

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Welcome to Christ's Service of Worship for the Lord's Day

April 6, 2025
Fifth Sunday in Lent



WE WELCOME YOU TO WORSHIP! You are special, because God brought you here today. Together we celebrate and rejoice in God's blessings in our lives!

GATHER JOYFULLY

THE PRELUDE

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PRAYER AND PREPARATION

Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14

(Congregants are encouraged to read and reflect upon these passages as they prepare for worship.)

BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST

GATHERING HYMN 166 *Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days (Verse 1)*

**Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray,
Teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.**

THE CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive, from Psalm 126)

Minister: When the Lord restored the fortunes of His people,

**Congregants: our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.**

Minister: It was said among the nations of this world,

Congregants: "The Lord has done great things for them."

Minister: The Lord has indeed done great things for us,

Congregants: and we are filled with joy and celebration.

Minister: So come, let us worship our God.

*HYMN OF PRAISE 53 *O God, Who Gives Us Life*

*PRAYER OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION (unison)

**God of all creation, God of our redemption, God of our daily lives,
we lift to You now our morning prayers.**

We thank You for all the places in our world that sing for joy:

**buds breaking into bloom, warm sunlight and cool breezes,
rain that nourishes life, hope that endures through all things.**

Your goodness is beyond our knowing, and we praise You.

Yet we also bring to Your throne our confessions of sinfulness.

We reduce the purpose of our lives to what we can obtain and retain.

We would rather remain as we are instead of following You.

We talk a good game of faith, but inside we are not fully Yours.

Forgive us, we pray, and guide us to reorient our lives

**towards Your goodness, Your peace, Your joy.
Renew us, restore us, and remain with us, we pray.
Hear these our private and personal prayers.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

The Lord has done great things for us.
Through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ,
we are renewed, and we are made whole.
Children of God, know that you are forgiven.
Praise be to God!

***RESPONSE HYMN 576** *Lord, Have Mercy*

GROW SPIRITUALLY

THE FIRST READING OF GOD'S WORD Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.' ⁶ Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.' ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER / 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.

ANTHEM

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

arr. Charles McCartha

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, and to take him at his word;
Just to rest, upon his promise, and to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Are we weak and heavy laden, burdened by a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
In his arms he'll take and shield you, you will find a solace there.

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, and to take him at his word;
Just to rest, upon his promise, and to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

I'm so glad I learned to trust you, precious Jesus, Savior, friend;
and I know that you are with me, will be with me to the end.
O how sweet to trust in Jesus, just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking life and rest and joy and peace.

MESSAGE FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

THE SECOND READING OF GOD'S WORD John 3:11-17

¹¹ 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

THE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

**Holy God, just as You spoke at the dawn of creation,
continue to speak to us now as we prepare to encounter Your Word.
Be with us in our listening, in our understanding, and in our responding.**

Through Christ, the Living Word, we pray. Amen.

SERMON

THE SNAKE AND THE CROSS

Dr. Merritt

HYMN OF COMMITMENT 215 *What Wondrous Love*

* PRESENTATION AND DEDICATION OF GIFTS (unison)

**God of all gifts, we are grateful for the many ways
You continue to provide for us. As we offer a portion of Your gifts
this day, we ask that You receive and transform our offering,
so that these gifts become acts of hope and joy for all Your children.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *The Apostles' Creed* (unison)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

GO FAITHFULLY

*HYMN OF DEDICATION 634 *To God Be the Glory*

*CHARGE

*THE BENEDICTION

THE POSTLUDE

YOUR SERVICE

*Indicates the People Standing

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Circle 2 will meet at Shakers Restaurant on Monday, April 7th at 6:00 pm.

Circle 1 will meet Tuesday, April 8th, at 10:00 am at the Church.

NEXT SUNDAY IS PALM SUNDAY, which is the beginning of Holy Week in the Christian Church. On MAUNDY THURSDAY we will gather for worship around the Table at 7:00 p.m., to hear God's Word and to celebrate our Lord's Last Supper. Then we will come together on EASTER SUNDAY morning to worship our risen Lord in special music and proclamation. Please make your plans to be with us throughout the week!

Our Men's Fellowship Breakfast will meet Thursday, April 17th, at 8:30 a.m. New location being sought. It's a great way to start your day, come join us!

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| Today | 10:00 am | Seekers Class |
| | 11:00 am | Worship Service |
| Monday | 6:00 pm | Circle 2 at Shaker's Restaurant |
| Tuesday | 10:00 am | Circle 1 |
| Next Sunday | 10:00 am | Seekers Class |
| | 11:00 am | Worship Service |

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Russ Merritt, Pastor Melissa Hudson, Music Director
Susie Tallmage, Secretary
Ministers...Members of Northminster

If you or someone you know should be included in the list of those needing special prayer, please contact the Pastor. If prayers have been answered and we can celebrate God's goodness by removing your name from the list, let the Pastor know.

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| Frances Bowling | Pam Claterbaugh | Richard Claterbaugh |
| Marie Haines | Walt Haines | Jake Hayes |
| Mary Anne Huff | Dennis Kincer | Skylar Kirby |
| Patsy Linton | Ann Pace | Mac Pace |
| Buddy Smith | Sandy Smith | |

Friends and Family

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Nancy Assaid | Joaquin Bielawski |
| Shirley Basham | Donna Betters |
| Lucy Collier | Terry Foss |
| Dan Cone | Ann Arrington |
| George Smith | |

***THE SESSION ***

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson
Elders: Frankie Bielawski, Pam Claterbaugh, Richard Claterbaugh, Dana Esworthy, Matt Graybill, Joe Gwitt, Karen Gwitt, Maggie Hambrick, Gary Harris, Lynn Kirby, Chuck Lockard, Judy Moore, Dave Snider, Ron Staton, Greg Theimer

