

Church on the Hill

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

February 11, 2024

10:30 AM



Photo Credit: Emerson Chen Photography

Rev. Sally Ann Castle — Interim Minister

Mr. Sean Cotty — Music Director

ORDER OF WORSHIP

BOLD – Congregation responds

* – Congregation Stands

Prelude Improvisation on “Lasst uns erfreuen” Sean Cotty

Welcome

Votum

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

Sentences of Scripture

* **Call to Worship**

Life can seem shrouded in mystery. **O Lord, lift the veil of our misunderstanding that we may see your Light.** We are eager to serve. **O Lord, calm our spirits and patiently prepare us for service.** Look to the Lord for mercy and comfort. **We look to the Lord for healing and hope. Amen.**

Prayer of Invocation

The darkness of winter has been our companion, Lord. Now the days are lengthening. Bring your light to us, that we might see your glory and may work for you, offering hope and peace to this world. We ask this, in Jesus' Name. **Amen.**

* **Hymn No. 356 (verses 1-2, 4-5)** All Creatures of Our God and King

Prayer of Confession

Patient Lord, you know how accustomed we are to “magic” tricks. Our spirits and our senses get fooled easily. We would be just like the disciples, at first not believing what we were seeing and then wanting to make a monument to the event. Thank you for being so patient with us. Forgive us when we get so wrapped up in the moment that we don't take time enough to understand its significance. Help us pause, reflect, think, and thank you for the blessings of unexpected revelations. Give us wisdom and strength to be your disciples, proclaiming your transforming love to all people. Amen.

Words of Assurance

To you the light of love and ministry has been revealed. Rejoice! You have been blessed by God to be witnesses; to proclaim God's love to all. Be at peace! **Amen.**

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Anthem

With a Voice of Singing

Martin Shaw

With a voice of singing declare ye this,

And let it be heard, Alleluia.

Utter it even unto the ends of the Earth.

The Lord hath delivered his people, Alleluia.

O be joyful in God, all ye lands,

O sing praises to the honor of his name,

Make his praise to be glorious.

With a voice of singing declare ye this,

And let it be heard, Alleluia.

Psalm 50: 1-6

The mighty one, God the Lord, **speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.** Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, **God shines forth.** Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, **and a mighty tempest all around him.** He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people: "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!" **The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge.**

* 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.

Prayer of Illumination

Open our eyes that we may see. Open our ears that we may hear. Open our hearts that we might accept your word for our lives. **Amen.**

Scripture Readings

Sue and Jim Nicholas

Old Testament Reading **2 Kings 2: 1-12**

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent." Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent." Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Mark 9: 2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to you O Christ.

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

* **Hymn No. 180**

Christ Upon the Mountain Peak

Sermon

"Boxing Alleluias"

Rev. Sally Ann Castle

When Jesus came down from the mount of Transfiguration, he began to tell his disciples that he would be betrayed and crucified.

Sometimes we lose our Alleluia.

Jesus did not enter into glory before he stretched out his arms on the hardwood of the cross.

Sometimes we lose our Alleluia.

Jesus told his disciples, "If you want to become my followers, deny yourselves and take up your cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 adapted)

Sometimes we must let go of our Alleluia.

At Easter, we will again celebrate the Resurrection and sing "Christ is risen."

In God's time, we will find our Alleluia!

For the days of Lent, we discontinue singing and saying, "Alleluia."

Sometimes we let go of our Alleluia.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, it is our joy to sing and say "Alleluia" as response to your conquering sin and death. Now, during the days of Lent we say farewell to "Alleluia" so that we may take it up anew on Easter. Amen. (The "Alleluia" is boxed and put away)

* **Confession of Faith**

The Apostles' Creed (*RCA contemporary version*)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
And born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic[†] Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

[†] *The word "catholic" means "universal,"
referring to all followers of Christ worldwide.*

Liturgy for Burning Palm

We gather here to turn these palms from our celebration of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem into ashes that we may be reminded of our mortality and our need of God. (The palms are lit and burned.)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Living God, in their life these palms drew life from the earth and gave it back to our air and the animals they hosted and sheltered; in the worship of our community, they helped us offer festive joy: Grant now, O God, that these palms, reduced to ashes, may be for us a sign of your power to purify our hearts, that we may recognize death at work in us, and replant our lives in the sure and humble soil of your truth and grace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

*Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake,
Lay not our sins to our charge,
But forgive that is past
And give us grace to amend our sinful lives;
To decline from sin and incline to virtue,
That we may walk in a perfect heart
Before thee now and evermore.*

Offering

* Doxology

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

Litany for Commissioning of the Transition Team

Leader: Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Today we recognize the ministry of Dorien Day, Doris Krsnak, Jerry Lutz, Larry Molino, and Sarah White; and commission each of them to the Transition Team of the Church on the Hill in the service of Jesus Christ.

Leader (to the Transition team): You have been called to a special ministry in this congregation. Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, perform it with diligence?

Transition team members: I will.

Leader: Will you faithfully and reverently execute the duties of your ministry to the honor of God, and the benefit of the members of this congregation?

Transition team members: I will.

Leader (to the congregation): Dear friends, rejoice that God provides laborers for the vineyards. Will you do all you can to assist and encourage them in the responsibilities to which they have been called, giving them your cooperation, your counsel, and your prayers? **Congregation: We will.**

Leader: Dorien, Doris, Jerry, Larry, and Sarah, in the name of this congregation I commission you to this work and pledge to you our

prayers, encouragement, and support. May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you that in this and in all things you may do God's will in the service of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray: **Almighty God, look with favor upon these persons who today affirm their commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give each of them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

* **Hymn No.635**

He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought

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 Hear Our Prayer, O Heavenly Father

*Hear our prayer, O heavenly Father,
For the dear Redeemer's sake. Amen.*

* **Benediction**

Response (please be seated) The Lord Bless You and Keep You

*The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord lift his countenance upon you,
And give you peace.
The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you.
Amen.*

Postlude

Fugue in G Major BWV 541

J.S. Bach

Announcements

LENT IN A BAG

Pick up your Lent in a Bag today! This bag contains small items and coloring pages to be used as symbols to focus individual or family meditations and conversations during the Season of Lent. Use whatever version of the scripture stories you like, whether from a traditional Bible translation, a children's Bible, or other translation. Also included is a Devotional Booklet and a set of daily devotional cards which may be used in any order. Please share one bag in your household. May you have a Holy Lent!

TRANSITION TEAM

Please join the Transition Team in Gessner Hall immediately after worship to meet the Team.

Transition Team Purpose:

The purpose of the Transition Team is to lead the Congregation through the Interim Period by...

- Moderating discussion pertaining to the developmental tasks of the interim period;
- Encouraging the congregation to maintain the positive momentum in the ministry of the church;
- Supporting and promoting the ongoing ministries/programs;
- Assisting the congregation in dealing with any emerging issues;

Specific Tasks of the Transition Team

- Function as the Eyes and Ears of the Congregation
- Process dates and guide the timeline for the Transition Process
- Facilitate opportunities for Congregational members to Meet, Learn, and Discuss the Transition process
- Gather information concerning the Congregation that will be pertinent to the Interim Process, interpret the information, and communicate the information to the Congregation
- Assist the Interim Pastor in completing the Transition Process.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Our Ash Wednesday Service will be on February 14th at 7 pm on Zoom only. Ash Wednesday is the day that we begin the season of Lent - a time where we take a reflective look at the life and suffering of Christ on our behalf. It is a time when we reflect on what we need to change in our lives in order to live responsibly and lovingly as a member of the created world. Ashes will be distributed as temporary tattoos in the Lent Bags, or you may use soil from your garden mixed with a bit of water.

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

Bible Study books are available for pickup at Church following the service for \$10— See Nancy Gessner. Bible Study begins on Tuesday, Feb. 13th at 7 pm via Zoom. 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

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

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