



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship May 25, 2025 9:30am
Sixth 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 “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?” arr. Michael Burkhardt
Linda Dover, organist

*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 Rev. Karen Wright

*CALL TO WORSHIP Emily Nelson Dixon

ONE: Come, people of God, from every path— called by visions, drawn by grace.

All: Like Lydia, we open our hearts to God’s word.

ONE Like the man at the pool, we long to be made well.

All: In Christ, healing and hope are offered freely.

ONE: This day, we remember those who gave their lives in service and sacrifice.

All: And we worship the One who offers peace that passes understanding.

Let us worship God with open hearts and expectant hope.

*HYMN 756 “O God of Every Nation” LLANGLOFFAN

O God of Every Nation 756

1 O God of ev - ery na - tion, of ev - ery race and land,
 2 From search for wealth and pow - er and scorn of truth and right,
 3 Lord, strength-en those who la - bor that all may find re - lease
 4 Keep bright in us the vi - sion of days when war shall cease,

re - deem the whole cre - a - tion with your al - might - y hand.
 from trust in bombs that show - er de - struc - tion through the night,
 from fear of rat - tling sa - ber, from dread of war's in - crease;
 when ha - tred and di - vi - sion give way to love and peace,

Where hate and fear di - vide us and bit - ter threats are hurled,
 from pride of race and sta - tion and blind - ness to your way,
 when hope and cour - age fal - ter, your still small voice be heard;
 till dawns the morn - ing glo - rious when truth and jus - tice reign

in love and mer - cy guide us and heal our strife - torn world.
 de - liv - er ev - ery na - tion, e - ter - nal God, we pray.
 with faith that none can al - ter, your ser - vants un - der - gird.
 and Christ shall rule vic - to - rious o'er all the world's do - main.

If we truly believe that God cares for all people, we cannot limit our prayers and songs for peace to the welfare of our own nation, no matter how much we may love it. This challenging text is set to a stirring Welsh tune, named for a hamlet with a prominent Baptist chapel.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

(Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time, is on summer hiatus. 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.)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Karen Wright

Even as we remember with gratitude the lives laid down in service, we confess that we have not always walked in the way of peace. Let us bring before God our hearts and our hopes, our brokenness and our longing for healing.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

God of mercy, we confess that we often choose safety over courage, and comfort over compassion. We turn away from those crying out for healing, and we ignore the visions you place before us. We forget the cost of peace, and we fail to follow the path of Christ.

Forgive us, Lord. Open our hearts, like Lydia's, to receive your word. Make us whole, like the man by the pool, by the power of your grace. Lead us, as your Spirit leads the church, to love more boldly and serve more faithfully. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: God's mercy is wide, and God's love never ends. Christ comes to us with healing and with hope, saying, "Stand up, take your mat, and walk." In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made new.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you and all others!

*HYMN 726

"Will You Come and Follow Me?"

KELVINGROVE

(Vs 1,4, and 5)

726 Will You Come and Follow Me

The Summons

Capo 3: (D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (Asus) (A)
F C7 Dm Gm7 Csus C

1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
2 "Will you leave your-self be-hind if I but call your name?
3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call your name?
4 "Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
5 Lord, your sum-mons ech - oes true when you but call my name.

(D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (G) (D)
F C7 Dm Gm7 B^b F

Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?
Will you care for cruel and kind and nev - er be the same?
Will you set the pris-oners free and nev - er be the same?
Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?
Let me turn and fol - low you and nev - er be the same.

(Em7) (G) (F#m7) (G) (Asus) (A)
Gm7 B^b Am7 B^b Csus C

Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your life at-tract or scare?
Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un-seen,
Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world a - round,
In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.

(D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (G) (D)
F C7 Dm Gm7 B^b F

will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"
Will you let me an - swer prayer in you and you in me?"
and ad - mit to what I mean in you and you in me?"
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

The first four stanzas of this ballad-like hymn are understood to be in the voice of Christ, with the fifth reflecting the individual singer's response. Created for this traditional Scottish tune, the text was written to mark the conclusion of a youth volunteer's time of ministry.

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 5:1–9 (NRSVue)

Melanie Townsend

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed people. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The ill man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a Sabbath.

ANTHEM

“Unexpected Places”

Heather Sorenson

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers,
Chris Lindsay, violin & Adam Paul, cello
Donated by Gene Wilson in memory of Mary Anne

*“I know the plans I have in store,” You whisper in my ear,
Words of affirmation, things I need to hear.
But of all the things You planned for me, I never would have guessed
That bringing me right here is what You call Your best.*

*But here I am in this unexpected place; a place I did not ask for,
But one that’s filled with grace.
And here I am in this room I did not plan,
But Jesus, You are here, You are grace, You are with me
In this unexpected place.*

*And in this room, I’ll learn the truth that
Blessed are the poor; the scorned, those who mourn.
And in this room, You’ll teach me that this time is not in vain.
There’s purpose for the pain, and beauty still remains.*

*So may we find the fulness that comes from empty spaces.
Jesus waits for us in these unexpected places.
If you find yourself in an unexpected place, a place you did not ask for,
But, oh friend, there is grace.*

*If you find yourself in a room of emptiness,
Jesus is there, Jesus is grace, Jesus is with you in this unexpected place.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 16:9-15 (NRSVue)

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good

news to them. We therefore set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Changing One Heart at a Time"

Rev. Karen Wright

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

arr. Mark Hayes

"Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"

Linda Dover, organist

[Sending](#)

THE LIFE OF THE NATIONS

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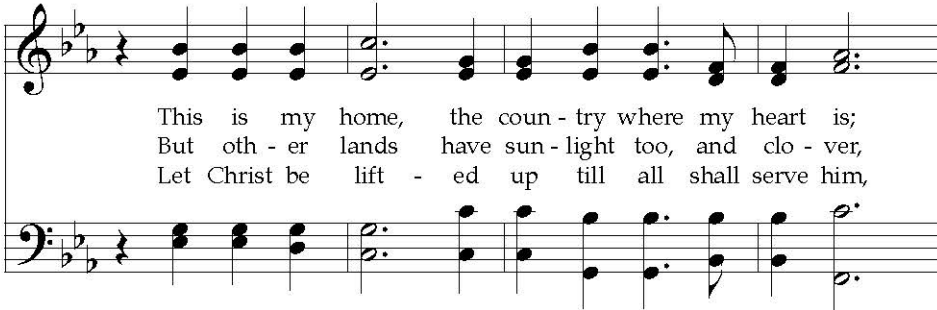
This Is My Song




1 This is my song, O God of all the na - tions,
 2 My coun-try's skies are blu - er than the o - cean,
 3 This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's king - doms:



a song of peace for lands a - far and mine.
 and sun - light beams on clo - ver - leaf and pine.
 thy king - dom come; on earth thy will be done.



This is my home, the coun - try where my heart is;
 But oth - er lands have sun - light too, and clo - ver,
 Let Christ be lift - ed up till all shall serve him,



here are my hopes, my dreams, my ho - ly shrine;
 and skies are ev - ery - where as blue as mine.
 and hearts u - nit - ed learn to live as one.

The first two stanzas of this hymn were written between the 20th century's two world wars and focus on the theme of international peace. The third stanza, by another author and added later, uses the language of the Lord's Prayer to voice a distinctly Christian perspective.

TEXT: Stanzas 1–2, Lloyd Stone; stanza 3, Georgia Harkness, alt.

MUSIC: Jean Sibelius, 1899; arr. *The Hymnal*, 1933, alt.

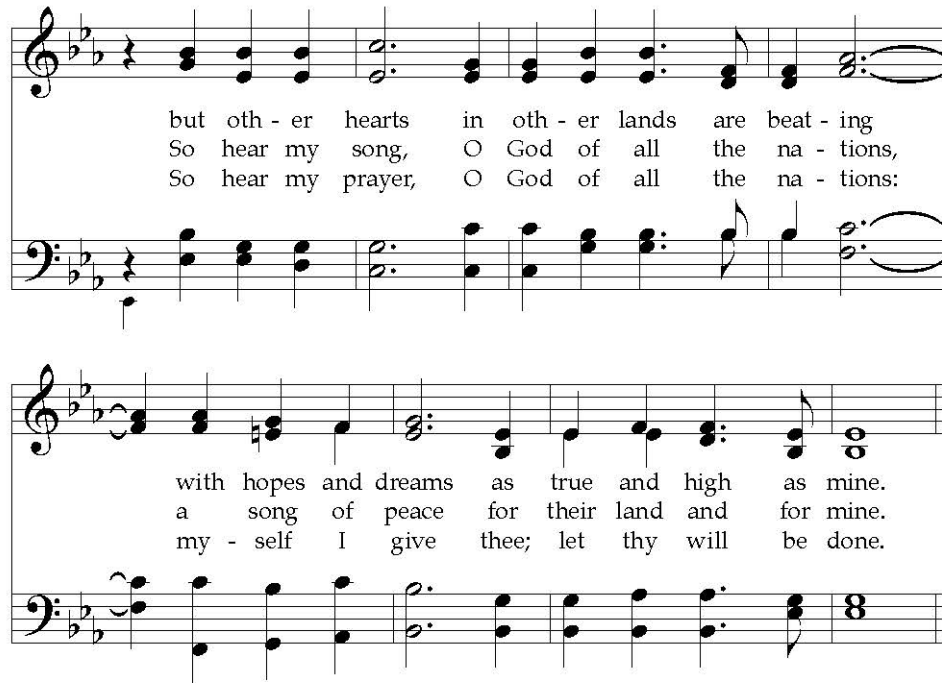
Text St. 1–2 © 1934, ren. 1962 The Lorenz Corp.; St. 3 © 1964 The Lorenz Corp.

Music Arr. © 1933, ren. 1961 The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

FINLANDIA

11.10.11.10.11.10

THE LIFE OF THE NATIONS



but oth - er hearts in oth - er lands are beat - ing
So hear my song, O God of all the na - tions,
So hear my prayer, O God of all the na - tions:

with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.
a song of peace for their land and for mine.
my - self I give thee; let thy will be done.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

“Doxology Postlude”
(All People on This Earth Do Dwell)
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Peter Pinder Stearns

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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