



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship May 17, 2026 9:30am
Seventh Sunday of Easter

Gathering

*The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow.
So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives
into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted*

PRELUDE

“Ave Verum”
Linda Dover, organist

Mozart
arr. Carl Eischer

*In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a
contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Karen Wright

*CALL TO WORSHIP (*Unison*)

ONE: Beloved, we gather in this in-between time — between promise and fulfillment, between ascension and Pentecost.

ALL: Like the disciples, we wait and pray, trusting that God is still at work among us.

ONE: The risen Christ calls us to be witnesses — not in our own strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit.

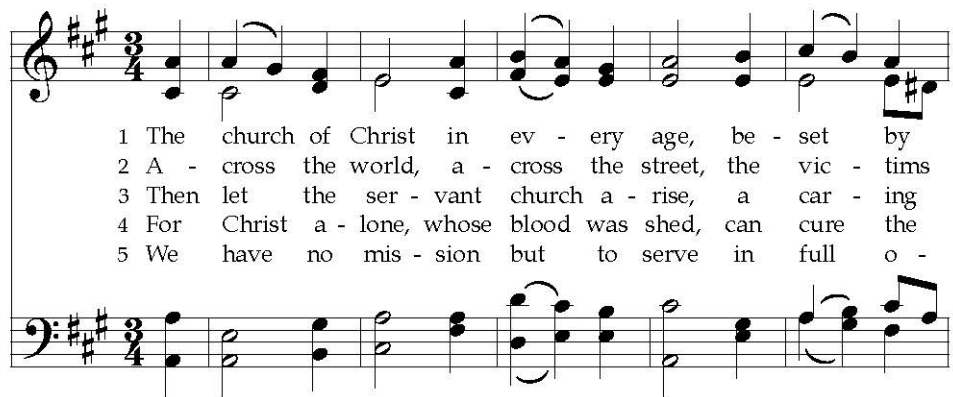
ALL: Come, let us worship the One who reigns and who equips us with hope and courage.

*HYMN 320

“The Church of Christ in Every Age”

WAREHAM


320 The Church of Christ in Every Age



1 The church of Christ in ev - ery age, be - set by
 2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims
 3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise, a car - ing
 4 For Christ a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the
 5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -



change but Spir - it - led, must claim and test its
 of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for
 church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's
 fe - ver in our blood, and teach us how to
 be - dience to our Lord: to care for all, with -



her - i - tage and keep on ris - ing from the dead.
 bread to eat, and nev - er live be - fore they die.
 sac - ri - fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.
 share our bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.
 out re - serve, and spread Christ's lib - er - at - ing word.

In this challenging text by a British Methodist minister, the odd-numbered stanzas develop the image of "the servant church," while the second surveys the many needs and the fourth describes the true source of strength for the task.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Emily Nelson Dixon

In seasons of waiting, we grow restless. In times of suffering, we lose heart. When called to lead or serve, we sometimes shrink back. Yet Christ, the Chief Shepherd, calls us still — to faithfulness, humility, and trust. Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Faithful God, you call us to be your witnesses, yet we often remain silent. You invite us to trust your timing, yet we demand certainty and control. You walk with us through trial and suffering, yet we resist the refining work of your Spirit. You appoint us to care for one another with gentleness, yet we seek power, recognition, or ease.

Forgive us, O God. Renew our courage to follow where Christ leads. Strengthen us to endure with hope. Shape us into a community that reflects your love and care. In your mercy, restore us, that we may serve you with joy and faithfulness. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: When we suffer, Christ is near. When we falter, God is faithful. The God who calls us also restores us, strengthens us, and establishes us in grace. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made new.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

NOISY OFFERING

(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you and all others!

*RESPONSE 243

“Be Not Afraid”

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Peter 4:12–14; 5:1–4

Brandon Hearn

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

ANTHEM

“Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise!”

Dan Forrest

Chancel Choir

Linda Dover, organ - Darryl Prater, trumpet

Carolyn Mammen, horn - Christopher Culp, percussion

*If God be for us, who can be against us?
He who did not spare His only Son, but gave Him up for all,
Shall He not with Him freely give us all things?*

*Hail the day that sees Him rise, Alleluia!
To His throne beyond the skies, Alleluia!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners giv'n, Alleluia!
Enters now the highest heav'n, Alleluia!*

*Circled round with angel powers, Alleluia!
Their triumphant Lord, and ours, Alleluia!
Conqueror over death and sin, Alleluia!
Take the King of glory in! Alleluia!*

CONGREGATION SINGS ON FINAL VERSE:

**Hail the day that sees Him rise, Alleluia!
To His throne beyond the skies, Alleluia!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners giv'n, Alleluia!
Enters now the highest heav'n, Alleluia!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 1:6–14

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father

has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Faithful in the In Between"

Rev. Karen Wright

HYMN 761

"Called as Partners in Christ's Service"

BEECHER

Called as Partners in Christ's Service 761

1 Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min-is-tries of grace,
 2 Christ's ex-am-ple, Christ's in-spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth,
 3 Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense,
 4 So God grant us for to - mor-row ways to or-der hu - man life

we re-pond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
 let us fol-low, nev-er fal-tering, rec-on-cil-ing folk on earth.
 help us bear each oth-er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence.
 that sur-round each per-son's sor-row with a calm that con-quests strife.

May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend,
 Men and wom-en, rich-er, poor-er, all God's peo-ple, young and old,
 Words of com-fort, words of vi-sion, words of chal-lenge, said with care,
 Make us part-ners in our liv-ing, our com-pas-sion to in-crease,

e - qual part-ners in our car-ing to ful-fill God's cho-sen end.
 blend-ing hu-man skills to-geth-er gra-cious gifts from God un-fold.
 bring new power and strength for ac-tion, make us col-leagues, free and fair.
 mes-sen-gers of faith, thus giv-ing hope and con-fi-dence and peace.

This hymn is a celebration of mutuality and diversity as well as a challenge to the Christian community to live out a ministry of reconciliation and inclusion. This 20th-century text is set to a 19th-century tune named for the noted pastor and preacher Henry Ward Beecher.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

“Love Divine”
Linda Dover, organist

Martin Setchell

Sending

*HYMN 268

“Crown Him with Many Crowns”

DIADEMATA

Crown Him with Many Crowns 268

1 Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on his throne;
 2 Crown him the Lord of love; be - hold his hands and side,
 3 Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a scep - ter sways
 4 Crown him the Lord of years, the po - ten - tate of time;

hark, how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own!
 rich wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, in beau - ty glo - ri - fied:
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease, ab - sorbed in prayer and praise.
 cre - a - tor of the roll - ing spheres, in - ef - fa - bly sub - lime.

A - wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
 no an - gel in the sky can ful - ly bear that sight,
 His reign shall know no end; and round his pier - ed feet
 All hail, Re - deem - er, hail! For thou hast died for me;

and hail him as thy match-less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 but down-ward bends his burn - ing eye at mys - ter - ies so bright.
 fair flowers of par - a - dise ex - tend their fra - grance ev - er sweet.
 thy praise shall nev - er, nev - er fail through-out e - ter - ni - ty.

This text is so familiar that it is easy to miss all its paradox, mystery, suffering, and beauty; it rewards careful reading and meditation outside corporate worship. The tune's composer, chapel organist at Windsor Castle, had much experience in creating a royal sound.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Diademata Reprise”
Linda Dover, organist

George J. Elvey
setting by Hal Hopson

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11100 College Boulevard ♦ Overland Park, KS 66210
Phone (913) 345-1256 ♦ www.gcpc.org