

Church on the Hill

A Congregation of the
Reformed Church in America
167-07 35th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11358

February 18, 2024

10:30 AM



River of Grace

By Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 5: 1-11

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Rev. Sally Ann Castle — Interim Minister

Mr. Sean Cotty — Music Director

ORDER OF WORSHIP

First Sunday in Lent

BOLD – Congregation responds

* – Congregation Stands

Prelude

Reverie

Debussy

Welcome

Votum

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. **Amen.**

Sentences of Scripture

* **Call to Worship**

Come in. Feel your feet on the floor. Settle your worries. Take a deep breath. Dust the cobwebs from your ears. Relax the tension in your jaw, **for Christ is here. God never stops seeking us.** We have been found. **Let us find God in return.** Let us worship the God of deep waters. **Amen.**

* **Hymn No. 45**

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

* **Call to Confession**

In our scripture passage for today, we will read about Jesus calling Peter to be a disciple. In the story, Peter is in the presence of the Divine for quite some time before he realizes it. Jesus crawls into Peter's boat. He tells him to head toward deep water. Together, they let the nets down. And it is only when the boat threatens to sink, due to the extreme abundance of fish, that Peter turns to Jesus and truly sees who's in his boat. Sometimes we miss what's right in front of us. Fortunately, Christ keeps crawling into our boats anyhow. So join me in the prayer of confession, not out of fear, but out of a desire to finally see who's right in front of us. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, **you call us by name. You join us in the deep waters of life.** You invite us to drop our nets and follow you, and yet, more often than we'd like to admit, **we are like Peter.** Over and over again, **we stand slack jawed and surprised to find you in our midst. Forgive us for drowning out your voice with our own. Forgive us for assuming that we can tackle deep**

waters by ourselves. Forgive us for forgetting that you will never stop climbing into our boat. Turn our hearts, our minds, and our spirits toward you, for you are the Lord our God, and it is in your name that we pray. Amen.

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Words of Forgiveness

Friends, Peter didn't exactly make a good first impression when Jesus got into his boat. He questioned dropping his nets, as they hadn't caught any fish all night. He was oblivious to who Christ was for quite some time, and once he realized the Divinity standing in his boat, he quickly deemed himself unworthy. And even still, Jesus called Peter a disciple and a friend. Church family, hear and believe this good news: You can make a thousand bad impressions. You can make every mistake in the book, roll your eyes, and assume you know better. And even still, Christ will forgive you, claim you, and continue to seek your heart. That is the good news of the gospel. Rest, celebrate, and trust in that. **Amen.**

Anthem

If You Search With All Your Heart

Craig Courtney

*When you seek Me, you shall find Me
If you search with all your heart.*

*For I know the plans I have for you:
Plans of welfare, not of evil.*

*For I know the plans I have for you:
Plans of hope and a future.*

*I will bring you out of bondage
To the land I have prepared.*

*I will bring you out of bondage
I will bring you home to Me.*

*When you seek me, you shall find me
If you search with all your heart.*

Prayer of Illumination

Creator God, you hear everything. You hear the rush of the wind through the trees. You hear a baby's first cry. You hear the crickets chirping, our silent prayers, and laughter around tables. You hear it all! We don't need that same capacity, but we do need to hear your Word, O God, for we cannot live on bread alone. So today we pray: **give us the ability to truly listen. Give us the ability to listen with our hearts, and may the truths revealed in your scripture today change us. With hearts full of gratitude we pray, Amen.**

Psalter for Lent

Psalm 25: 1-10

Maureen Saepia-Chen

* **Gloria Patri**

***Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen, Amen.***

Gospel Reading

Luke 5: 1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to you, O Christ.

* **Hymn for Lent** (see insert)

You Sought Me

Sermon

“Jesus Sought Me”

Rev. Sally Ann Castle

Sung Response (verse 2)

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

***O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.***

* **Affirmation of Faith**

I believe in a God of abundance— a God who sees possibilities where I cannot, and who holds onto hope when I am at the end of my rope. I believe in a God who comforts— a God who says, “Do not be afraid;” a God who joins me in life’s deep waters. I believe in a God who invites— a God who says, “Follow me,” and, “You will be fishers of people.” I believe in a God who seeks after me relentlessly and persistently— a God of second chances and boundless mercy; a God who calls us by name. We believe. Help our unbelief. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Anthem

A Lenten Meditation

Brett Michaels

*Jesus refuge of the weary,
Blest Redeemer whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the work above.
Ohm how your eyes offended,
Gaze upon a sinner's fall!
Yet, upon the cross extended,
You endured the pain of all.
Dare we pass that Cross unheeding,
Breathing no repentant vow,
As we see you wounded, bleeding,
See your thorn encircled brow?
Since your sinless death has brought
Us life eternal, peace and rest,
Only what your grace has taught us*

*Calms the sinner's deep distress.
When I survey the wondrous Cross,
On which the prince of glory died.
My richest gain, I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Jesus, may our hearts be burning
With more fervent love for you!
May our eyes be ever yearning,
To behold Your cross anew.
'Till in glory, parted never
From the blessed Savior's side,
Graven in our hearts forever,
Dwell the cross, the crucified!*

Offering

* **Doxology** (verse 3)

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

***O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.***

Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

Prayers of the People

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 trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom and the power
And the glory, forever. Amen.**

Prayer Response

Lord Jesus, Think on Me

*Lord Jesus, think on me, nor let me go astray;
Through darkness and perplexity point thou the heavenly way.*

* **Hymn No. 574**

Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak

* **Sending**

Beloved wanderer, as you leave this place, may you carry your curious heart on your sleeve. May you look for God in every face. May you find the courage to get out of the boat, to run to the tomb, and to speak of your faith. And when the world falls apart, may you hear God's voice deep within, saying, "Take heart, it is I, be not afraid." You are called. You are blessed. In both your ups and your downs, you always belong to God. Go now in peace. Go trusting that good news. **Amen.**

* **Benediction**

Response (please be seated) If You Search With All Your Heart (ending)

*When you seek me, you shall find me
If you search with all your heart.*

Postlude

Trio Sonata No. 4 in E Minor (II. Andante)

J.S. Bach

Announcements

NEXT SUNDAY

February 25th, 2024 — Guest Preacher, Rev. Justin Meyers

Wandering Heart: "Rescue me from danger"

Focal Scriptures: Matthew 14: 22-31, Psalm 22: 23-31

Theme Connections: As a new disciple, perhaps

Peter wants to prove himself. Boldly, in the middle of a storm, Peter steps out of the boat to join Jesus who is walking on top of the waves. He, too, walks on water until the wind shakes his trust and he begins to sink. Many of us know what it feels like to be thrown off balance, to feel as if we're sinking. Maybe this looks like doubt, unexpected change, too-busy seasons of life, devastating grief, or distance from God. In this story, we empathize with the desperation Peter feels as he cries out, and we pray for God to save us when we sink.



SOUPER BOWL

Arden Beron first introduced Souper Bowl to Church on the Hill in 2011, and since then we have collected 1,962 canned food items and \$6,790 in cash, which has been contributed to various food banks and soup kitchens over the years. In 2024 we will be accepting donations the entire month of February. If you are attending a Super Bowl party with family or friends, please consider passing the hat for this worthy cause. Small contributions add up!

BIBLE STUDY

Lenten Bible Study- Tuesday, Feb 20th at 7 pm on Zoom

First week of Lent - Psalms 25: Paths

Pause, Spending Lent with the Psalms by Elizabeth F. Caldwell

The invitation to pause with the Psalms began on Ash Wednesday with Psalm 51. Each chapter helps readers to connect an image drawn from a psalm, such as paths, faces, blessing, tables, waiting, thanksgiving, listening, being alone or abandoned, and hands, with their own lives. At the close of each chapter, readers are invited to try a different prayer practice to help them continue to reflect on the theme and psalm each day. This intentional engagement—without feeling burdensome—opens just enough space and time for a creative spiritual practice to flourish, sustaining the life of faith during the Lenten season in ways that can make a difference in God's world. Check the Weekly Email for Zoom information!

QUEENS COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The Queens Community Children's Choir is starting its Spring semester in March.

The 8-week program runs from 3/7- 5/9 (no classes on 3/28 and 4/25). We will meet on Thursday afternoons from 5:00-6:00 pm in the Music Room. These

rehearsals will culminate in a grand end-of-semester performance on Saturday, May 11th at 2 pm in the Church on the Hill sanctuary. All children are welcome.

COFFEE HOUR

Please join us for coffee hour after the service, downstairs in Gessner Hall.

OFFERING

If you feel called to give, offering plates are located in the rear of the sanctuary, where you can leave your offering upon entry or exit of the sanctuary.

BARGAIN BOUTIQUE

The Bargain Boutique is open on Saturdays from 10 am- 1 pm. Donations are accepted on Saturdays only. *We are unable to accept: Electronics, TVs, Furniture, Textbooks, and Large Toys/Stuffed Animals* Find us on Instagram @cothbargainboutique for a fun look inside the Boutique and to find out about special sales and hidden gems!

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST!

Be sure to sign up for our email list to keep up with the latest Church on the Hill happenings through the weekly email and the Beacon. A sign-up form can be found on **churchonthehill.org**



Prayer Requests

If you would like to add a loved one to the prayer list, or if your loved one no longer needs to be on the prayer list, please contact the church office at office@churchonthehill.org

Karin Bennitt

The Bermudez Family

Diane Blagburn

Hank Boechmann

Katie and Clayton Buckley

The Cappellano Family

Lucas Carnesechi

Richard D.

Thomas Degnen

Gabriel DeMelo

Lucas Ditta

Joanne Dunckhahn

Alison Friedman

Michael Gittens

Adam Gonzalez

The Greer Family

Rudy Jakob

Mary Kansfield

The Family of Rev. Norm Kansfield

Mike Kenny

Susan Laurita

Donna Lemay

The Liao/ Lin Family

Gessa Markantonis

Rose McLain

Christian Mender

Kathy Mender-Murphy

Paul Mobius

Mary Moder

Lillian Mukai

Marti and Tom Pearce

The Family of Rev. Bob Perless

Iris and Ralph Prager

Nina Proschel

Patrick Sullivan

Ed Surujballi

Virginia Young



The sanctuary is looped for the hard of hearing. In order to connect to the system, please sit in the north set of pews (on your right when you enter the sanctuary) and set your hearing device to the "T" setting.



Nancy Gessner, Victor Han, **Vice Presidents**
Nancy Gessner, **Clerk**

Consistory & Staff

Elders

- Linda Diez
- Nancy Gessner (VP)
- Victor Han (VP)
- Rhoda Jabbour
- Sarah White

Deacons

- Ginny Chan
- Emerson Chen
- Jerry Lutz
- Adriene Toy

Sean Cotty, Music Director: sean.cotty@churchonthehill.org
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THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
Wandering Heart: "Jesus sought me"

All This Time

I put my headphones in.
I walk quickly.
I look toward the ground.
I create one million barriers
of independence,
but still God seeks after me.
God leans a rainbow over the sky.
God sends sun after the rain.
God blankets the earth with wildflowers.
God allows music to carry
and laughter to rise,
all so that I might notice.
And when I do notice,
the unfurling that begins in my soul
is slow and holy and burning.
I am not alone.
God has been chasing after me
all this time.

A poem by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.



THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "Jesus sought me" | LUKE 5:1-11

You Sought Me

ERHALT UNS, HERR 8.8.8.8

Words by Anna Strickland, 2023

Music by Joseph Klug, 1543

My bones and head were bent down low When you
 A chance en - coun - ter by the lake I thought
 I tried to tell you, "Leave me be - I'm not
 When I be - gin to doubt my worth Re - mind

ap - proached me on your own You sought me out and
 this must be some mis - take That some - one wrapped in
 sure what you see in me." And yet you chose my
 me I was formed from earth The ve - ry good cre -

called my name My life would nev - er be the same
 ho - li - ness Would will - ing - ly em - brace this mess
 net - to fill With all my faults you call me still
 a - tion of My God who seeks me out in love

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THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart: "Jesus sought me" | LUKE 5:1-11

You Sought Me

ERHALT UNS, HERR ("The Glory of These Forty Days")

My bones and head were bent down low
When you approached me on your own
You sought me out and called my name
My life would never be the same

A chance encounter by the lake
I thought this must be some mistake
That someone wrapped in holiness
Would willingly embrace this mess

I tried to tell you, "Leave me be—
I'm not sure what you see in me."
And yet you chose my net to fill
With all my faults you call me still

When I begin to doubt my worth
Remind me I was formed from earth
The very good creation of
My God who seeks me out in love