



Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 5, 2026 10:30 a.m.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

RINGING THE BELL

WELCOME AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

PRELUDE "Prelude and Fuge in C" Dietrich Buxtehude

() Indicates that all are invited to stand*

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *(based on Matthew 11:28-29)*

One: Come, all you who carry heavy burdens, and Christ will give you rest.

All: For he is gentle and humble in heart: in him we find rest for our souls.

***GATHERING HYMN** "God of the Ages, Who with Sure Command" #592

New Century Hymnal vv.1-3

(For full music, the New Century Hymnal is located in each pew rack)

**God of the ages, who with sure command brought forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
our grateful songs before your throne arise.**

**Your purpose, just, envisions mortals free; God, set our path toward human liberty.
Still be our ruler, guardian, guide and stay—
your Word our law, your paths our chosen way.**

**From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence, with steadfast care be ever our defense;
Your love and faith within our hearts increase;
with bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION (1)**

Holy One, we confess to you and to each other that we are tired and weighed down by the mistakes we have made.

We give this burden to you, mindful of Jesus' promise that he will give us rest, for we trust in your gracious love.

(silent confession)

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Friends, hear the good news of our faith: God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love and showing compassion to all.

Thanks be to God!

***RESPONSE OF PRAISE "God of the Ages" v.4**

**Refresh your people on life's toilsome way; Lead us from night to never-ending day;
With truth and love guide us through errors maze,
And we shall give you glory, laud, and praise.**

***PASSING THE PEACE**

CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

LISTENING

God speaks to us in the Word proclaimed.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Pew Bible p.792

A Word of God that is still speaking, **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

Sarah Fredriksen McCann

SILENT MEDITATION

HYMN OF REFLECTION "In This Time of Great Reflection" (see hymn note at end of bulletin)

The image displays a musical score for a hymn titled "Hymn of Reflection". The score is written for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music is divided into four systems, each with a vocal staff and a piano accompaniment staff. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The hymn consists of five verses. The first verse is a call to reflection on the 250th anniversary of the United States. The second verse is a reflection on the nation's history of wealth and glory, and the need for justice. The third verse is a reflection on the nation's history of slavery and displacement, and the need for prayer. The fourth verse is a reflection on the nation's history of violence and silence, and the need for love and service.

1. In this time of great re - flec - tion on two hun - dred fif - ty years,
2. Here is what holds us to - geth - er: Mer - cy, love, com - mu - ni - ty.
3. We re - call our na - tion's sto - ry. Keep us hon - est, God a - bove!
4. Will we work for ra - cial jus - tice? Will we turn from fear and hate?
5. In this time, O God, re - store us to the land we're called to be—

We re - mem - ber, as a na - tion, times we've pros - pered, times of tears.
We're to seek to care for neigh - bors in a just so - ci - e - ty.
In our quest for wealth and glo - ry, we have in - jured ones you love.
What is now the pub - lic wit - ness that you call us to cre - ate?
where all peo - ple here a - mong us know your blest com - mu - ni - ty.

"We shall be," a prea - cher told us, "as a ci - ty on a hill"—
If we fail to help the nee - dy and to build a land that's just,
Through en - slave - ment, through dis - place - ment, we have cho - sen ways of sin.
As we ce - le - brate our coun - try, help us, Lord, to un - der - stand:
May we seek to be that ci - ty, not with pride but as a prayer.

not to praise us but to warn us: We've a du - ty to ful - fill.
we will sim - ply be a by - word as the world looks on at us.
We've been vio - lent. We've stayed si - lent. So our light of love stays dim.
All of us must share the boun - ty and the good - ness of the land.
May we love and serve you hum - bly, in our land and ev - ery - where.

RESPONDING

We respond to God's Word through our prayers and our gifts.

NAMING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

OFFERTORY "American Pastorate" John S. Dixon

(A QR code at the end of the bulletin is available for online giving.)

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE (tune: "Lasst Uns Erfreuen")

**Praise God, the Giver and the Gift,
Hearts, minds and voices now uplift, Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the breath of glad surprise, Freeing, uplifting, opening eyes.
Three-In-Oneness, Love Communing, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

INVITATION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

God be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to God!**

Eternal God, holy and mighty, it is our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, and to worship you in every place where your glory abides. You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. You made us in your image, and called us to be your people, but we turned from you, leaving sin and death to reign. Still you loved and sought us. In Christ your grace defeated death and opened the way to eternal life. Therefore we praise you, joining our voice with the faithful of every time and place:

Holy, holy, holy God, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

You are holy, O God, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your son and our risen Savior. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that we may be united with the living Christ and with all his people. Accept this our sacrifice of praise as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the one crucified and risen:

Dying you destroyed our death. Rising you restored our life.

Lord Jesus, come in glory.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE ELEMENTS *(All are welcome to share in the Sacrament of Communion! Elements will be served by ushers, and you are invited to hold the elements until we commune together. Wine trays contain white grape juice and red wine. Wrapped gluten-free wafers are available on each bread tray.)*

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** *(unison)*

We give thanks, O God, because in your own free gift of love you have reached out to us. You have refreshed us at your table, and called us to a life shared in memory and hope. Send us forth with courage and joy in the name of Jesus Christ, that we, too, may become bread and peace for one another and the world. Amen.

***COMMISSIONING HYMN:** "How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies" #594
(For full music, the New Century Hymnal is located in each pew rack)

**How beautiful, our spacious skies, our amber waves of grain;
Our purple mountains as they rise above the fruitful plain.
America! America! God's gracious gifts abound,
And more and more we're grateful for life's bounty all around.**

**Indigenous and immigrant, our daughters and our sons:
O may we never rest content till all are truly one.
America! America! God grant that we may be
A sisterhood and brotherhood from sea to shining sea.**

**How beautiful, sincere lament, the wisdom born of tears,
The courage called for to repent the bloodshed through the years.
America! America! God grant that we may be
a nation blessed with none oppressed, true land of liberty.**

**How beautiful, two continents, and islands in the sea
That dream of peace, nonviolence, all people living free.
Americas! Americas! God grant that we may be
a hemisphere where people here all live in harmony.**

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE "Trumpet Tune on *Westminster Abbey*" Jerry West

SENDING

With God's blessing, we are sent forth to follow Christ in the world.

Hymn Note for "In This Time of Great Reflection"

"In This Time of Great Reflection" is a hymn that lifts up the theme of the Puritan John Winthrop's 1630 sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity." Winthrop talked about the Massachusetts Bay Colony as "a city on a hill," referencing Jesus' image from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14. In his use of this phrase, Winthrop wasn't giving a sermon about American exceptionalism, as some later historical figures have suggested. As historian Daniel T. Rodgers explains in *As a City on a Hill: The Story of America's Most Famous Lay Sermon*, Winthrop was actually delivering a warning: The eyes of the world would be on Plymouth to see if the colony would morally succeed in being loving, just, humble, good, neighborly, and kind.

This hymn is a prayer that, as we reflect on our nation's 250th anniversary, we will strive to be a morally responsible and community-building people; that we will repent of our sins and become as loving and humble as God is calling us to be. The hymn tune, RESTORATION (most often used for "Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy") is a 19th-century American folk tune, as is the alternate tune, HOLY MANNA. Both tunes come from the shape-note folk music tradition.

Thank you to three historians who offered helpful insights and feedback in the creation of this hymn; all three have expertise in American history and social movements, and are active in their churches' music programs: Frederick J. Heuser, the retired executive director of the Presbyterian Historical Society and archivist for Federal/National Council of Churches and Religion News Service; Andrew Robertson, associate professor of history at Lehman College of the City University of New York; and Wendy Wall, associate professor of history at Binghamton University.

This hymn was commissioned by *Sojourners* magazine for their June 2026 special issue: *A Christian Response to America's 250th Birthday*. *Sojourners* has gathered diverse voices to provide a prophetic Christian perspective on where the U.S. has been — and what it means to follow Jesus when our nation struggles to achieve "liberty and justice for all."

--Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, www.carolynshymns.com

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ministries of Hope
UCC!