

Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian USA)
Order for Worship ~ 7th Sunday of Easter ~ 75th Anniversary Sunday ~ 17 May 2026

Preparation for Worship:

“At some time or another...the church must send [its people] to stand bodily and physically with the oppressed.”
~Rev Bill Barker, Founding Pastor of Bower Hill Church, 1965

Prelude *Improv on Favorite Hymns* Thanakarn Limtham “Bank,” pianist

Introit *Alleluia*

Call to Worship:

Leader: Before the mountains were born, before God brought forth the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting, God is God.

People: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Leader: God has called this church into being and journeyed with us for seventy-five years.

People: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Leader: The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of the past is the God of the future.

People: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Leader: We will not fear, though the world changes, though mountains tremble and seas roar.

People: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Leader: “Be still and know that I am God. I am exalted in all the earth.”

People: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Leader: Let the favor of the Lord God be upon us, and prosper the work of our hands.

People: O prosper the work of our hands!

Prayer of Adoration:

God of yesterday, God of tomorrow, we give you thanks and praise for the seven and a half decades of service that this congregation celebrates today. We give you thanks for all those who have led us, inspired us, taught us, guided us, and quietly done their part in the witness and mission of your church. Let this joyful day bring you glory, and let it renew your Spirit in us with all hope, peace, joy, and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

***Hymn 321** *The Church’s One Foundation* Alice Grier Lee, organist

Call to Prayer

“Have you not seen? Have you not heard? The Lord is an everlasting God whose goodness is unfailing.” Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sin. Together let us say:

Prayer of Confession

God who was, and is, and is to come: Too often we look to the past without gratitude and to the future without courage. We have benefited from the generosity of earlier generations, but we rarely stop to consider what we are leaving to your children tomorrow. We have sensed your guidance and your love down through our years, but we fail to trust you with the future. Forgive our shortsightedness and all our sins. Open our eyes to your timeless presence. Grant us the humility to see our place within your greater plan; through Christ, who holds our future as our past. Amen. [Silent prayers]

Words of Assurance

“The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. God removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.” Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ: in him we are forgiven. Amen.

***The Gloria: Hymn 583**

Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest. Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia.

***The Peace**

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

All children from preschool through fourth grade are invited to meet their teachers in the Narthex and go to their classes.

Prayer of Illumination

Bless the words we read, for when your Spirit touches them, they become your living Word for us today, guiding us into the ways of wisdom, justice, gratitude and peace. Then let us go from this place to sow joy into your world; through Christ, who is your true Word. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:1-2, 13-16

Leader: Holy wisdom, holy Word.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Choral Anthem

This Little Light of Mine

Mark Hayes

A Meditation by Rev. Bob Heppenstall

“Let Our Light Shine”

1983-1992

Hymn 687 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past Verse 1 Remain Seated

A Meditation by Rev. Jack Hodges

1994-2000

Hymn 687 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past Verse 2 Remain Seated

A Meditation by Rev. Leonard Sponaugle

2002-2008

Hymn 687 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past Verse 3 Remain Seated

A Meditation by Rev. Laurie Sponaugle

2002-2009

Hymn 687 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past Verse 4 Remain Seated

Psalter

Psalm 84

A Meditation by Rev. Brian Snyder

2010-present

Response 601

Amen

***Affirmation of Faith**

“Credo for Christians”

**I worship and adore God, source, essence, and aim of all things,
Spirit that enlivens all beings.**

**I follow the way of Jesus, who found God in himself
and shared a way for others to find God in themselves.**

He was born through love,

He lived for love,

He suffered for love,

He died for love,

But love never dies.

**I submit myself to the leading of the love that is God,
that I may be compassionate toward all beings,
that I may live and serve in community with others,
that I may ask for and offer forgiveness,
that I may praise and enjoy God forever. Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer 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.**

*Or “Mother” or “Parent”

Welcome and Next Steps

Offerings and Gifts of Self

Offertory

Congregational Hymn 157 - *I Danced in the Morning*

***The Doxology: Hymn 606, 607** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow** Old Hundredth

*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.*

**For a gender-neutral version, use hymn 607.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Closing Hymn 306**

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

***Charge, Benediction, and Sharing the Light**

Extroit

May I Be Empty

Postlude

Voluntary on Simple Gifts

Wilbur Held

Feel free to exit during the postlude, mindful of those who wish to stay and listen