

# *Forest Hill Church: Worship Service*

*January 15, 2023 ~ 11:00 am*

You may also join worship online using this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKTp76EQdcg>

*\*Please stand if able*

## *Words for Meditation*

*“Slavery in America was perpetuated not merely by human badness but also by human blindness.”  
Strength to Love, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, p. 37*

## **WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **INTROIT**

Thomas A. Dorsey

"Precious Lord"

## *Greeting Our God with Joy*

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Marina Grant

One: God of our ancestors and God of our dreams, we gather today to remember that you have created us all in your image and in your likeness.

**All: Open our eyes, O God, that we might see You in every person we meet.**

One: We celebrate that you have illumined our paths, leading toward a Beloved Community where all are equally seen and radically loved.

**All: Open our eyes, O God, that we might see You in your people gathered.**

One: We claim your presence among us and your call to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with you and all of humanity.

**All: Open our eyes, O God, that we might see you in the world you love. Let us worship God!**

### **\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN NO. 450**

"Be Thou My Vision"

## *Renewing Our Relationship with God*

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Leader: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The person who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as the one who helps perpetrate it. The person who accepts evil without protesting against it, is really cooperating with it."<sup>1</sup> Let us confess before God and each other the ways in which we have contributed to systems of oppression and inequity. Trusting in the mercy of the God who calls us to justice, let us confess our sin.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of justice and mercy, you ask us to open our eyes to the injustice in the world around us. We admit that sometimes that is hard to do. Too often we are unwilling to give up our comfort and safety and see things from another's point of view. When we close our eyes, or avert our gaze from the pain of others, forgive us. Give us the courage to join the movement toward racial equity by being willing to look, to see, to learn and to act, even when we are fearful. Guide us as we seek to find new ways to put your love into action. In the name of the One who came that all might be free, Amen.**

## TIME OF SILENCE

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

When we are freed to acknowledge the wrongs around us, the pain among us, the sin within us, and the work before us, God's movement of mercy, peace and justice is being revealed in our midst. **The good news is that we are forgiven and freed.** Our burden is lifted: we are empowered to follow the movement of the Spirit. **The liberating love of God is at work within us. Thanks be to God.**

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. *Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* 1958  
(Confessional section adapted from materials by Sharon R Fennema)

## *Affirming the Good News in Our Lives*

### MINUTE FOR MISSION

Stewardship

Peter Williams and Jenny Himmelman

### ANTHEM

Glenn Burleigh

"Nia"

Why was I born? Why was I born?

Was I born to feed the hungry children?

Or to give shelter to the homeless?

Was I born to be my brother's keeper, companion to the lonely?

I was born to love the Lord with all my heart, my soul, my mind and strength.

If I love God, I can love all people.

This is my purpose, my Nia

Why was I born? Why was I born?

Was I born to preach the Gospel,

Or to care for aging parents?

Was I born to help unwed mothers or counsel the prisoner?

I was born to love the Lord with all my heart, my soul, my mind and strength.

If I love God, I can love all people. If I love all people, I can love God!

This is my purpose. This is why I sing my song, Nia.

## *Opening Our Hearts to God's Word*

### THE LIVING WORD (NRSV)

#### John 1: 35-51

Marina Grant

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip

said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

*After the readings*

Hear what the Holy Spirit is telling God's people.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*HYMN NO. 452**

"Open the Eyes of My Heart"

**SERMON**

Rev. Carol Wedell

"Leaving Our Fig Tree"

**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. Adler

"Selected Spirituals"

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**\*CLOSING HYMN NO. 339**

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

*Going Forth to Live as God's People*

**\*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**

arr. Adler

"This Little Light of Mine"



**Prayer Request:**

To request prayers for a personal concern, please email Pastor Lentz ([pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org](mailto: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:**

Cooper Andrews, Jennifer Blakeney, Kiva Bohanon, Mark Davidson, Rita Grube, Deborah Howard, Joanna Klingenstein, Ginie Mast, Kitty McWilliams, Beverly Thomas, Grace Uhle, Doreen Underwood, Susan Way, Peg Weissbrod and Sharon Wiggins.

**Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:**

Robert Kellermeyer, Florence and Ron Klein, Carol Hopkins-Lutz, Emelia McGuire, Beryl and Henrietta Williams.

**Care Group: *The Corinth Group*** will assist our pastors with members' needs in **January**. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death. Information will be passed on to the **Care Group leader, Dean Sieck ([deacons@fhcpresb.org](mailto:deacons@fhcpresb.org))**.

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

**Thank you,** all Stream Team Volunteers! Anyone interested in helping stream Sunday services should contact Kurt Haas at [kurt@dangereddy.com](mailto:kurt@dangereddy.com).

**The deadline for the bulletin and weekly email** is Tuesday of each week at 5 pm. The next TOWER deadline is **February 16 (for the March TOWER) at 8:00 am**. Please submit your written requests to [office@fhcpresb.org](mailto:office@fhcpresb.org).

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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