

# Church on the Hill

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

**April 28, 2024**  
**10:30 AM**



Photo Credit: Emerson Chen Photography

**Rev. Sally Ann Castle — Interim Minister**  
**Mr. Sean Cotty — Music Director**

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

**BOLD** – Congregation responds

\* – Congregation Stands

**Prelude**      Organ Sonata No. 4 (II. Andante Religioso)      Felix Mendelssohn

**Welcome**

**Votum**

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

**Sentences of Scripture**

**Call to Worship**

God of Love, **let us gather together in your name to spend time in your presence.** May we abide with you in your love, **that we may share and live your love with one another.** The road we have traveled to get here today is different for each one of us, **but we meet together in this place to praise you.** Let us be open to your transforming love, **that we may become your disciples and follow you on your way. Amen.**

**Prayer of Invocation**

**Gardening God, cultivate in us a spirit of openness in this time of worship. Help us to till the soil of our hearts, to dig deep into your scriptures, to nourish our bodies and spirits with song and praise. Help us to love one another more fully, and to bear spiritual fruit, for you are the vine, and we are the branches, and in you will live, grow, and have the fullness of life. Amen.**

\* **Hymn No. 558**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

**Prayer of Confession**

**Awesome God, we confess that we have allowed fear to rule our lives. We have allowed fear to keep us from loving our neighbors who are different than us. We have allowed fear to close our doors, our hearts, and our minds. But you are Perfect Love, and you cast out all fear. Help us to let go of what holds us back and to be open to your Spirit, to love freely, and to**

love deeply. We know that our hearts may be broken, but help us anyway to love those most in need, the most vulnerable, and guide us into ways of love and care that help heal our brokenness. In the name of Christ, the one who laid down his life for us because he loved us so much, we pray all things. Amen.

## Kyrie

*Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

*Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.*

*Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

## Words of Assurance

We come together with grateful hearts, remembering all that Christ has done for us, and knowing we can never repay that kind of love, except in how we love one another. So share God's love. Share God's peace. Share God's joy, and know that love, peace, and joy in your heart. You are forgiven, loved, and restored. **Amen.**

**Aria** Seele, deine Spezereien (from the "Easter Oratorio") J.S. Bach  
Soloists - Brianna Barnhart and Simon Walsh

(Sung in German)

*O soul, your spices*

*Need no longer be myrrh.*

*For only*

*Crowning with the laurel wreath*

*Will quiet your anxious longing.*

## Responsive Psalter Reading

Psalm 22: 25-31

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; **my vows I will pay before those who fear him.** The poor shall eat and be satisfied; **those who seek him shall praise the Lord.** May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; **and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.** For dominion belongs to the Lord, **and he rules over the nations.** To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; **before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.** Posterity will serve him; **future generations will be told about the Lord,** and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, **saying that he has done it.**

\* **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**

**Epistle Reading**

1 John 4: 7-21 (p. 991)

Dorien Day

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

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

**Gospel Reading**

John 15: 1-8 (p. 878)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch

cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

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

## **Response to the Word**

**Abide with us and within us, O Holy One. Transform us into branches of your love, bearing fruit that feeds and nourishes a world hungry for kindness and compassion. Strengthen us that we may grow into your likeness with courage and conviction. Live in us, that we may live in you, and live as your abiding presence in the world. In faith and trust, we pray. Amen.**

\* **Hymn No. 531**

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

**Sermon**

“Radical Love”

Rev. Sally Ann Castle

\* **Affirmation of Faith**

Belhar Confession

**We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. We believe in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family. We believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people, and that in a world full of injustice and enmity; we believe that God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged. To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.**

**Solo**

Fantasia for Solo Flute in D-Minor

Telemann

Soloist - Simon Walsh

**Offering**

\* **Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,*

*Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

## Prayers of Intercession

*Lord's Prayer* (as rewritten by Rev. Ursula Glienecke)

**Loving God, our Companion in heaven  
Hallowed be Your name  
Your community come,  
Your heart's desire for us  
Be realized on Earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today all that we need for a life in fullness.  
Help us to stop doing harm  
And heal us from harm done to us.  
Guide and shield us in difficult times  
And deliver us from evil.  
For the community, the vision and the joy are Yours  
Now and forever. Amen.**

\* **Hymn No. 556**

Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me

\* **Sending Forth**

*"We love because God first loved us."*

As we leave wherever we have gathered, virtually or physically, may we understand that different does not mean bad. **May we demonstrate the love that God has for us and in us by sharing that with those we come into contact with in the coming days and weeks.** Offer kindness and conversation in place of silence, find a way to spread love instead of fear and welcome instead of rejection. **May love be something we do instead of say.** Knowing that someone else's life experience may be utterly alien to ours, **may we recognize that love leads others and ourselves to get closer to God from whom all love and blessings flow. Amen.**

\* **Benediction**

**Postlude**

Organ Sonata No. 4 (IV. Allegro Maestoso)

Felix Mendelssohn

# Announcements

## MUSIC NOTE

Thank you to Brianna Barnhart and Simon Walsh for the beautiful music this morning!

## CONCERT

Join us at 2:00 pm on Saturday, May 11th for the Queens Community Children's Choir's Spring Concert! The concert will take place in the COTH sanctuary, and there will be a reception to follow in Gessner Hall. The children will be joined by guest artists Abram Korsunsky and friends. The musical pairing will be Disney songs and Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto. What do these two have in common? Come find out!

## BIBLE STUDY

New Bible Study will begin on **Tuesday, April 30th at 7 pm on Zoom**. Check the Weekly Email for Zoom information. *Context: Putting Scripture in Its Place* by Josh Scott. **Exploring the Chapter behind the Verse**. *Context* looks at verses we know by heart but may not know the people, places, and times that give them meaning. Josh Scott delves into these well-known Scripture verses, exploring their true meanings by examining them in their original biblical context. Through this process, he unveils fresh and enlightening interpretations that are often missed when these Scriptures are taken out of context.

## CHILDREN AT WORSHIP

Children at Worship is ongoing! The class is for children ages 6-13. During the service, the children will process out and be led to Room 2-E.

## 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](mailto:office@churchonthehill.org)*

Karin Bennitt

The Bermudez Family

Diane Blagburn

Katie and Clayton Buckley

The Cappellano Family

Richard D.

Thomas Degnen

Linda Diez

Lucas Ditta

Joanne Dunckhahn

Alison Friedman

Michael Gittens

Adam Gonzalez

The Greer Family

Bob Iovale

Rudy Jakob

Mike Kenny

Gessa Markantonis

Donna McLernon

Mary Moder

Lillian Mukai

Iris and Ralph Prager

Trevor Sealy

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.