

May 11, 2025 + 10:30 A.M.  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/MOTHER'S DAY

**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.*

Liturgist: Karen Lounsbury

**PRELUDE**     *Just as I Am, Thine Own to Be*

Barnby/arr. Langston

**WELCOME**

**CHORAL INTROIT**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalms* 98)

Leader:     O sing to the LORD a new song, for she has done marvelous things.

**ALL:     Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**

Leader:     Let us sing praises to God our Mother with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!

**ALL:     Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**

Leader:     With trumpets and the sound of the horn, make a joyful noise before God our Mother.

**ALL:     Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**

Leader:     Let the sea roar, and all that fills it, the world and all those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of God our Mother, who is coming to judge the earth. She will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

**ALL:     Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Let us worship God our Mother!**

**\*OPENING HYMN:**     "Morning Has Broken" (469)

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION:**

Leader:     In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul writes that we are entrusted with the message of the Gospel, which requires great courage and Wisdom. Together let us confess our need for Wisdom and courage.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (unison)

**O God our Mother, you are the source of all Wisdom and courage. As you nurse us and raise us up, you instruct us in your commandments. You teach us how to live. You teach us how to love. You nourish us. You protect us. You inspire us. And yet, we often ignore your guidance. We seek wisdom elsewhere. We follow other commandments. We pray to the idols of our society. We listen for their voices instead of yours. Forgive us. Call us back to you. In the name of Jesus Christ our liberator we pray. Amen.**

**KYRIE:** No. 572 (unison)

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Christ, have mercy upon us.**

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

#### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Leader:** Friends, hear the good news! Jesus forgives us and gives us new life!

**ALL:** **Jesus Christ liberates us! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!**

**GLORIA MATRI:** No. 579 (unison)

**Glory be to the Mother, 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 *A Brief Statement of Faith*)

God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

<b>We Hear God's Word</b>
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#### **EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES**

#### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

God our mother, through your only Son you overcame death and opened to us the light of eternity. Enlighten our minds and kindle our hearts with the presence of your Spirit, that we may hear your words of new life in the reading of the scriptures. In the name of Jesus Christ our liberator we pray. Amen.

**HEBREW BIBLE LESSON:** *Deuteronomy 32:11-18*

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *1 Thessalonians 2:1-8*

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *Luke 13:31-35*

**SERMON:** Our Mother Who Art in Heaven

**MUSICAL MEDITATION:** *The Gift of Love* Hal H. Hopson

<b>We Respond in Faith</b>
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#### **PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Mother, 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: God loves us as a mother loves her children. Let us give our tithes, pledges, and offerings so that we may more effectively share that love with the world. If you are here in person, please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us take a moment to reflect on stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

**OFFERTORY** *Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us Sicilian Melody*

arr. Warner

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.**

**Praise God, all creatures here below.**

**Praise God, above, ye heavenly host.**

**Praise Mother, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION:** (Unison)

**O God our Mother, you have listened to our prayers and offered us your wisdom. We dedicate these gifts to you and to your mission of sharing love with all. Guide us with your wisdom as we use these gifts. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

*"In the Bulb There Is a Flower"* (Glory to God 250)

**We Go Into the World**

**BENEDICTION**

**CHORAL BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** *Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken*

Haydn

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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 5/11:	MOTHER'S DAY Adult Study – 9:00 AM Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM Fellowship Hosts: Deacons
MONDAY 5/12:	GA – 6:30 AM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM Lake Shore Comm. Concert Meeting – 7:00 PM (FH)
TUESDAY 5/13:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Mission – 6:00 PM Stewardship/Finance – 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 5/14:	Trustees – 10:00 AM Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) “Bring Your Own Bible” 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 5/17:	Gladys' Table Prep
SUNDAY 5/18:	Graduate Recognition Sunday Financial Workshop Following Worship

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **MINISTRY OF MISSION'S FLOWER VOUCHER SALE** Support FPCH's vital mission work and gain some beautiful new life for your home and garden in the process! Please see a member of the Ministry of Mission to purchase your voucher for Zandstra's!
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS: PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION FINANCIAL WORKSHOP MAY 18<sup>TH</sup> AFTER WORSHIP** Our representative from the Presbyterian Foundation will be giving us a workshop on planned giving and stewardship. There will be light lunch included. Please join us! Sign up in the narthex.
- **GRADUATION CELEBRATION MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>!** Be sure to join us that day to bless and celebrate this year's graduates!
- **“BYOB” (BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE)** Our Wednesday evening online Bible study and discussion is at 7:00 PM. Keep your eyes out for the email with information to join!
- **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.
- **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:**

- **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.
- **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	Delta Rose
Brady Vanes	Winnie Owen
George Griner	Breeanne
Guy Hendricks	Mom Bechtler
Bill and Anettia Holmes	Victor
David Markley	Marian Clayton
Pat and David Kingen	Ella P
Diana and Ray Mendoza	Edie Delgano
Janet Orem	Melissa J.
Cindy Waltz and Sister	Rita Stronczek
Yvonne Suroviak	Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
Georgette Sknerski	OGB
Jakob Holden	Edna Cruz
Denise Matthys	Katie
Jan Oprea	Charlie
Florance Cody	Jerry & Rena Martinez
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea	George
Laura Buono Domsic	Dustin
The Windstrups	Noreen
Ruth Dekker	Kim
Rick Parker	Jessica
Gary Everhart	Nicole
Caroline Studer	Greg
Darlene O'Brien	Pastor Jane
Doug & Sue Matthews	Mary Ellen Edeus
Janet Terpstra	Jane and David
Glen Nahler	Lodean
Tom	Suzanne
David Hamblin	Jalen
Jana Tolley	Flora R.
Larry & Bonnie Perryman	

## **Deuteronomy 32:11-18**

<sup>11</sup> As an eagle stirs up its nest  
and hovers over its young,  
as it spreads its wings, takes them up,  
and bears them aloft on its pinions,  
<sup>12</sup> the Lord alone guided him;  
no foreign god was with him.  
<sup>13</sup> He set him atop the heights of the land  
and fed him with produce of the field;  
he nursed him with honey from the crags,  
with oil from flinty rock,  
<sup>14</sup> curds from the herd, and milk from the flock,  
with fat of lambs and rams,  
Bashan bulls and goats,  
together with the choicest wheat—  
you drank fine wine from the blood of grapes.  
<sup>15</sup> Jacob ate his fill;  
Jeshurun grew fat and kicked.  
You grew fat, bloated, and gorged!  
He abandoned God who made him  
and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.  
<sup>16</sup> They made him jealous with strange gods;  
with abhorrent things they provoked him.  
<sup>17</sup> They sacrificed to demons, not God,  
to deities they had never known,  
to new ones recently arrived,  
whom your ancestors had not feared.  
<sup>18</sup> You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you;  
you forgot the God who gave you birth.

## **1 Thessalonians 2:1-8**

**2** You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, <sup>2</sup> but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. <sup>3</sup> For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, <sup>4</sup> but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup> As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, <sup>6</sup> nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, <sup>7</sup> though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. <sup>8</sup> So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

## **Luke 13:31-35**

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. <sup>33</sup> Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ <sup>34</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children

together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' ”

### **Our Mother Who Art in Heaven**

*Deuteronomy 32:11-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Luke 13:31-35*

Happy Mothers' Day! To all of you moms, stepmoms, foster moms, godmoms, church moms, grandmas, aunties, older sisters, and mentors who have raised us, thank you for all that you have done. Thank you for all that you continue to do. Thank you for all that you will do. Too often you are unappreciated or underappreciated. Too often you are taken for granted. Too often you are disrespected and dishonored. Not in this church! Not today and not ever! We appreciate you. We respect you. We honor you. We love you! This congregation simply would not exist without you. The Church universal across the world simply would not exist without you.

In Church history and theology there is this surpassingly important title and role of “Church Mother.” Church mothers are those women throughout history and today who have ensured that the good news of God's love has reached the world. There are those we know from scripture like Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James, Joanna, Lydia, Dorcas, Priscilla, Lois, Eunice, and all the unnamed women we so recently learned about in *Luke*. There are those whose spiritual Wisdom has carried us through the ages, like Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Delores S. Williams, Katie Cannon, Letty Russell, Kwok Pui-lan, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, and Elizabeth Johnson. The list could keep on going and going! And then there are the Church mothers who run the ministries and committees and kitchens and missions and education programs and pulpits and church offices and prayer chains and worship designs and spiritual care departments of every blessed manifestation of the body of Christ across God's good Creation. Again, to you Church mothers, thank you!

As we celebrate all types of mothers today, especially our Church mothers, it is our greatest joy to honor and worship the greatest Mother of all—the Mother who created us all and everything else, our Mother who art in Heaven. When God made human beings with different sexes, God claimed that they were made in God's own image. This means that God's identity is feminine just as God's identity is masculine just as God's identity includes the spectrum of our identities. And even given their overwhelming maleness, the scripture writers couldn't help but recognize God's maternal nature alongside of God's paternal nature. A mother bear protecting her cubs. A mother eagle hovering over her nest. A mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings. A mother in labor. A mother comforting her children. All of these images are used to describe God. All of these images are used to describe God's relationship to us.

We have been gifted with some of those images in our readings today. The scripture writers were brilliant to make use of them, especially those stunningly beautiful portrayals of mothers in the wild. Vima and I have been watching *The Americas* on the blessed recommendation of our paternal grandmother, Nanny Janet Orem, and echoing recommendations from Mom and Dad. Hopefully some of you have gotten a chance to watch it as well. It is one of those mesmerizing nature documentaries in which the miracles of nature are somehow caught on film. And of course it helps to have the mesmerizing voice of Tom Hanks narrating those miraculous scenes! In it, there are so many clips of mothers in the wild doing incredible things for their children. There are mother birds, mother whales, mother bears, mother snakes, mother octopi, mother otters, and so many other mothers. The lengths that they go to in order to ensure the birthing, living, and ultimately thriving of their children is nothing short of mind-blowing. If you have not gotten the chance to watch it, let me add my echoing recommendation to Nanny, Dad, and Mom. If not it, then try the *Planet Earth* or *Our Planet* series with equally mesmerizing footage and the equally mesmerizing voice of David Attenborough!

It would be great to get to visit some of the natural wonders portrayed in person, but seeing them on film gives an important glimpse of God's stunning Creation in all her awe and wonder and, just as importantly, a

glimpse of exactly what the scripture writers mean when they give those images of God as a mother eagle, a mother hen, and a mother bear. The idea is certainly not to say that human mothers should sacrifice themselves so completely as some of these animals do, but rather to say that God as our Mother will go to any length to bring us to life and sustain our lives—that God our Mother provides all that we need for nourishment, protection, and fun, in short for thriving. Now of course we humans all too often mess up those resources that God provides, but that is on us! What a different world it would be if we all chose to honor God our Mother by ensuring that ALL of her children have the same access to nourishment, protection, and fun that God provides in the first place through the miracle of this planet Earth, a planet also so often aptly called “Mother.”

Of course, images to describe God’s relationship with us always fall woefully short no matter how powerful they are. For, God is mother to the entirety of Creation—to all stars, planets, lands, waters, air, microorganisms, plants, and animals, of course including us humans! And God’s motherhood involves a love beyond any love found in the created universes. God’s love is somehow encompassing of all and yet so very particular to each and every one of us, much as a human mother who loves all of her children both equally and uniquely. God loves each and every one of us in our giftedness, our faults and failings, our quiriness, our interests, our embodiments, our personalities, and our ways of perceiving the world. And the miraculous thing is that it is not just God ensuring this life. The promise of the Resurrection is that God also brings us into new life and ensures our thriving in new life! And *that* supreme expression of love is also an all-encompassing one. For, God promises a new heaven and a new earth—in other words new life for ALL of Creation!

How extravagantly blessed we are, for how extravagantly loved we are! How extravagantly blessed and loved ALL of Creation should feel! And that brings me back to this idea of how we can properly honor our extravagantly blessing and extravagantly loving Mother. I mentioned before how that would entail doing what we can to ensure that all of God’s children have access to the protection, nourishment, and fun that God has provided in Creation. So I ask, “What would that look like if we keep in mind that God’s children include all human beings AND all the rest of Creation?” What would that look like to care for each and for the planet in a way that ensures life and thriving? How would we even begin to make that sort of care a reality?

The remarkable truth is that God birthed Creation in such a way that it is all interconnected and interdependent—that *we* are all interconnected and interdependent with each other, with the microorganisms and plants and animals, with the lands and waters and air, with the planet—and I am sure in some ultimate way with all the stars and planets. So, in providing loving care to the natural world, we participate in the thriving of all beings that depend on the natural world. And in providing loving care to each other as human beings, we participate in the thriving of all living beings, in the thriving of Mother Earth herself. And each act of loving care truly matters! Each act of loving care truly honors God our Mother.

The act of providing hospitality to a stranger. The act of picking up pieces of trash in wilderness. The act of paying attention to a child in need of attention. The act of reducing consumption and thus reducing waste. The act of truly listening to someone. The act of listening to the sounds of nature and being inspired by them. The act of supporting someone through grief. The act of using less gas and electricity. The act of advocating for justice for the oppressed. The act of advocating for clean air and clean water. The act of demanding the end of wars and genocide. The act of demanding the end of fossil fuel use. The act of adopting humans in need of family. The act of adopting fur babies in need of family. The act of making meals for people who are hungry. The act of supporting sustainable agriculture. The act of sharing resources. The act of conserving natural resources. All of it matters! All of it honors God our Mother! So let us keep honoring her! May this Mother’s Day be a new starting point for a new life built around this, built around her!

For, again, how blessed we are to have been created because of the love of a mother, to have been birthed into the love of a mother, to be sustained by the love of a mother! She watches over us and protects us with the fierceness of a mama bear! She raises us up with the unbridled power of a mama eagle! She draws us into her sheltering embrace with the tenderness of a mama hen! And yet these are only glimpses of the magnitude of her love for ALL and her love for each, a love beyond our greatest imagining! Hallelujah! Happy Mother’s Day! Amen.



# Morning Has Broken

469

BUNESSAN. 5.5.5.4 D

Eleanor Farjeon, 1931

Gaelic melody  
Arr. Dale Grotenhuis, 1985

C Am Dm G Dm G C

1. Morn-ing has bro - ken Like the first morn - ing, Black-bird has  
2. Sweet the rain's new fall Sun - lit from heav - en, Like the first  
3. Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing Born of the

Em Am Em F G C Am F C

spo - ken Like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the  
dew - fall On the first grass. Praise for the sweet - ness Of the wet  
one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion, Praise ev - ery

Am G C G Am Dm G7 C

morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing Fresh from the Word!  
gar - den, Sprung in com - plete - ness Where God's feet pass.  
morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion Of the new day!

# In the Bulb There Is a Flower 250

## Hymn of Promise

Capo 3: (D)

(Em)



1 In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple tree;  
 2 There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o - dy;  
 3 In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i - ty;

(A7)

(D)



in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise: but - ter - flies will soon be free!  
 there's a dawn in ev - ery dark - ness, bring - ing hope to you and me.  
 in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni - ty.

(D7)

(G)

(Em)

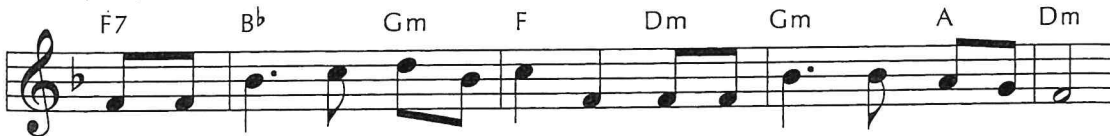
(D)

(Bm)

(Em)

(F#)

(Bm)



In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to be,  
 From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter - y,  
 In our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to - ry,

(G)

(Em)

(D)

(Bm)

(Em)

(A7)

(D)



un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.