

Forest Hill Church: Worship Service

July 30, 2023 ~ 10:00 am

You may also join worship online using this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53_3OK3eKA

**Please stand if able*

Centering Words

Loving God, you are in every moment and in every place. In the grace of this morning, we quiet our souls, open our hearts to your presence, and still our minds to listen for you.

Speak your grace to us, and create us anew.

Greeting Our God with Joy

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Mary Ann Breisch

God, your love is a fine pearl: **beautiful, perfect, worth more than everything else.**

Your grace is the treasure we seek: **lovely, and hidden in the field of our lives.**

So, we sell all we have and buy the field.

We leave all else aside and worship you, shovels in hand, seeking your Word.

*HYMN NO. 401

“Here in This Place”

- 1. Here in this place new light is streaming; now is the darkness vanished away;
See in this space our fears and our dreamings brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken; gather us in, the blind and the lame;
Call to us now and we shall awaken. We shall arise at the sound of our name.*
- 2. We are the young, our lives are a mystery. We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty; gather us in, the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly; give us the courage to enter the song.*
- 4. Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven light years away:
Here in this place the new light is shining; now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all people together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we do not know how to live as we ought. And even when we do know how, we do not seem to be able to do it. The truth is not in us and we discharge our discomfort in judgment - of others and ourselves. We seek to maintain the illusion of our separateness from you, our creaturely sibling human and animal, your creation. We are out of control and we are scared. In your mercy, forgive our sinning and heal our fearing, and empower us to change our habits for the sake of love.

TIME OF SILENCE

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God's Spirit intercedes for us, with sighs too deep for words... and so we are forgiven, known, and accompanied moment by moment, loved beyond all measure, come what may. By God's grace brought to us in so many ways, especially through Jesus the Christ, we are forgiven. Believe the good news, and live it!

Affirming the Good News in Our Lives

ANTHEM

Mary Ann Breisch

“There is a River”

*Do you hear a voice in the wilderness cry? How did we get here?
How will we get there from here? There’s a mountain in the distance
The path between unclear. Thought I saw a city on that hill
On clearer days I think I see it still. It’s a kingdom of love and light
Justice and truth and sight. It’s a place that has no walls
That welcomes all. It’s a place we hold inside that we try to hide
How do we prepare the way? For that kingdom to come?
Do you hear the wilderness answer? You walk broken or beaten
You walk thirsty or dry. You must follow the river
That flows from that mountain’s side. You were washed in its life-giving stream
You must drink and remember the dream. Of a kingdom of love and light
Justice and truth and sight. Of a place that has no walls
That welcomes all. Of a place you hold inside; why do you try to hide?
Hear the call, prepare the way for that kingdom to come.
Born in the heart of the wilderness he walked broken and beaten *
He walked thirsty and dry. Yet he offered a river
That flowed from his side. His love and mercy wash us still somehow**
He feeds us with living waters now. In a kingdom of love and light
Justice and truth and sight. In a place that has no walls
That welcomes all. In a place we hold inside; we need no longer hide
We are here, the time is now for that kingdom to come
Do you hear a voice in the wilderness cry?*

Opening Our Hearts to God’s Word

THE LIVING WORD (NRSV)

Selected Verses from:
Genesis: 29:15-28; Psalm 105: 1-11, 45b;
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52; Romans 8:26-39

After the readings

Hear what the Holy Spirit is telling God’s people.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Sally Wile

THE 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.

FRIENDSHIP REGISTER

To participate in our online Friendship Register, please leave a comment in the Live Chat box listing the names of those participating in this morning's Live Worship or email the office.

OFFERING

Giving and Offering is available by texting: 216-400-5300
Or you may give online: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/give/online/>
You may also mail a check to the church office.

OFFERTORY

Arr. by Mary E. Bryne

“Be Thou My Vision”

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Going Forth to Live as God’s People

***CLOSING HYMN NO. 833**

“O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”

*1. O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.
2. O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine’s blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.
3. O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.*

***BENEDICTION**

***HYMN NO. 701**

“Sanctuary”

*Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving I’ll be a living, sanctuary for you.*

POSTLUDE

Trad. Spiritual

“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”

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Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Pastor
Dr. Amy Wheatley, Dir. of Family, Youth & Children’s Ministry
Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Director of Music
Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate



What is a Matthew 25 church?

Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

How the vision unites all Presbyterians

By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, we recognize Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.

The invitation, open to any church or mid council, has three goals:

- **Building congregational vitality** by challenging congregations and their members to deepen and energize their faith and grow as joyful leaders and disciples, actively engaged with their community as they share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.
- **Dismantling structural racism** by fearlessly applying our faith to advocate and break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
- **Eradicating systemic poverty** by acting on our beliefs and working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.



Prayer Request:

To request prayers for a personal concern, please email Pastor Lentz (pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org) no later than Thursday afternoon of each week for inclusion in next week's congregational prayer.

Prayers are requested this week for:

Ed Dickson, Bob and Dianne Doyle, Deborah Howard, the family of Emelia McGuire, Roz and Graham Peters, Beverly Thomas, Grace Uhle, Doreen Underwood, Anne Way, Susan Way, Sharon Wiggins, the family of Henrietta Williams and Warren Young.

Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:

Florence and Ron Klein and Carol Hopkins-Lutz.

Care Groups will assist our pastors with members' needs. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death. Information will be passed on to the **head of the Deacons**, Dean Sieck (deacons@fhcpresb.org).

Thank you, all office volunteers: Joan Bacon, Lynda Bernays, Cathy Ghiandoni and Nancy Grube.

Thank you, all Stream Team Volunteers! Anyone interested in helping stream Sunday services should contact Kurt Haas at kurt@dangereddy.com.

The deadline for the bulletin and weekly email is Tuesday of each week at 5 pm. The next TOWER deadline is **August 17 (for the September TOWER) at 8:00 am**. Please submit your written requests to office@fhcpresb.org.