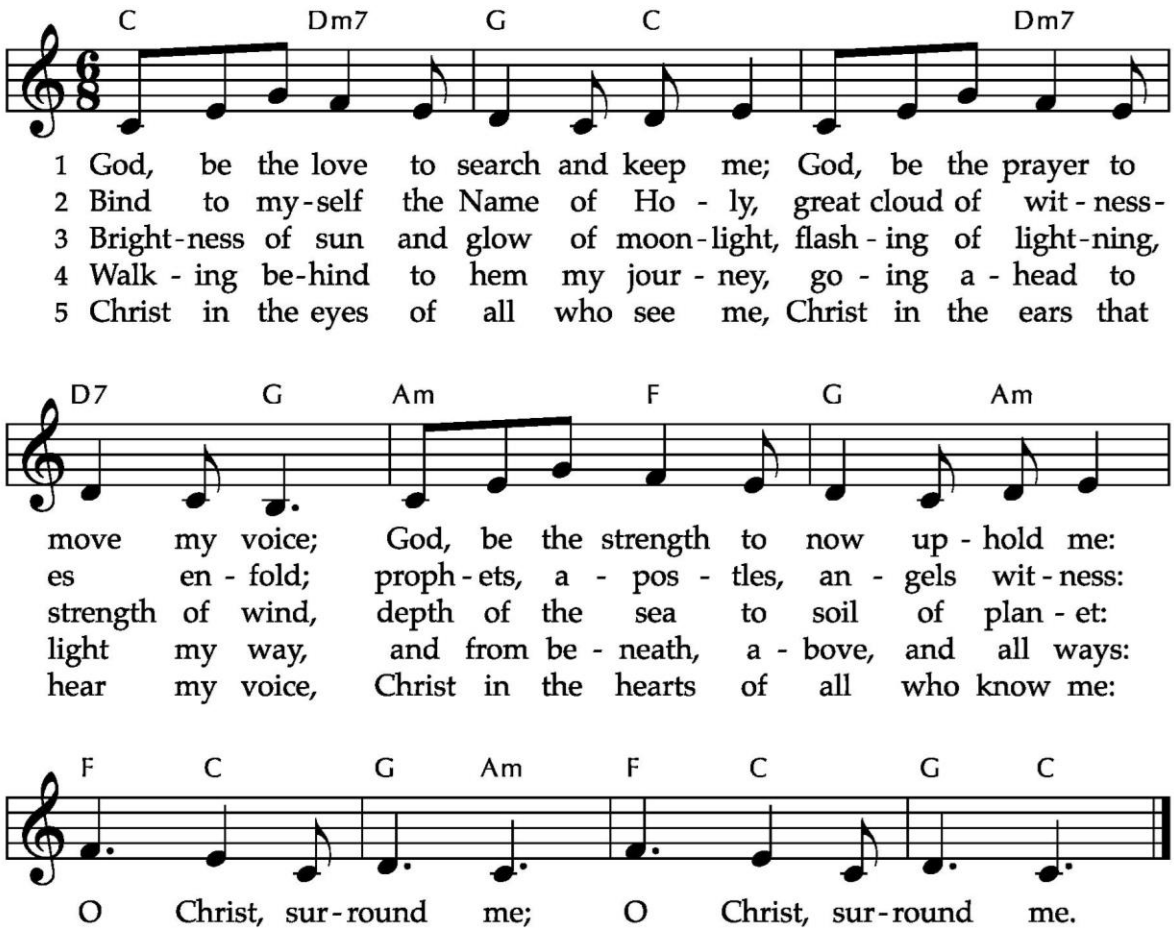
Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow — OLD HUNDREDTH

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

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me *(below)* — O CHRIST, SURROUND ME



*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Postlude in G, op. 134 no. 6 Gustav Merkel

Flowers given in memory of Margaret Clauser