



GRACE COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship March 15, 2026 9:30am
Fourth Sunday of Lent

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

“Fantasy in C Major”
Linda Dover, organist

J.S. Bach
(1685–1750)

*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

ONE: We gather in a season of shadows and searching, seeking the light that breaks through our darkness.

ALL: The Lord anoints the unexpected, the overlooked, the unseen. God does not look on outward appearance; the Lord looks on the heart.

ONE: We come carrying what we have hidden — our fears, our failures, our blind spots. Christ stands before us: I am the light of the world. Follow me and walk in the light of life.

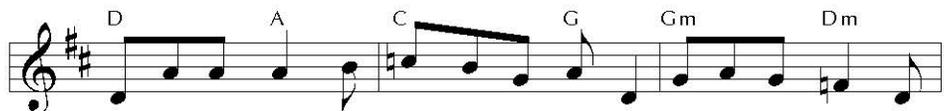
ALL: Open our eyes, O God. Let us see what we have refused to see — the grace around us, the neighbor we’ve ignored, the new thing you are doing. Come, Lord Jesus. Come, let us worship the God who sees us fully and loves us still.

GATHERING

Here in This Place

401

Gather Us In



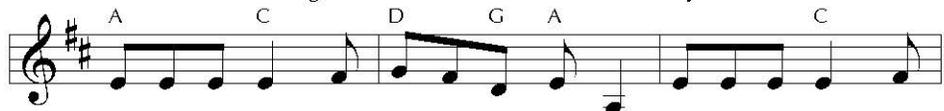
1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing; now is the dark-ness
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-tery. We are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter; here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,
 bread of new birth. Here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a-way: here in this place the new light is shin-ing;



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.
 now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en; gath-er us in, the
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion; give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er; gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en;
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly;
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

The “you/your” mentioned in every stanza is never identified, but this 1979 hymn is clearly a corporate prayer to God on behalf of the diverse congregation who have assembled for worship, longing to be transformed and used as God’s witnesses and for God’s purposes.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Emily Nelson Dixon

When the disciples looked at the man born blind, they asked, “Who sinned?” They searched for someone to blame and walked right past a child of God. Let us come before God honestly, trusting the mercy that has been promised to us.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Gracious God, we confess that we have been slow to see your hand at work. Like Samuel, we have judged outward appearances — dismissing those you have chosen, overlooking the humble and the small. We have stood like the Pharisees at the edge of a miracle, more troubled by inconvenience than moved by compassion, more invested in defending our systems than celebrating your grace. Forgive us, Lord. Restore our sight. Wash from us the mud of our self-deception, our prejudice, and our pride. Open our eyes to see those around us as you see them — beloved, chosen, worthy of grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, who gives sight to the blind and calls us into his marvelous light. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news of the Gospel: The God who sent Samuel to anoint the one the world passed by has sent his Son not to condemn the world, but to save it. The God who opened the eyes of one born blind has not turned away from us in our blindness. Christ has carried the full weight of our sin and shame to the cross. Therefore, in the name of Jesus Christ, I declare to you: You are forgiven. You are seen. You are loved.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

(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 227

“Jesus, Remember Me”

OPEN MY EYES

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Samuel 16:1–13 (NRSVue)

Cheryl Johnson

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

ANTHEM

“Create in Me”

arr. Terre Johnson

Chancel Choir

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.*

*Cast me not away from Thy presence;
Take not Thy holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
And uphold me with Thy free Spirit,
Create in me, O God.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 9:1–17; 26–41 (NRSVue)

Nelson Townsend

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as

I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

“What Do We Not Want to See?”

Rev. Karen Wright

HYMN 451

“Open My Eyes, That I May See”

OPEN MY EYES

Open My Eyes, That I May See 451



1 O - pen my eyes, that I may see glimps - es of truth thou hast for me.
2 O - pen my ears, that I may hear voic - es of truth thou send - est clear.
3 O - pen my mouth, and let me bear glad - ly the warm truth ev - ery - where.




Place in my hands the won - der - ful key that shall un - clasp and
And while the wave notes fall on my ear, ev - ery - thing false will
O - pen my heart, and let me pre - pare love with thy chil - dren




set me free. Si - lent - ly now I wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy
dis - ap - pear. Si - lent - ly now I wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy
thus to share. Si - lent - ly now I wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy




will to see. O - pen my eyes; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!
will to see. O - pen my ears; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!
will to see. O - pen my heart; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!



The first woman to publish a collection of her own anthems, this author/ composer has created in this hymn a sung prayer for illumination. It not only asks God to help us understand Scripture but also prays for the strength and courage to make God's love known to others.

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

“The Gift of Love”
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Alec Wyton
Traditional English Melody

Sending

*HYMN 726

“The Summons”

KELVINGROVE

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.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

“Toccatà”
Linda Dover, organist

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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