

March 22, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Heather Casiano

*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 Be Thou My Vision *Irish Folk Tune*

Byrne/Cherwien

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (Adapted from *Psalm 121*)

Leader: We lift up our eyes to the mountains—from where will our help come?

**ALL: Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**

Leader: The LORD will not let our feet be moved; the LORD who keeps us will not slumber.

**ALL: The LORD who keeps us will neither slumber nor sleep.**

Leader: The LORD is our keeper; the LORD is our shade at our right hands.

**ALL: The sun shall not strike us by day, nor the moon by night.**

Leader: The LORD will keep us from all evil; the LORD will keep our lives.

**ALL: The LORD will keep our going out and our coming in from this time on and forevermore.**

\*OPENING HYMN: “What Wondrous Love Is This” (85)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, “To set the mind on the flesh is death.” This means that it is death to focus on and follow the ways of the world rather than the ways of the Kingdom. Together let us confess we have chosen the ways of the world, the ways of death.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God of new life, we join our hearts and voices in confession unto you. We confess that we have not loved as fiercely and as fully as we should. When the world loses your beloved children because of our wars, we do not weep. While homelessness and hunger continue to ravage the poor, we do not weep. As entire ecosystems go extinct with our changing climate, we do not weep. With guns continuing to wreak havoc on our communities, we do not weep. We have become desensitized to loss. We have buried our grief. Remind us that we are human. Resurrect our compassion. Guide us back to love. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, your beloved Son. Amen.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. We are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in us!

ALL: **Jesus Christ forgives us, and we have the Spirit of life! 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: (Adapted from *The Confession of 1967*)

Leader: In Jesus of Nazareth true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of sinful people.

ALL: **But his complete obedience led him into conflict with his people. His life and teaching judged their goodness, religious aspirations, and national hopes. Many rejected him and demanded his death. In giving himself freely for them he took upon himself the judgment under which all people stand convicted. God raised him from the dead, vindicating him as Messiah and Lord. The victim of sin became victor, and won the victory over sin and death for all people.**

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

New Membership by Reaffirmation of Faith: Marvin Kohler

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Unison)

**Saving Spirit, as you led Jesus into the wilderness and gathered the wild beasts and angels to surround him, gather us around your Word and lead us into your wisdom that we might be equipped to follow your Son on this Lenten path. Amen.**

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Ezekiel 37:1-14*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Romans 8:6-11*

GOSPEL LESSON: *John 11:17-44*

SERMON: As in Bethany, So in Heaven

CHORAL ANTHEM: *Wondrous Love, Wondrous Cross* Joseph M. Martin

<b>We Respond in Faith</b>
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### 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: As we continue Lenten journey, it is vital that we continue our practices of giving. For, the work of sharing the good news of the Resurrection and the Life must go on! Let us give our tithes and offerings so that we can share that good news! Please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshipping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

**OFFERTORY** Mine is an Unchanging Love

Dykes/Gwilym Beechey

### \* 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 of new life, we dedicate these gifts to you and to the work of your Kingdom. Guide us with your life-giving Spirit as we use them to enact the work of life. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life. Amen.**

<b>We Go Into the World</b>
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\* **CLOSING HYMN:** "My Song Is Love Unknown" (76)

## BENEDICTION

## CHORAL BENEDICTION

**POSTLUDE** And Can't It Be That I Should Gain

Wesley/Campbell

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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.

## PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 3/22:	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM Faith Development – 11:45 AM
MONDAY 3/23:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 3/24:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Prayer Shawl – 1:00 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 3/25:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Lenten Study 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 3/26:	Choir – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 3/28:	Sackurday – 12:00 PM AA – 6:30 PM
SUNDAY 3/29:	PALM SUNDAY

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE** Be sure to join us for **Palm Sunday**, March 29, at 10:30 AM, **Maundy Thursday**, April 2, at 7:00 PM, and **Resurrection Sunday**, April 5, at 10:30 AM!
- **PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON** A generous benefactor is providing a delicious luncheon for the congregation to celebrate the start of Holy Week, following worship on March 29! Please plan to join!
- **DOING SPRING CLEANING?** As you do your spring cleaning, set aside items that might be donated to the rummage sale. The rummage sale will be May 1 and 2. You can bring items to the church beginning April 14 -April 25. More information is coming soon.
- **RUMMAGE SALE PLANNING MEETING** Come join us on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, as we plan for the rummage sale. We will meet in the meeting room in the old sanctuary. All are welcome to attend!
- **LENT PRAYER ACTIVITY STATIONS** Lenten Prayer Stations are set up in the church library room (across from the church office) and in the narthex. The prayer stations are appropriate for all ages, so you are encouraged to share this space with the children, youth and adults in your life. The prayer stations are available on Sundays before and after worship, and during regular church office hours (Mon. –Thurs., 8 am to noon). If you cannot come to the church and would like an at-home version of the stations, please contact Heather Casiano at [hcasiano@fpchighland.org](mailto:hcasiano@fpchighland.org), or call the church office.
- **LENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET** The Ministry of Faith Development is once again providing a Lenten devotional booklet. This year's devotional is titled "Discipleship in a Divided Age," from the Presbyterian Outlook, and guides readers to journey through Matthew's Gospel to discover how Jesus leads us toward humility, courage, compassion and faithful discipleship amid the fractures of our age. We have a few extra printed copies in the narthex for those who prefer a printed version and do not have access to a printer.
- **LENTEN STUDY AND PRACTICE WITH PASTOR TYLER** Once again, Pastor Tyler will be leading us in a special Lenten Study and Practice during the season of Lent. Join in each Wednesday of Lent, Feb. 25 - April 1, from 7-8 pm online on Zoom (During our usual BYOB time). This year's theme is "I Lift My Eyes Up to the Mountains." *Psalm* 121 is a powerful salve in times of great challenge and need. We will explore it and other mountain passages as we seek hope and healing. All are welcome! The sessions will be recorded for those who would like to participate but cannot make the live sessions on Wednesdays. The Zoom link is sent out via email weekly; if you are not currently receiving this email and would like to, please contact Kristen in the church office.
- **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING PC(USA) SPECIAL OFFERING** We will be participating in this offering throughout Lent, with our fish banks to come back Easter Sunday. In doing so, we create possibility for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety. We support recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities. We empower partners to build sustainable futures. We walk alongside our siblings to work for more just immigration laws and processes. Our gifts show people they are not alone and that people they don't know see them and care enough to respond.
- **"THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD"** class meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am in the middle classroom (across from Pastor Tyler's office). This group is reading through the book, "A is for Alabaster" by Anna Carter Florence. Each week is independent of the other weeks, so come as you are able. If you need a book, or for any other questions, contact Heather Casiano.
- **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.

## Prayer List

Anthony	Rita Stroncsek
Brady Vanes	Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
George Griner	Edna Cruz
Guy Hendricks	Charlie
Bill and Anettia Holmes	Jerry & Rena Martinez
David Markley	Nicole
David Kingen	Greg
Diana and Ray Mendoza	Pastor Jane
Janet Orem	Mary Ellen Edeus
Cindy Waltz and Sister	Jane and David
Yvonne Suroviak	Flora R.
Georgette Sknerski	Tyler Gall
Jakob Holden	Phil
Denise Matthys	Luana Sulkowski
Jan Oprea	Sonny Buono
Florance Cody	Shannon Sutton
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea	Robin
Laura Buono Domsic	Eunice
The Windstrups	Betsy
Rick Parker	David
Gary Everhart	Trina & Scott
Darlene O'Brien	Joe & Kathy
Doug & Sue Matthews	Breanne Polan
Janet Terpstra	Tammy
Glen Nahler	Alex
Tom	Ben
David Hamblin	Mike Kelly
Jana Tolley	Sue Heth
Larry & Bonnie Perryman	Ron Toren
Delta Rose	Tony
Winnie Owen	Mildred
Breeanne	Neal
Mom Bechtler	Rita
Victor	Carolyn
Marian Clayton	Oscar Ochoa
Ella P	Loved ones of Nancy Engle
Melissa J.	Loved ones of Ray Mendoza

## **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

37 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” <sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.”

## **Romans 8:6-11**

<sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed, it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

## **John 11:17-44**

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup> She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup> When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup> He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” <sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

### **As in Bethany, So in Heaven**

*Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:17-44*

Ezekiel stood in the desolate valley of dry bones. Perhaps it was a vision. Perhaps it was a real burial ground. They were brittle, lifeless things, fossils of a bygone era. The way they are described, it seems like they might crumble into powder at the slightest touch. While he stood in this open air ossuary, gazing upon the utter lack of life, the LORD spoke to him and said, “Mortal, can these bones live?” (*Ezekiel 37:3*). Thus began one of the most profound mystical experiences in all of the scriptures. As commanded, Ezekiel prophesied. Bones rattled together and joined together, sinews grew between them, organs and muscles filled them, and skin covered them. And then there was the breath, oh the breath! “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!” (*Ezekiel 37:9*). And the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Around 600 years later the people of Palestine were living under the harsh reality of Roman occupation. Just as the breath of the four winds entered those re-formed bodies in the Valley of Dry Bones, Word and Spirit filled the heart and lungs of an infant in Bethlehem who bore the fullness of God and humanity. He grew up and lived a full life of which we know oh so little. But we do get rich detail in his final years, glimpses of deep relationships, deep connections that surely took years to develop. We see his connection with his cousin brother John. We read of his relationship with his mother Mary and his brother James. We discern deep bonds with his

disciples. We hear of the harm enacted by community members significant to him—the people of Nazareth and the leaders of the temple.

And we feel this formation of chosen family for him in Bethany, not far from the boundaries of Jerusalem. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were three siblings who shared a home. In *Luke* we learn that Jesus visited them, and Martha kept busy serving while Mary sat at his feet and listened to him. Already in that passage they had some familiarity, with the sisters comfortable enough with Jesus to banter about work and relaxation in front of him (*Luke* 10:38-42). And in the words leading up to today's reading, we hear Martha describing her brother Lazarus as he whom Jesus loves (*John* 11:3). Further, the author describes Jesus as having loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus all three (*John* 11:5). Surely this was one of those connections that formed over the years of Jesus' life even if we are only given the briefest of glimpses. I think of this home in Bethany as Jesus' home near Jerusalem, the home that he would go to when he journeyed in and out of the city. Oh yes, they were certainly Jesus' chosen family.

And so, when Jesus went to Bethany upon Lazarus' death, it was not simply to find the bones of strangers as Ezekiel had found. It was to join his beloved, chosen family in grief for he whom Jesus loved. AND it was to call upon the breath of the four winds and bring him back to life right there in front of everybody. It was deeply personal, intentionally public, and profoundly political. As *John* goes on to say,

*Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council and said, "What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. So from that day on they planned to put him to death.*

Jesus knew how his action would be received by the religious and political leaders who now feared him more than ever before. He was egging them on, striving forward boldly towards the end that he had predicted to his disciples and that he knew would transform the world. The resurrection of Lazarus was indeed Jesus shining brightly and brilliantly and saying, "I'm here!" to those who would accuse him and kill him.

But there is much more to it than that. For, he was also shining brightly and brilliantly and making that public declaration to all who witnessed it and to all whom those witnesses would tell. I am sure that this action multiplied the Kingdom manifold, being this close to the population center of Judea. He was willing to risk it all for the sake of changing hearts and minds and spreading the good news of God's love to neighbors near and far.

And it goes even deeper than that! For, it was indeed personal. When Martha confronted him about not getting there sooner to save their brother and when Mary fell to her knees before him and weeps, Jesus himself wept. He wept for the one whom he loved who had died. He wept because of the immense pain of his sisters. He wept because witnessing their grief in that moment gave him a glimpse of the pain that his own death would soon cause for his loved ones. He wept because facing the reality of Lazarus in the tomb so up close and personally gave him a glimpse of just how desolate and lonely it would soon be for him in the tomb. He had always known in his head what might happen to him, but I am convinced that this was the moment when the true reality of all that was to come finally and fully sank in for him in his heart. And that weeping was a devastating, powerful, cathartic release of all that pent up grief!

But O my friends, my friends indeed, weeping was never going to be the end of the story! The event in Bethany was not only a foretaste of the death and grief that was to come. It was also a foretaste of glory divine—of the exquisite joy that would come with the Resurrection. By calling Lazarus out of that tomb, Jesus

was showing all the witnesses, and by extension all those to whom the witnesses would spread the news, that the Resurrection was indeed possible, that the Resurrection was indeed real. For, he had not only predicted his suffering and death. He had also predicted his rising again after three days. I can understand just how difficult it would have been to believe in that possibility...until this moment. This would have been the moment when it sank in for the crowds. And just as this was the moment when the reality of death and grief sank in for Jesus, it was also the moment when the *resurrection* sank in for him!

Everyone was convinced that Jesus would stay away from Jerusalem after that because the religious and political leaders had made it clear that they wanted his death. And indeed he disappeared for a little while, going to the town of Ephraim, which was notably very close to the wilderness. I am sure that he went out there to spend some time with God and the wild beasts and the angels who had waited upon him back at the beginning of his public ministry. But then, “six days before the Passover Jesus came [back] to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him.”

The resurrected Lazarus was there at the table with him! Talk about a foretaste of glory divine! This dinner prefigured the great banquet of all the resurrected. At that same dinner “Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’s feet, and wiped them with her hair.” She thus prepared him for his own death and resurrection, and from there Jesus went directly to Jerusalem to make his triumphal entry with palms waving. Jesus was ready because of the loving support of his beloved family in Bethany, including his resurrected brother Lazarus. For, he knew that he was not alone. He had neighbors in the Resurrection.

I cannot help but imagine that in that moment *Jesus* started imagining the great banquet, the table set for and surrounded by all those who had gone before. After all, we do have that mysterious tradition rooted in scripture and our confessions that between his death and resurrection Jesus descended into hell to set free the dead. And, of course, we have the blessed assurance that our dearly departed loved ones are now part of the Resurrection because of Jesus’ resurrection. Wow do we ever need that blessed assurance on a weekend such as this, during a week such as this, in a year such as this! Yes, I am convinced that in that moment Jesus was able to envision everyone in the Resurrection joining together in the glorious celebration of new life—everyone coming together as Jesus’ chosen family. As in Bethany, so in Heaven!

So what does all this mean for us in the here and now? Well, the work of Resurrection is not relegated only to Bethany and heaven. We are to expand the table of Jesus’ family here on earth. We are to turn valleys of dry bones into gardens of new life. We are to call people out of tombs of despair. We are to unbind people from the funeral vestments of violence.

There are so many wonderful ways to bring new life! We bring new life to our dearly departed loved ones by carrying on their legacies of love. When we pick up the mantles that they leave for us—those mantles of Wisdom and service and peacemaking and teaching and radical hospitality and generosity and kindness and faithfulness and gentleness and courage and creativity and integrity and hard work—we participate in the Resurrection by giving them new life. I can certainly think of many of our loved ones from First Presbyterian Church of Highland, many of those good and faithful servants of the Lord, who have left us these legacies to carry onward!

We bring new life by spreading the good news of the Resurrection. We are called to reach out to neighbors near and far to share the promise and hope of the life ahead. We are to accompany people who are far along their journey to death and to help them to see the joy and glory of all that is to come, including the joy that comes with the assurance that their mantles will indeed be carried onward.

And we are to strive for new life on earth that resembles life in heaven, to give our own glimpses of the Resurrection to people by creating beautiful and just and loving Kingdom communities in the here and now. And our Resurrection work must be personal, public, and political. As in Bethany, so in Heaven. As in Heaven, so on Earth! In striving for that heaven-like earth, we are called to seek the transformation of the world in such a

way that nobody faces an early death—not schoolchildren in Minab, not schoolchildren in Beirut, not schoolchildren in the West Bank, not schoolchildren in Gaza, not schoolchildren in Darfur, not schoolchildren in Newtown. We are to strive for an end to violence in all of its forms—the interpersonal violence of cruelty and fighting, the catastrophic and devastating violence of war, and the structural violence of poverty, patriarchy, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia. We are to strive for a world in which all God’s children live in right relationship with each other, a world in which love and life and love *of* life reign supreme. For, this is the way of the Resurrection and the Life! This is the Way of Jesus Christ! Amen.

## What Wondrous Love Is This

WONDROUS LOVE 12.9.12.9

Walker's *Southern Harmony*, 1835  
Harm. *Cantate Domino*, 1980

American folk hymn, c. 1811

1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
2. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,  
3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

What won - drous love is this, O my soul!  
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;

What won-drous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful be,

To bear the \*heav - y cross for my soul, for my soul,  
 While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;  
 And through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on, I'll sing on,

To bear the \*heav - y cross for my soul!  
 While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!  
 And through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on!

\*Or "dreadful curse" (as original text).

# My Song Is Love Unknown

76

LOVE UNKNOWN 6.6.6.4.4.4.4

Samuel Crossman, 1664

John Ireland, 1918

1. My song is love un - known, My Sav - ior's love to me, Love  
2. Christ came from heav - en's throne Sal - va - tion to be - stow, But  
3. Some - times they strew His way, And His sweet prais - es sing, Re -  
4. They rise, and needs will have My dear Lord made a - way; A  
5. Here might I stay and sing, No sto - ry so di - vine: Nev -

to the love - less shown That they might love - ly be. O who am  
peo - ple scorned and none The longed-for Christ would know. But O my  
sound - ing all the way Ho - san - nas to their King. Then "Cru - ci -  
mur - der - er they save, The Prince of life they slay. Yet stead - fast  
er was love, dear King, Nev - er was grief like Thine. This is my

I That for my sake My Lord should take Frail flesh, and die?  
Friend, My Friend in - deed, Who at my need His life did spend!  
fy!" Is all their breath, And for His death They thirst and cry.  
He To suf - fering goes, That He His foes From thence might free.  
Friend, In whose sweet praise I all my days Could glad - ly spend.