



# GRACE COVENANT

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship March 8, 2026 9:30am  
Third 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

“A Lenten Prelude”  
Linda Dover, organist

Giovanni Pergolesi  
arr. John Troutman

*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

ONE: We come to this place thirsty

**ALL: thirsty for meaning, for mercy, for God.**

ONE: In the wilderness, our ancestors cried out, and God provided water from  
the rock.

**ALL: The Lord is faithful, even when we doubt.**

ONE: Jesus sat at a well and offered living water to a stranger, an outsider, one  
who had known rejection.

**ALL: He offers that same water to us — water welling up to eternal life.**

ONE: Come, all who are weary and dry.

**ALL: We come to worship the One who satisfies our deepest thirst.**

ONE: Come, let us worship the Lord our God!

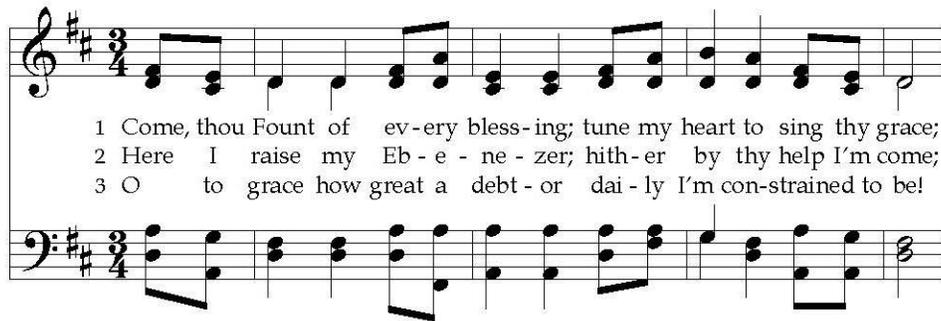
**ALL: We worship the God who meets us where we are.**

\*HYMN 475

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

NETTLETON

## Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing 475



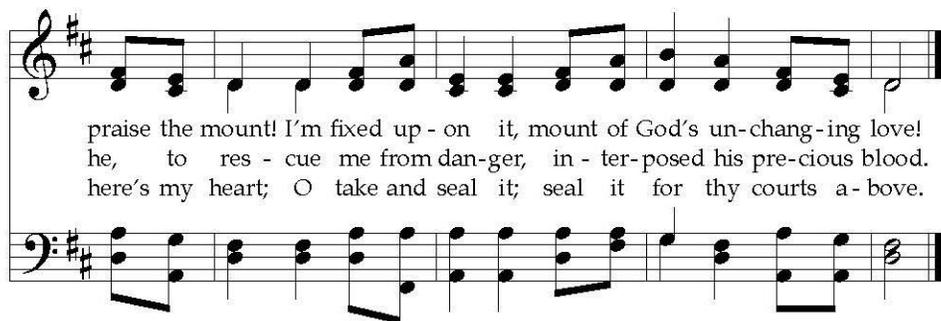
1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
 2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;  
 3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.  
 and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe-ly to ar - rive at home.  
 Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.



Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;  
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;  
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;



praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!  
 he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter-posed his pre-cious blood.  
 here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Written for Pentecost by a British Baptist pastor, this text is full of biblical terms like "Ebenezer" (1 Samuel 7:12), Hebrew for "a stone of help" set up to give thanks for God's assistance. The tune name honors hymnal compiler Asahel Nettleton, who probably did not compose it.

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Emily Nelson Dixon

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we are quick to grumble and slow to trust. Like the woman at the well, we have sought satisfaction in places and things that cannot truly quench our thirst. Jesus, who knows us fully and loves us still, invites us to honest prayer. Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Gracious God, we confess that we have tested you, doubted your presence, and demanded proof of your care. We have wandered from you, seeking to fill the emptiness inside us with things that cannot satisfy. We have drawn boundaries around your grace, deciding who is worthy and who is not — and we have sometimes placed ourselves outside the reach of your love, convinced we are beyond redemption. Forgive us, Lord. Forgive our thirst misdirected, our faith so easily shaken, our hearts so slow to recognize you standing before us. Pour into us the living water of your Spirit, that we may worship you in spirit and in truth. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: Jesus knew everything about the woman at the well — and he did not turn away. He knows everything about us — and still he comes to us, offering grace, offering life, offering himself. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**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”

## Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Exodus 17:1–7(NRSVue)

Joy Slayton

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

## ANTHEM

### "Even Here"

arr. Mark Miller

Chancel Choir

Allen York, soloist

*At the land's dark roots, in the farthest deep,  
Where the daylight dims, where no one can reach,  
Can the hand of God, can the voice of love,  
Find me even here?*

*I have turned away, I have set my fate,  
I have run too far, I repent too late,  
Can the hand of God, can the voice of love,  
Find me even here?*

*O, to climb again where the eagle flies,  
Where its nest is set in the sunlit skies!  
Can the hand of God, can the voice of love,  
Find me even here?*

*O forgive me, Lord, may I see your face,  
May I die in peace with a song of praise,  
May the hand of God, may the voice of love,  
Find me even here, find me even here.*

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 4:5–42(NRSVue)

Anne Stroud, Jeff DeVries

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said

to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words  
**Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

"Leave the Jar"

Rev. Karen Wright

HYMN 435

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

IN BABILONE

FORGIVENESS

# 435 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, like the wide-ness  
 2 For the love of God is broad-er than the mea-sures  
 of the sea. There's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice,  
 of the mind. And the heart of the E-ter-nal  
 which is more than lib-er-ty. There is no place where earth's  
 is most won-der-ful-ly kind. If our love were but more  
 sor-rows are more felt than up in heaven. There is no place  
 faith-ful, we would glad-ly trust God's Word, and our lives re-  
 where earth's fail-ings have such kind-ly judg-ment given.  
 flect thanks-giv-ing for the good-ness of our Lord.

These stanzas, excerpted from quite a few more, offer a reminder that the model for our dealings with others should be God's generosity rather than limited human tolerance. The text is effectively set to a broad and sturdy Dutch folk melody, probably from the 17th century.

## ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF DEACONS

### 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

#### “Deep River”

arr. H.T. Burleigh

Norman Garrett, baritone  
Linda Dover, accompanist

*Deep river,  
My home is over Jordan.  
Deep river, Lord,  
I want to cross over into campground.*

*Oh, don't you want to go,  
To the Gospel feast;  
That Promised Land,  
Where all is peace?*

### Sending

\*HYMN 754

“Help us Accept Each Other”

BARONITA

# Help Us Accept Each Other 754

1 Help us ac - cept each oth - er as Christ ac - cept-ed us;  
 2 Teach us, O Lord, your les - sons, as in our dai - ly life  
 3 Let your ac - cep - tance change us, so that we may be moved  
 4 Lord, for to - day's en - coun - ters with all who are in need,

teach us as sis - ter, broth - er, each per - son to em - brace.  
 we strug - gle to be hu - man and search for hope and faith.  
 in liv - ing sit - u - a - tions to do the truth in love;  
 who hun - ger for ac - cep - tance, for jus - tice and for bread,

Be pres - ent, Lord, a - mong us and bring us to be - lieve  
 Teach us to care for peo - ple, for all, not just for some,  
 to prac - tice your ac - cep - tance un - til we know by heart  
 we need new eyes for see - ing, new hands for hold - ing on:

we are our - selves ac - cept - ed, and meant to love and live.  
 to love them as we find them, or as they may be - come.  
 the ta - ble of for - give - ness, and laugh - ter's heal - ing art.  
 re - new us with your Spir - it; Lord, free us; make us one!

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

The scriptural basis of this text is Romans 15:7, recast as a prayer in the opening two lines of the first stanza. The many implications of living as people who have been accepted by Christ fill the remaining stanzas. This tune was composed for the first publication of this text.

TEXT: Fred Kaan, 1974  
 MUSIC: Doreen Potter, 1974  
 Text and Music © 1975 Hope Publishing Company

BARONITA  
 7.6.7.6.D

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

“Fantasia”  
 Linda Dover, organist

Johann Pachelbel  
 (1653–1706)

*\*Stand in body or spirit*

GOD'S PEACE TO YOU

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**GRACE COVENANT**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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