



GRACE COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship April 30, 2023 9:30am
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Gathering

PRELUDE "Prelude" by J.S. Bach
(No. 1 from the Well-Tempered Clavier)
Linda Dover, organist

WELCOME Rev. Mitch Trigger

CHORAL INTROIT "O Come, Let Us Sing" by Cindy Berry
Chancel Choir Psalm 95:1-2, adapted
*O come, let us sing with joy to the Lord, O come. O come.
Come bow down before him, kneel and adore him
and praise him with music and song.
For he is holy, shepherd, creator, and King.
For he is worthy. Forever God's praises I'll sing.
Sing unto God the Creator, he made the sea and the land.
Sing unto God the Almighty, we are the works of his hand.
O come, let us sing with joy to the Lord, O come. O come.
Come bow down before him, kneel and adore him
and praise him with music and song. Sing to the Lord!*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: With friends and strangers, with family and neighbors, we gather:

ALL: Come among us, Healing God, with that love which never ends.

ONE: With faith reaching out to touch, with hearts straining to trust, we hope:

**ALL: Come among us, Friend of the broken,
with your compassion which makes us whole.**

ONE: With word and wonder, with silence and song, we wait:

ALL: Come among us, Dryer of our tears, to lift us to our feet to follow you.

ADORATION

Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven 619

(Psalm 103)

1 Praise, my soul, the God of heav - en; glad of heart your
 2 Praise God for the grace and fa - vor shown our fore - bears
 3 Like a lov - ing par - ent car - ing, God knows well our
 4 An - gels, teach us ad - o - ra - tion; you be - hold God

car - ols raise; ran - somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en,
 in dis - tress; God is still the same for - ev - er,
 fee - ble frame, glad - ly all our bur - dens bear - ing,
 face to face. Sun and moon and all cre - a - tion,

who, like me, should sing God's praise? Al - le - lu - ia!
 slow to chide, and swift to bless. Al - le - lu - ia!
 still to count - less years the same. Al - le - lu - ia!
 dwell - ers all in time and space: Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Praise the Mak - er all your days!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing our Mak - er's faith - ful - ness!
 Al - le - lu - ia! All with - in me, praise God's name!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Praise with us the God of grace!

This adaptation of an older paraphrase of Psalm 103 (see no. 620) is informed by an awareness that much of the received language of religious traditions enshrines social values that obscure the goodness of God, which far transcends all our labels and categories and hierarchies.

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.)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

We confess to you, Gracious God, that too often we look on your law as a burden, not a gift; an inconvenience, not a blessing. Rather than seeing your love revealed, we feel our own guilt magnified. Instead of rejoicing in your good news, we focus on our own shortcomings. Turn us around, Redeemer, and do not let our fears have control over us. Enlighten us, so that our words and deeds may be acceptable to you. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you and all others!

*HYMN 607

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Nehemiah 5:1–8 (CEB)

Lara Schesser

Then there was a great protest of the people and their wives against their fellow Jews. Some said, "With our sons and daughters we are many, and we all need grain to eat and stay alive." Others said, "We have to mortgage our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine." Still others said, "We have had to borrow money against our fields and vineyards in order to pay the king's tax." "We are of the same flesh and blood as our kin, and our children are the same as theirs. Yet we are just about to force our sons and daughters into slavery, and some of our daughters are already slaves! There is nothing we can do since our fields and vineyards now belong to others." I was very angry when I heard their protest and these complaints. After thinking it over, I brought charges against the officials and the officers. I told them, "You are all taking interest from your own people!" I also called for a large assembly in order to deal with them. "To the best of our ability," I said to them, "we have

bought back our Jewish kin who had been sold to other nations. But now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!" At this they were silent, unable to offer a response.

INSTRUMENTAL REFLECTION

"Amazing Grace"

arr. James and Gay Jones

Bob Dover, clarinet

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Nehemiah 5:9–13 (CEB)

So I continued, "What you are doing isn't good! Why don't you walk in the fear of our God? This will prevent the taunts of the nations that are our enemies! I myself, along with my family and my servants, am lending them money and grain. But let's stop charging this interest! Give it back to them, right now. Return their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses. And give back the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you are charging them." They replied, "We'll return everything, and we won't charge anything else. We'll do what you've asked." So I called the priests and made them swear to do what they had promised. I also shook out the fold of my robe, saying, "So may God shake out everyone from their house and property if they don't keep this promise. So may they be shaken out and emptied!" The whole assembly said, "Amen," and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"History of the Church, Part 1"

Rev. Mitch Trigger

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

Linda Dover, organist

[Sending](#)

*HYMN 65

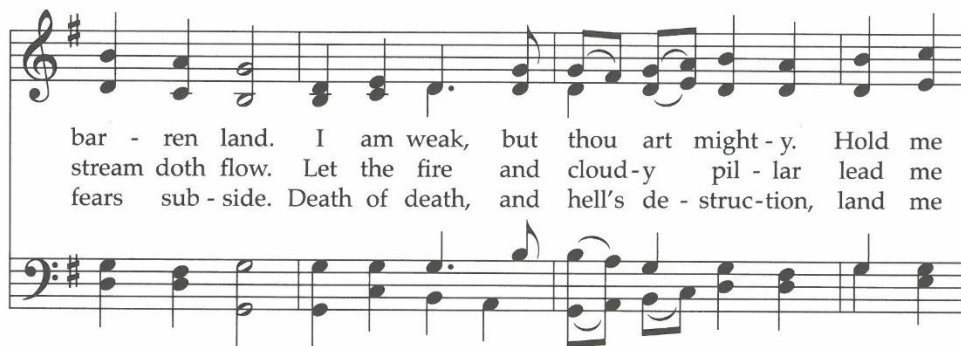
"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

CWM RHONDDA

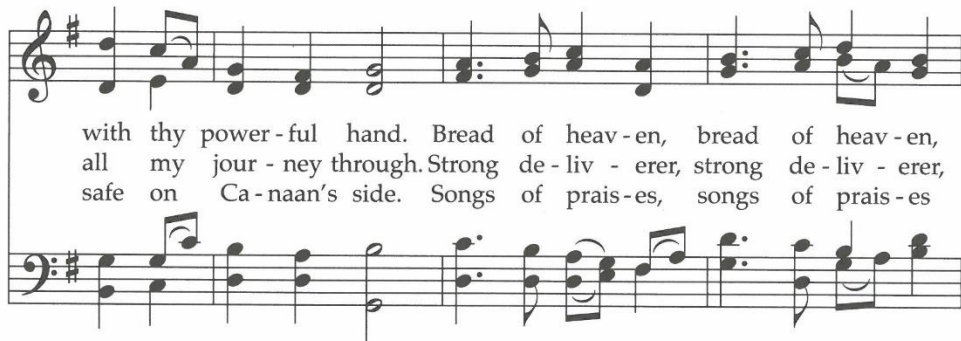
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah 65



1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es



feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

arr. Phillip Lane

Linda Dover, organist

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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