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Gathering those who fear they are not enough,  
so we may experience grace, wholeness, and renewal as God's beloved.

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Herbert Boeckl, 1894-1966. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch  
from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library

## **PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP**

*We must face the fact that in America, the church is still the most segregated major institution in America. At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing that Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation. This is tragic. Nobody of honesty can overlook this.*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

## ***We Gather to Praise God***

### **PRELUDE AND RINGING OF THE BELL**

*Balm in Gilead*

arr. David Cherwien (b. 1957)

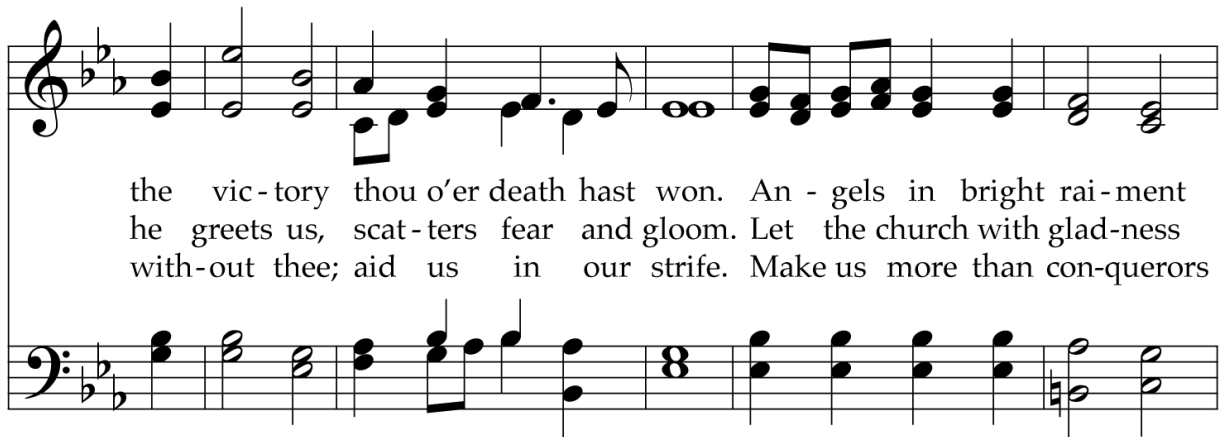
### **WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP**

\* **HYMN 238** (vv. 1 and 3)

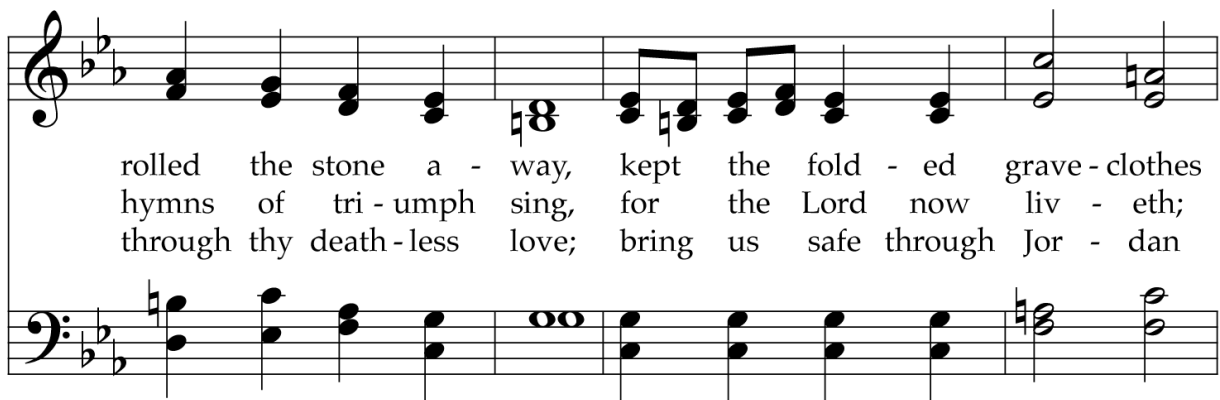
*Thine Is the Glory*



1 Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-quer-ing Son; end - less is  
2 Lo! Je - sus meets us, ris - en from the tomb; lov - ing - ly  
3 No more we doubt thee, glo - rious Prince of life! Life is naught

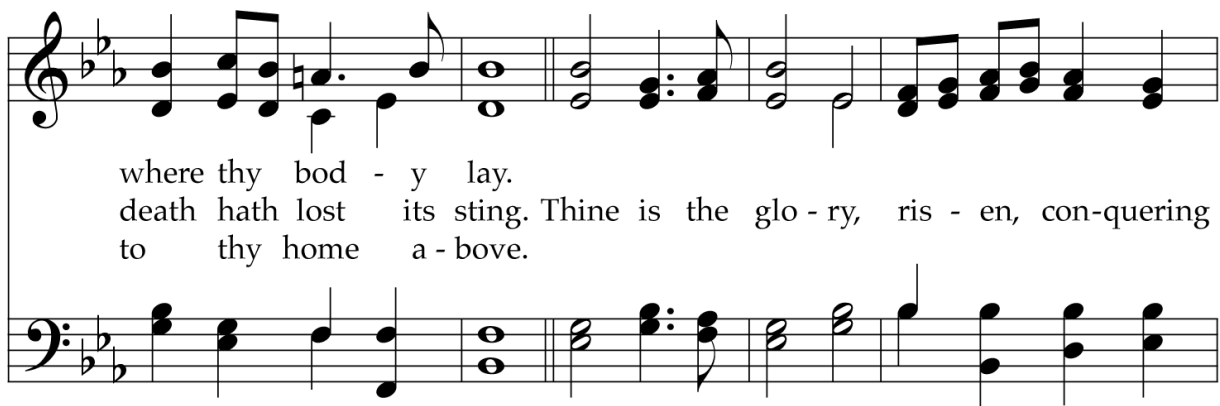


the vic-tory thou o'er death hast won. An - gels in bright rai-ment  
he greets us, scat-ters fear and gloom. Let the church with glad-ness  
with-out thee; aid us in our strife. Make us more than con-querors



rolled the stone a - way, kept the fold - ed grave - clothes  
hymns of tri - umph sing, for the Lord now liv - eth;  
through thy death - less love; bring us safe through Jor - dan

*Refrain*



where thy bod - y lay.  
death hath lost its sting. Thine is the glo - ry, ris - en, con-quer-ing  
to thy home a - bove.

\* *Please stand in body or spirit*

*continued on next page*



This Easter text, first in French and later in English, was written to fit the music, a chorus created for Handel's oratorio *Joshua* and moved to *Judas Maccabeus* in 1751. It grew widely popular following its use at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

TEXT: Edmond Louis Budry, 1884; trans. R. Birch Hoyle, 1923, alt.  
MUSIC: George Frederick Handel, 1748

JUDAS MACCABEUS  
5.5.6.5.6.5.6.5 with refrain

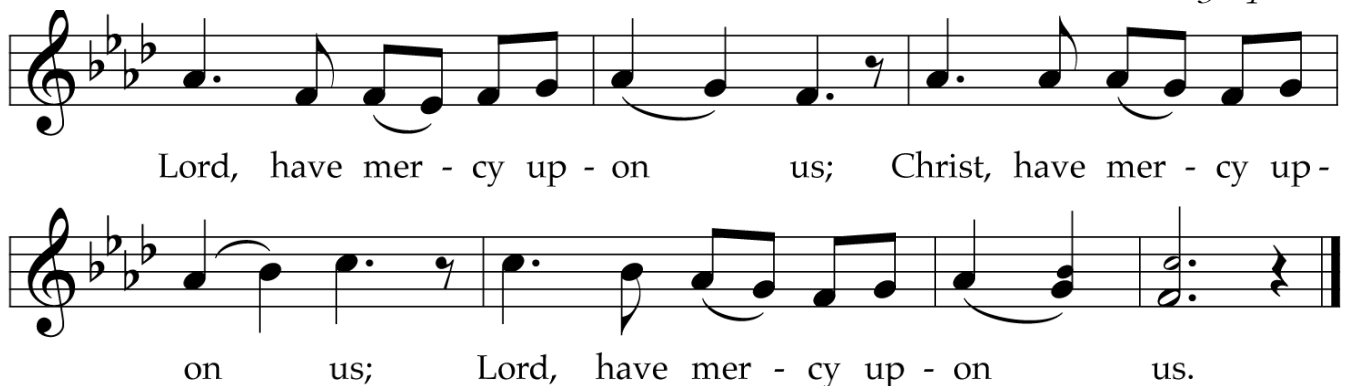
## DRAW NEAR TO GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE

Lord Jesus, in your ministry, you did not reach out only to those like you.  
You embraced the reputable and disreputable, Jew and Gentile, male and female.  
And you called your Church to share the gospel with all people.  
We proclaim that you have broken down all divisions,  
that all people "are one in Christ Jesus."  
Yet we continue to divide ourselves by race, class, wealth, and more.  
Our congregations do not bear witness to God's coming new day,  
a day "when people will come from east and west, from north and south,  
and will eat in the kingdom of God."  
Forgive us, Jesus, for preferring familiar divisions to unity in you.  
Grant us your Spirit, that we may live as you lived  
and show the world another way.

*Silence for personal reflection*

## SUNG RESPONSE

*Lord, Have Mercy upon Us*



TEXT: Trad. liturgical text  
MUSIC: J. Christopher Pardini, 2005  
Music © 2011 Birnamwood Publications (a div. of MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.)

KYRIE ELEISON (Pardini)

## RECEIVE GOD'S LOVE, GRACE, AND PEACE

## \* SING GLORY TO GOD



## *We Listen for God's Word*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

#### FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 15:1-8

*“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.*

ONE: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

### MUSIC MEDITATION

*“Meditation”*

Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Andrew Jonas, saxophone; Lisa Bloy, piano

## SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 8:26-40

*Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.)* <sup>27</sup>*So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship* <sup>28</sup>*and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.* <sup>29</sup>*Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."* <sup>30</sup>*So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"* <sup>31</sup>*He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.* <sup>32</sup>*Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:*

*"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,  
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,  
so he does not open his mouth.*

<sup>33</sup> *In his humiliation justice was denied him.*

*Who can describe his generation?*

*For his life is taken away from the earth."*

<sup>34</sup>*The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?"* <sup>35</sup>*Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.* <sup>36</sup>*As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?"* [<sup>37</sup>*And Phillip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."* And he replied, *"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*] <sup>38</sup>*He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.* <sup>39</sup>*When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.* <sup>40</sup>*But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*

ONE: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

## SERMON

ON BEING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

James Sledge

# We Respond to God's Word

## \* HYMN 759 (vv. 1 and 3)

*O God, We Bear the Imprint*

Em Am B7 Em

1 O God, we bear the im-print of your face: the col - ors  
 2 Where we are torn and pulled a - part by hate be - cause our  
 3 O God, we share the im - age of the One whose flesh and

Am B7 Am

of our skin are your de - sign, and what we have of  
 race, our skin is not the same, while we are judged un -  
 blood are ours, what-ev - er skin; in Christ's hu - man - i -

D G Am6

beau - ty in our race as man or wom - an, you a -  
 e - qual by the state and vic - tims made be - cause we  
 ty we find our own, and in his fam - i - ly our

B7 Am D

lone de - fine, who stretched a liv - ing fab - ric on our  
 own our name, hu - man - i - ty re - duced to lit - tle  
 prop - er kin: Christ is the broth - er we still cru - ci -

G Am6 Em B7 Em

frame and gave to each a lan - guage and a name.  
 worth, dis - hon - ored is your liv - ing face on earth.  
 fy, his love the lan - guage we must learn, or die.

Rather than treating racism as a societal problem, this text considers the issue from a theological point of view. When we distance ourselves from other people merely because of the color of their skin, we fail to honor their God-likeness and to see Christ's image in them.

## \* **RESPONSE OF FAITH**

*adapted from Brian McLaren*

We believe that God the Father, Good Creator and giver of life, calls us to love all creation and care for it as respectful stewards, to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. We believe that Jesus Christ is God come to save and lead us, who teaches us to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We see Jesus in the poor, oppressed, condemned, and forgotten, and so we embrace all people with God's true compassion. We believe that by the Holy Spirit, God unites us in the eternal dance of love, empowers us diversely to serve and love, and fills us that we may overflow with grace, truth, beauty, and life as Christ's agents in this world.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Sue Armstrong

ONE: Lord in your mercy,

**ALL: Hear our prayer.**

*The Prayers of the People are offered on behalf of and with the congregation, usually by an elder currently serving on Session (governing council) or other members of the congregation.*

### *Prayers of concern*

Craig Golub, dear friend of Tom Koger and Louise Phillips, whose beloved wife, Ashleigh, passed away on April 25

Nicole Moose (Alleman), recovering from a second neck surgery

Nora Long, at home after being in rehab due to a stroke in February

Educators, administrators, support staff, and students during the pandemic

Staff and residents of elder care facilities everywhere

First responders, health care providers, caregivers, essential employees, and all who continue to put their lives at risk during the pandemic

### *Continued prayers*

Kris Barth, Allan Capon, Steve Graff, Mike Hugo, Laurel Kovach, Sandy Martin, Ruth Mileham, Bob Moore, Cort Peret, James Steele, Lawson Swift, Helen Waugh, Doris Webb, Charles Wirth

*Prayer requests can be sent to Pastor James at [prayers@fallschurchpresby.org](mailto:prayers@fallschurchpresby.org).*

## \* DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Christ, all peo - ple  
here be - low; praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more;  
praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore. A - men.

TEXT: Neil Weatherhogg, 1988  
MUSIC: Genevan Psalter, 1551  
Text © 1990 Neil Weatherhogg

OLD HUNDREDTH  
LM

## SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### *INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE*

#### *Great Thanksgiving*

ONE: The Lord be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

ONE: Lift up your hearts.

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.**

ONE: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

ONE: It is truly right...



## Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, God of

(E) (F#m)(A) (F#7)(B) (E) (A)(E7)  
F Gm Bb G7 C F Bb F7

pow - er, God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

(A) (D)(A) (E) (F#m7)(F#7) (B)(Bm)(D7)  
Bb Eb Bb F Gm7 G7 C Cm Eb7

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Blessed is the

(G) (C) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G) (Am7)  
Ab Db Ab Db Gb Db Ab Bbm7

One, blessed is the One, blessed is the One who

(C) (A7) (D) (G) (C) (G)  
Db Bb7 Eb Ab Db Ab

comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na! Ho -

(C) (F) (C) (G) (C) (D7) (G) (C) (G)  
Db Gb Db Ab Db Eb7 Ab Db Ab

san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

TEXT: Trad. liturgical text  
MUSIC: David E. Poole, 2007  
Music © 2007 David E. Poole

SANCTUS (Poole)

## The Lord's Prayer

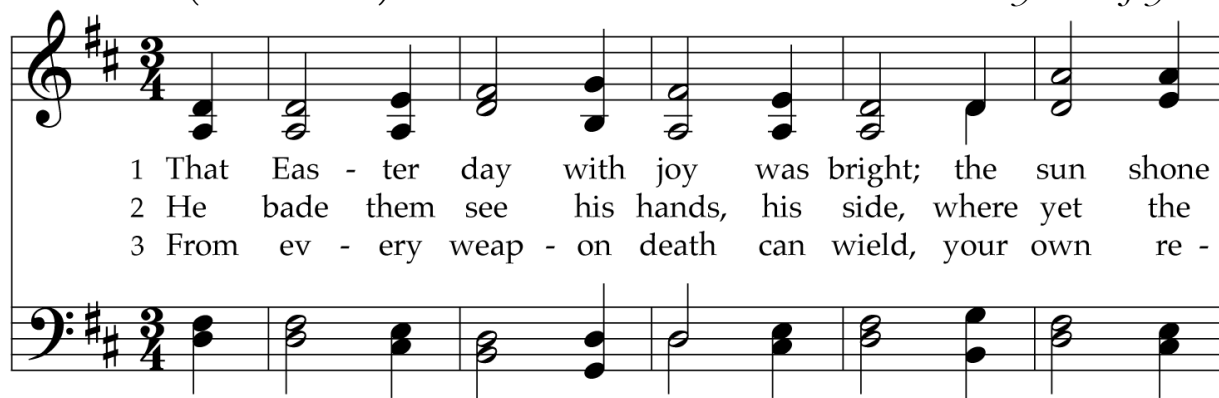
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

## Distribution of the Elements

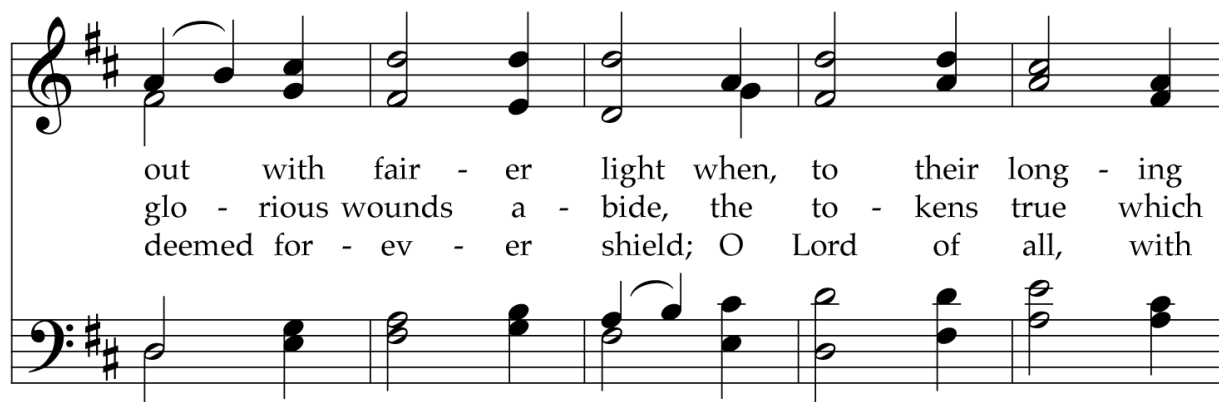
## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**\* HYMN 254** (vv. 1 and 3)

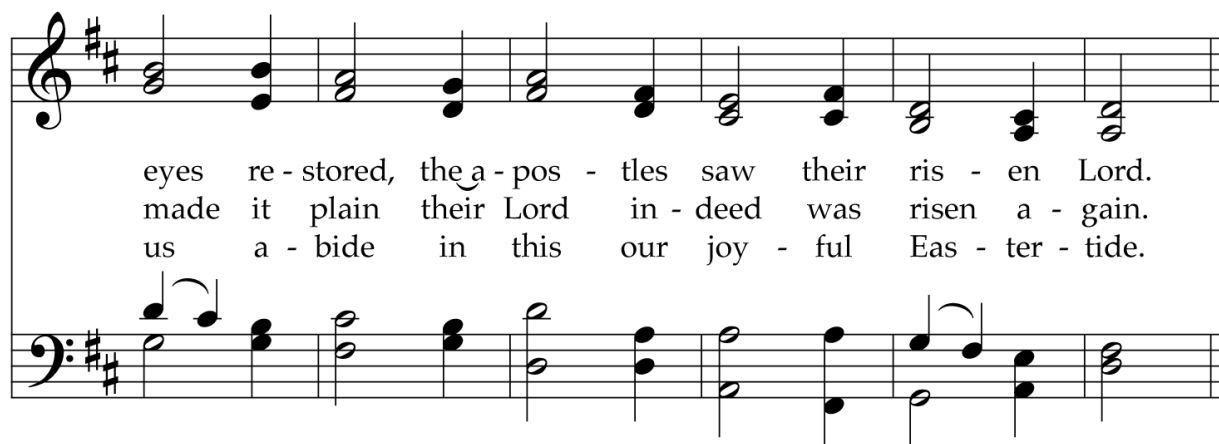
*That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright*



1 That Eas - ter day with joy was bright; the sun shone  
2 He bade them see his hands, his side, where yet the  
3 From ev - ery weap - on death can wield, your own re -



out with fair - er light when, to their long - ing  
glo - rious wounds a - bide, the to - kens true which  
deemed for - ev - er shield; O Lord of all, with



eyes re - stored, the a - pos - tles saw their ris - en Lord.  
made it plain their Lord in - deed was risen a - gain.  
us a - bide in this our joy - ful Eas - ter - tide.

These Eastertide stanzas are derived from a longer Latin text that was one of the earliest hymns written especially for a season of the church year. They are set here to a tune with Christmas associations, a means of linking the two great festivals of the Christian year.

TEXT: Latin hymn, 5th cent.; trans. John Mason Neale, 1852, alt.  
MUSIC: Trier ms., 15th cent.; adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1609

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR  
LM  
(alternate harmonization, 67)

**\* OUR LIFE TOGETHER AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

**\* CHARGE AND BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

Invention in B-flat major

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

## ***Supporting us in Worship***

Worship Leader	Sue Armstrong
Audio/Video	Diane Maloney
Music	Andrew Jonas, tenor; David Schoonover, baritone
Fellowship Time Host	Kathy Chavez
Sanctuary Flowers	The flowers today are given to the glory of God with love from Molly, Nattie, Caitlin, and Evan Good in celebration of Jason Good's 50th birthday on May 9. (Jason was born on Mother's Day!)

## ***A Warm Welcome***

Thank you for joining us in worship this morning. We welcome all to our livestream community and hope that you will join us in song and prayer from the safety of your own homes. If you would like to learn more about our family of faith, please [visit our church website](#).

*Falls Church Presbyterian belongs to the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, "working for the unity of the church, furthering the inclusion of LGBTQ persons, seeking understanding and reconciliation, and joining with others seeking a still more just and inclusive church."*

The Rev. James Sledge, Pastor  
Diane Maloney, Director of Spiritual Growth and Community Engagement  
Noah Clark, Assistant Director of Youth Ministry  
The Rev. Megan Klose, Parish Associate  
The Rev. Rusty Lynn, Hon. Ret., Parish Associate  
David Schoonover, Acting Director of Music  
Dr. Lisa Bloy, Organist

## This Week at FCPC

May 2-9, 2021

### Online Worship and Meetings

**Story Time** – Sunday at 8:00 a.m. [Story Time with Mrs. Burns](#)

**Worship Service** – Sunday at 9:30 a.m. [www.fallschurchpresby.org/livestream](http://www.fallschurchpresby.org/livestream) or [Facebook Live](#)

**Fellowship Time** – Immediately following worship. [Zoom Meeting ID: 919 9132 3252](#)

**Tuesday Morning Prayer** – Tuesday at 8:45 a.m. [Zoom Meeting ID: 104 294 101](#)

**Saturday Morning Bible Study & Fellowship Group** – Contact [Tom Koger](#) for meeting information.

**Story Time with Mrs. Burns.** Join Mrs. Burns in the library for some stories about moms as we prepare for Mother's Day on May 9th. What is something your mom or motherly figure has taught you? Available on YouTube Sunday after 8:00 a.m. [Story Time with Mrs. Burns](#)

**Join us for virtual Fellowship Time and Escape Weekend Q&A** immediately following worship. [Zoom Meeting ID: 919 9132 3252](#). This week's host is Marsha Schuyler. Members of the Escape Planning Team will be available to answer all your questions about Escape Weekend 2021. In case you missed it, you can [watch the Escape promo video](#) that ran during last Sunday's worship service. Video credits and thanks go to Marnie Sarver (producer/writer), Diane Maloney (production manager), and Diane, James Sledge, Marnie, and Vincent Riggione (narrators). Anyone is welcome to host Fellowship Time! Learn more [here](#) and sign up [here](#).

**In-person Youth Group, May 2.** Middle and high school youth are meeting in person this Sunday from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. These meetings are 100% outside. We will play some games, talk about God, and have fun. No signup is needed, but if you have questions email [Noah Clark](#).

**Gathering Groups.** Groups are meeting throughout the week to discuss passages of the Psalms with a modern interpretation. Follow along with the groups [here](#).

**Welcome Table, May 5.** Sign up to help at our next Welcome Table through [this link](#). If you would like to support Welcome Table with a financial contribution, you can mail a check (made out to FCPC with "Welcome Table" in memo line) to the church office or give through FCPC's secure [Online Giving](#) link.

**Silent Witness, May 8.** Join the Falls Church faith community in a Silent Witness Against Racial Injustice and school-based racial profiling from noon to 1:00 p.m. along Broad Street. For many Black and Hispanic children, racial profiling begins at school. Black students routinely experience school rules differently than white students. Black students observe that rules are more harshly enforced on them than their white peers, even though many students violate the rules. Also, Black students report their behaviors are harshly scrutinized and seen as more dangerous, while white students are given wider autonomy and are presumed innocent. These disparities in school climates can lead Black and Hispanic students to a sense of alienation from their educational environment. For more information, see [\*Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools\*](#), by Amanda Lewis and John Diamond.

**Jubilee Project.** A jubilee is a joyful celebration. It is also described in the Hebrew bible as a time of emancipation and restoration—one year out of every fifty where people would rest, land would be restored, slaves would be freed, and debts would be canceled. This year during Lent, FCPC families used a devotional guide called “The Jubilee Project” to explore Biblical themes of forgiveness, abundance, and grace. As part of that practice, we set aside some money each week to participate in our own Easter jubilee. Now, as a sign of God’s abounding grace and forgiveness, we will extend grace and forgiveness to others by pooling that money to help cancel the medical debt of struggling individuals and families.

Millions of Americans have medical debt they can’t pay—hospital bills that are astronomical, or medical charges to their credit cards that balloon over time. Almost two-thirds of all bankruptcies in the U.S. are related to medical debt issues, and millions of Americans report having to choose between paying for necessary health care or paying for other necessities, like food or heat.

This issue has special resonance in 2021 because it is one where the pandemic and structural racism collide to disastrous effect. People of color are already disproportionately impacted by medical debt and are also disproportionately impacted by COVID. We can expect to see medical debt—especially in communities of color—rise as a consequence of COVID. It is an issue at the intersection of mercy and justice.

But it also turns out that buying medical debt is a lot less expensive than paying your own medical debt—or paying for another individual’s debt alone. You can buy medical debt for about a one-hundredth of its face value. The nonprofit organization [RIP Medical Debt](#) purchases consolidated medical debt from creditors at this huge discount and then forgives it. They target the medical debt of those most in need of relief, purchase the debt, and then erases it, with no taxes or penalties to the recipient.

Each dollar donated frees a person from about \$100 of debt, on average. Together with others in the Northern Virginia area, we are on track to help forgive more than a million dollars in debt. **If you’d like to participate in FCPC’s gift to the Jubilee Project, donate online at [www.fallschurchpresby.org/giving](http://www.fallschurchpresby.org/giving) or mail a check to the church office noting “Jubilee” in memo line. FCPC will send its donation to the Jubilee Project on MAY 1.**

**Crossing Paths** is a daily email designed to be a way to stay connected to each other, our community, and God. To share a prayer, poem, or scripture passage to be included in future Crossing Paths, please email [Diane Maloney](#). Not receiving Crossing Paths? [Click on this link](#) to be added to the email list.

**God sightings.** You are invited to share a photo that captures a time or place where you have experienced God. Photos submitted by noon each Wednesday will be considered for use at the opening of our virtual worship service. Email images to [Diane Maloney](#).

**Pastoral care during social distancing.** If you or your loved one is in need of pastoral care, please do not hesitate to contact [James Sledge](#). And if you are at-risk from COVID-19, please let James or the [deacons](#) know if we can offer you support with specific tasks such as grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, or other things that might put you at risk.