

September 29, 2024 + 10:30 A.M.

Twentieth Sunday of Pentecost

We Join in Worship

*If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our
Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.*

PRELUDE

When Morning Gilds the Skies

Dale Wood

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (Sung)

Leader: Come, let us worship God!

ALL: Come, let us worship God!

Leader: Come, let us worship God!

ALL: Come, let us worship God!

Leader: Welcome, everyone!

ALL: Welcome, everyone!

Leader: To the love of God!

ALL: To the love of God!

Leader: Life-giving water!

ALL: Life-giving water!

Leader: Quench our thirst and cleanse us!

ALL: Quench our thirst and cleanse us!

Leader: Welcome, everyone!

ALL: Welcome, everyone!

Leader: To the love of God!

ALL: To the love of God!

***OPENING HYMN: "We Know That Christ Is Raised" (495)**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: James writes, "The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of life, and is itself set on fire by hell." Together let us confess how we have caused harm with our tongues.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God who gives us living water, we use our tongues to confess unto you, trusting that you can redeem even this part of us. We confess that we speak foolish words much more frequently than wise ones. With the same mouth we use to bless you, we curse those made in your image. We cause harm with insults, belittlements, and discouragements. We make people feel unworthy, unwanted, and unwelcome. Forgive us for allowing our tongues to turn us into fools. Fill us with your Wisdom so that we may use our tongues as tools for healing. In the name of Jesus Christ, your beloved, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE:

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! The Wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits. Jesus is full of that Wisdom!

ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

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.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (from *Confession of Belhar*)

We believe that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right; that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O God, we know that rivers of living water flow from your heart. Let that water, your Spirit, flow into us and give us life as we hear your word this day. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON	<i>Proverbs 1:20-33</i>
EPISTLE LESSON	<i>James 3:1-18</i>
GOSPEL LESSON	<i>Matthew 10:40-42</i>
SERMON	Wisdom in the Water

CHORAL MEDITATION *On Eagle's Wings*
In loving memory of Jay Smith

Michael Joncas/Mark Hayes

We Respond in Faith

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Wisdom is crying out to us, calling us to listen to her counsel. Let us give with Wisdom in our hearts, following the teachings and the way of generosity set forth by Jesus. If you did not do so as you entered, please place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Let us reflect on stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY *He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought!*

Dale Wood

* 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.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

God who gives us living water, we dedicate this offering to you and to the work of your Kingdom. Fill us with Wisdom as we seek to use these gifts to serve those who are made in your image. In the name of Jesus Christ, your beloved, we pray. Amen.

We Go into the World

* **CLOSING HYMN:** "God of Grace and God of Glory" (Glory to God 307)

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *We've a Story to Tell to the Nations*

James Denton

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

Life of the Church

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 9/29:	Adult Study – 9:00 AM Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM Fellowship Hosts: Worship & Music
MONDAY 9/30:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 10/1:	Private Flute Lessons – 2-8 PM (FH) Deacons – 6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 10/2:	Private Flute Lessons – 2-8 PM (FH) "Bring Your Own Bible" Bible Study 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 10/3:	Choir – 7:00 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **JOIN US FOR THE FALL HAYRIDE & BONFIRE!** Our annual fall Hayride and Bonfire will be on Sunday, Oct. 6, from 3-5 pm at Oak Ridge Prairie County Park in Griffith. All are invited and friends are welcome! Wagon leaves promptly at 3 pm, so plan to arrive a little early. After the hayride, we'll gather around the bonfire and roast hotdogs and marshmallows for s'mores! All food will be provided; bring a chair if have one. Sign-up sheets are located in the narthex and fellowship hall, or you can email Heather Casiano (hcasiano@fpchighland.org) and let us know how many are coming. If there are any food allergies or special needs, please indicate that when you sign up as well.
- **WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY IS NEXT WEEK, OCTOBER 6TH!** Be sure to join us for this important observance in the life of the Church!
- **"BYOB" (Bring Your Own Bible)** discussion group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm online using Zoom. Each week this group takes a look at the Scriptures and sermon from the previous Sunday's worship service, asking questions, bringing up different perspectives, and hopefully encountering the Holy Spirit in a fresh way. The link for the Zoom meetings is emailed out weekly. You can connect to Zoom with a smart phone, tablet or computer. If you're not familiar with how to use Zoom, please contact Pastor Tyler or Heather Casiano for assistance.
- **THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD** Bible study group meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am at the church. We're reading through *A is for Alabaster* by Anna Carter Florence. The book takes us through the alphabet of both the Old and New Testaments, focusing on one Scripture passage per letter. Join us for great conversation and perhaps a new way of reflecting on God's Word. Contact John Toren or Heather Casiano with any questions.
- **CHOIR PRACTICE THURSDAYS AT 7:00 PM** Join us if you love to sing! We welcome all voice ranges and skill ranges!
- **BUILDING USE FORMS** Just a quick reminder that for the safety and security of everyone using our building, we need to have building use request forms filled out by both members and non-members whenever they use any area of the building outside of regular church activity functions.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **KARING KITCHEN** The Karing Kitchen is in need of small appliances, as these are in great demand for newly housed people. Please consider donating microwaves, toasters, toaster ovens, panini grills, etc. Gently used items are fine! Check with Cheryl Steen or Carolyn Ham if you would like to donate or have questions.
- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.
- **BIN OF HUGS** Bring in clean, gently used stuffed animals for distribution to migrant families with young children who need the joy of loving welcome!
- **GOT SNEAKERS?** We are still participating in the Got Sneakers Fundraiser where there is nothing to buy or sell; all we need is your support and your gently worn, used, or new sneakers! Blue bins are located in the narthex, and inside and outside DOOR D by the office. Every pair counts!

Prayer List

Anthony
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
Daniel Litwicki
David Markley
Pat and David Kingen
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
Jeanne Nestor
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Yvonne Suroviak
Wendy
Georgette Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Steve & Melinda
Jan Oprea
Ric Jaeggi
Florance Cody
Josephine Kim
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
Nick
Laura Buono Domsic
The Windstrups
Ruth Dekker
Rick Parker
Gary Everhart
Bonnie Kern
Collin & Kathy Stein
Tim
Barbara Morton
Caroline Studer
Holly Letnich
Jaden Mendez

Frank Falzone
Doug & Sue Matthews
Robert Urich
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tammy
Tom
Jana Tolley
Larry & Bonnie Perryman
Virginia Marshall
Delta Rose
Winnie Owen
Charity Lynn
David Hamblin
Judy
Breeanne
Mom Bechtler
Gloria
John Miramontes
Victor
Crystal and David Cervantes
Cheryl
Marian Clayton
Lou Ann Sulowski
Ella P
Donald Churilla
Edie Delgano
Melissa
Katie
Rita Stronczek
Flora Reichanadter
Loved ones of Gale Osterby

Proverbs 1:20-33

- ²⁰ Wisdom cries out in the street;
in the squares she raises her voice.
- ²¹ At the busiest corner she cries out;
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:
- ²² “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?”
- ²³ Give heed to my reproof;
I will pour out my thoughts to you;
I will make my words known to you.
- ²⁴ Because I have called and you refused,
have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,
- ²⁵ and because you have ignored all my counsel
and would have none of my reproof,
- ²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when panic strikes you,
- ²⁷ when panic strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.
- ²⁸ Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
they will seek me diligently but will not find me.
- ²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the Lord,
- ³⁰ would have none of my counsel
and despised all my reproof,
- ³¹ therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way
and be sated with their own devices.
- ³² For waywardness kills the simple,
and the complacency of fools destroys them;
- ³³ but those who listen to me will be secure
and will live at ease without dread of disaster.”

James 3:1-18

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will face stricter judgment. **2** For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is mature, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. **3** If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. **4** Or look at ships: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. **5** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a such a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of life, and is itself set on fire by hell. **7** For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, **8** but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth comes a blessing and a curse. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. **11** Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? **12** Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

13 Who is wise and knowledgeable among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be arrogant and lie about the truth. **15** This is not wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. **16** For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. **17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. **18** And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Matthew 10:40-42

40 “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. **41** Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous, **42** and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

Wisdom in the Water

Proverbs 1:20-33; James 3:1-18; Matthew 10:40-42

What a voyage we have been on throughout the month of September, dear ones! Upon our voyaging vessel the book of *James*, we have made our way through the living waters of wadis, springs, rivers, and saliva. We have witnessed those living waters flowing through the lives of Hagar the Egyptian, Ishmael her son, Isaac his brother, Abraham their father, Elijah the Tishbite, the widow of Zarephath, John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, the Syrophoenician woman, a man who had a hearing impairment and a speech impediment, and a man who had a vision impairment. The water has quenched, cleansed, healed, and saved. As we have sailed upon it, we have learned about endurance, true religion, faith, and works. And all of that, at last, brings us to our destination: Wisdom. Our scriptures are overflowing with water, and our scriptures exist for the purpose of leading us to Wisdom. And so, of course, there is Wisdom in the water!

We have talked before about how Wisdom is an aspect of the divine, and of course, she is feminine. She is named Hochma in Hebrew and Sophia in Greek. She cries out to us in the street and town square, saying, "I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you." Today she speaks to us through the words of James, in the third chapter of his epistle. And my, what powerful words they are! He starts with the wise reminder that teaching is a vocation that requires specific, remarkable giftedness. I know that several of you have embodied that giftedness and are not recognized nearly enough. So, to those of you who are or have been teachers, thank you! He then gives us a wise lesson on the power of our tongues, using some of the most vivid imagery to be found anywhere in the scriptures. It is the bit in the mouths of horses that controls their movements. It is the small flame that can set the whole forest ablaze. And, intersecting with our theme of water, it is the small rudder that has the power to steer even the largest of ships through the strongest of winds. Oh yes, the tongue is powerful indeed!

He is using the tongue as a metonymic stand in for our speech, of course, and in doing so makes one of those profoundly significant statements that I have somehow never paid attention to before: "With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, made in the likeness of God." Aha! Perhaps the beginning of Wisdom is to remember that all of us humans bear the image and likeness of God! So how dare we be arrogant and hypocritical to think that we can bless God and then use the same mouth to curse those who bear God's image! "Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh."

Our blessing is no longer a blessing if we are cursing God's children—if we are insulting, belittling, and discouraging—if we are making people to feel unworthy, unwanted, and unwelcome. So, if we want our blessing of God to be true, we must treat each other with the same love, kindness, and respect that we would show to God. Aha! I see the rivers of living water flowing forth from the same source! And there is Wisdom in that water! In the words of *Matthew 25*: "And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'" In the words of *James 3*, "Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom," and, "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

It all seems so clear and simple! Wisdom is crying out to us. Wisdom is making herself obvious to us! See God in the children of God and thus treat the children of God with the same love, kindness, and respect that we would show God. If we would only do that, we would make peace. If we would only do that, we would be whole.

So how is it that we end up being so darned foolish?! Why is it that when Wisdom calls out to us we refuse her? Why is it that when Wisdom reaches her hand out to us we do not heed her? Why is it that when Wisdom counsels us we ignore her?

James steers us in the right direction to answer this as well! "But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be arrogant and lie about the truth. This is not wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be

disorder and wickedness of every kind.” Earthly wisdom, which I think we can safely call “foolishness,” is the antithetical enemy of divine Wisdom in us, and it is defined by arrogance, envy, and selfish ambition. I am struck by how clear this all is! James is a worthy teacher indeed! For, arrogance, envy, and selfish ambition characterize exactly the foolishness that defines the politics of power that plague our world.

This is the foolishness that deludes a nation of people to believe that it is somehow ok to murder children of God as a means of “justice.” The wickedness is made all the more apparent in a case like that of Marcellus Williams, for whom there was clear evidence of innocence, but the wickedness is there with any state-sponsored killing. For, it is utter hypocrisy to claim to follow God in the flesh who was murdered by capital punishment and then to murder others by capital punishment. This is the foolishness that has led a modern nation state bearing the sacred name of *Israel* to become the slaughterer of innocents, killing more than 13,000 actual children in an area of land a full 100 square miles smaller than Chicago in less than one year. This is the foolishness that has led us to pay the taxes that fund that slaughter. This is the foolishness that tells us to seek power over rather than power with, to segregate rather than liberate, to choose wealth of resources over wealth of relationships. Wisdom is crying out to us, so why do we so often respond to the calls of foolishness?

This week I was having a conversation with one of the wisest people I have ever had the blessing to know—my grandma, Nanny Janet Orem. She is one of those teachers by vocation who truly has that specific, remarkable giftedness James alludes to. And, of course, she is a woman. Wise, indeed! As often happens, she and I were trying to solve the problems of the world and not getting very far. In the midst of our striving, she reminded me that hatred is something that is taught, not something that is inborn. In other words, foolishness is something that we learn from those who do *not* have the specific, remarkable giftedness of wise teachers. It is something we learn from those who choose the path of arrogance, envy, and selfish ambition. What would happen, then, if instead we started listening to the actual teachers?

My wise Nanny and I concluded that the wisest teacher of all teaches us exactly how to embody Wisdom throughout the gospels. So let us turn to him for the final word. He summoned his *disciples*, that old, old word for *students*, and said, “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous.” This is the easiest to understand formulation yet of, “How you treat your fellow human beings is how you treat God.” And then he gets to the Wisdom in the water. He says, “And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

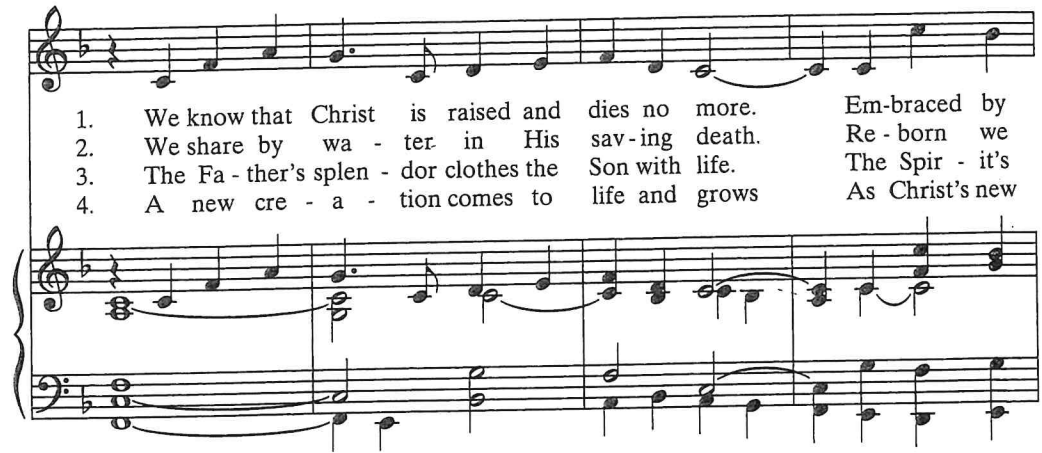
That, dear ones, is the very beating heart of Wisdom. It is the source from which all other waters flow. It is uncomplicated. It is easy to grasp. It is easy to do. And it is the most profoundly powerful thing in the world. When a child is thirsty, give them a cup of cold water. Do this as you would to a disciple of the Lord. Do this as you would to the Lord himself. Do this as you would to God. What we do to children, we do to God.

What will we choose? Will it be lords to make our children feel unworthy, unwanted, and unwelcome? Will it be walls and weapons and wars and slaughter? Or will it be a cup of cold water?

Wisdom cries out from the street and the town square, and “On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Amen!

John Brownlow Geyer, 1969

Charles Villiers Stanford, 1904



1. We know that Christ is raised and dies no more. Em-braced by
 2. We share by wa - ter in His sav - ing death. Re - born we
 3. The Fa - ther's splen - dor clothes the Son with life. The Spir - it's
 4. A new cre - a - tion comes to life and grows As Christ's new



death He broke its fear - ful hold; And our de - spair He turned to
 share with Him an Eas - ter life As liv - ing mem - bers of a
 pow - er shakes the church of God. Bap - tized we live with God the
 bod - y takes on flesh and blood. The u - ni - verse, re - stored and



blaz - ing joy.
 liv - ing Christ. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Three in One.
 whole, will sing:



Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

BAPTISM

307 God of Grace and God of Glory

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple
 2 Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as -
 3 Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour thy power; crown thine an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry; bring its
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us free our
 thy con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness, rich in
 we de - plore. Let the gift of thy sal - va - tion be our

bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 lest we miss thy king - dom's goal, lest we miss thy king - dom's goal.
 serv - ing thee whom we a - dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.

This stirring hymn used at the opening of Riverside Church in New York in 1930 was penned by its widely-known and influential pastor, and it has gained a firm place in English-language hymnals around the world. The Welsh tune name honors the Rhondda Valley in Glamorganshire.