

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Clarita

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

10:30 AM — April 26, 2026

The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Cathy Gero and Linda & Joe Merkens in memory of Ron Gero, loving father, husband and grandfather — we love you and miss you always. By Anne Stenger in memory of Vincent Stenger, St., Vincent Stenger, Jr. and Irene and Harry Traffert.

Before the service begins, we encourage you to use the following for meditation.

Our only experience of life is life in this world, which, from the beginning, God called “good.” God’s becoming human in the face and form of Jesus boldly reaffirms the original blessing of creation. Though our life on this earth is fleeting, we are to steward God’s magnificent provision in creation with humility, and generosity, and gratitude. Earthly life is to be revered as we bequeath onto the next generation what has been entrusted to us. Br. Curtis Almquist, SSJE

-Generally, we stand to give praise, sit to listen (to scripture and sermon), and stand or kneel to pray. These postures help us stay focused on the worship, but there are no strict rules and you should take whatever posture is appropriate to your needs.-

Prelude

I Am the Light of the World

Jim Strathdee

-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the beginning of the service they signify an intention to move toward the altar and into direct relationship to worship God. Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it.-

Entrance Hymn #645

“The King of love my shepherd is”

St. Columba



1. The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
 2. Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth,
 3. Per-verse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,
 4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
 5. Thou spread'st a table in my sight; thy unc-tion grace be-stow-eth;



I nothing lack if I am his, and he is mine for ever.
 and where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.
 and on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing, brought me.
 thy rod and staff my comfort still, thy cross before to guide me.
 and oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!

6. And so through all the length of days
 thy goodness faileth never:
 Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
 within thy house forever.

-The liturgy is God's community gathered to actively share the Word and the Eucharist. We invite and encourage your participation in this community. Please join in the spoken responses and hymns shown in the service bulletin.-

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

-The opening acclamation is the greeting of the people by the presider and their response, which begins the service. Its purpose is to bring the congregation corporately into dialogue with the presider and set a tone for the celebration.-

Priest: Alleluia. Christ is risen!
People: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Hymn of Praise #S 280

Powell

1. Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his peo-ple on
earth. 2. Lord God, heaven-ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we
wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus
Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you take a - way the
sin of the world: have mer - cy on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the
Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. 6. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, —
you a - lone are the Lord, 7. you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly
Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

-A Collect is a short prayer with a specific structure. Its purpose is to gather into one the individual prayers of the People. The Collect of the Day is a specific prayer that reflects upon the lectionary readings for the given day of the liturgical year.-

The Collect of the Day

Priest: God be with you.
People: **And also with you.**
Priest: Let us pray.

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS

The First Reading Acts 2:42-47

Reader: Ken Higginbotham

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Those who had been baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

-The Book of Common Prayer has always placed great importance on the Psalms in worship. They are sung or said in every service of the church, and their words make up the petitions and language of our liturgy. -

Psalm 23

Reader: Mark Bridgeford

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; *
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul *
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; *
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

A Reading from the First Letter of Peter.

It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

-The Gospel procession moves into the congregation as a liturgical reminder that Jesus walked among us.-

Please stand as you are able.

Gradual Hymn #178 "Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord" (vs.1-3) *Alleluia No. 1*

Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Give_ thanks to the ris - en Lord.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Give_ praise to his_ Name.

Verses



1. Je - sus is Lord of all the_ earth.
 2. Spread the good news o'er all the_ earth:
 3. We have been cru - ci - fied with_ Christ.
 4. Come, let us praise the liv - ing_ God,
 He is the King of cre - a - - tion.
 Je - sus has died and is ris - - en. Al - le -
 Now we shall live_ for - ev - - er.
 joy - ful - ly sing to our Sa - - vior.

-The Gospel is comprised primarily of the words Christ himself spoke, and so we stand out of reverence for the good news that has been brought for us and all people.

Those who wish, make the sign of the cross with the right-thumb on the forehead, the lips, and the heart when the Gospel is announced, praying silently, God be in my head and in my thinking. God be in my lips and in my speaking. God be in my heart and my departing.-

The Gospel Reading John 10:1-10

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John.

People: **Glory to you, O Christ.**

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Priest: The Gospel of the Savior.

People: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

-The Sermon or Homily helps us apply the words of the early prophets and Christ in our lives.-

The Sermon

The Rev. Payton Hoegh

A period of silent reflection follows the sermon.

-The Nicene Creed is the statement of what we believe. It is one of the most ancient and corporate confession of our faith, having been adopted by the first ecumenical council in the year 325. When we recite this creed we are joining a great heritage of the holy universal Church through the centuries.

Some people may choose to bow their heads at the verse, For us and for our salvation...and was made man. This gesture marks the mystery of the Incarnation as the central Christian message of God's love for the world.-

Please stand as you are able.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

-Prayer is offered for the Universal Church, the Nation and all in authority, the welfare of the world, concerns of the local community, for those who suffer or who are in any trouble, and for the departed.-

The Prayers of the People

Reader: Marilyn Pisa

Jesus bore our sins on the cross so that we, free from sins, might live in righteousness. Let us pray to God, saying, "Revive our souls, and guide us along right pathways."

Guardian of our souls, call your Church to greater righteousness. Help us to live by your example and follow in your steps.

Silence

Intercessor: Revive our souls,

People: And guide us along right pathways.

Guardian of our souls, spread out your table in the presence of those who are troubled. Feed their souls and bodies with your good and generous gifts.

Silence

Intercessor: Revive our souls,

People: And guide us along right pathways.

Guardian of our souls, you have blessed us with a beautiful planet full of places where we can find rest and peace. May we care for it, as you care deeply for all you have made.

The congregation may add their own thanksgivings.

Silence

Intercessor: Revive our souls,

People: And guide us along right pathways.

Guardian of our souls, you desire the goodwill of all the people. Give us generous hearts and open hands.

Silence

Intercessor: Revive our souls,

People: And guide us along right pathways.

Guardian of our souls, it is your presence that comforts us. Make your presence known to the sick and the sorrowful, to the fearful and the weak. We pray for all those on the prayer list, especially Amy, Marionette, Malcolm, Patsy and Dennis.

The congregation may add their own petitions.

Silence

Intercessor: Revive our souls,

People: And guide us along right pathways.

Guardian of our souls, you came that we may have life, and have it abundantly. Bring the dying and the dead into your eternal home, especially Lynn Williams and Sean Wiggins-Rubin.

Silence

Intercessor: Revive our souls,

People: And guide us along right pathways.

Priest

O Christ, lead us away from the tomb toward the new thing you are doing; improve our vision until we can see nothing but you, in everyone and everything. May we seek and serve you daily. We pray because you show us the way. **Amen.**

-The Peace is an extension of Christian greeting and teaching to love our neighbor as ourselves. It symbolizes our intent to forgive as we are forgiven, to live in peace with all people. Members are encouraged to greet one another with a sign of God's peace with the clasping of hands, a reverential bow, a hug, or a peace sign.-

The Peace

Priest: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Members of the congregation who are joining us via livestream are encouraged to post "Peace be with you" in the comments or to use the "like" or "love" reaction button to take part in the virtual exchange of God's peace with the rest of the congregation at this time.

Please be seated.

Welcome and Announcements

We are pleased to celebrate the following birthdays: Frank Browne & Caroline Nold on May 1st, and Derek Maldonado on May 2nd. We also celebrate the wedding anniversary of Robin & Dave Morrow on April 25th.

Offertory Prayer

The People remain seated and say together:

Loving God, you alone are the source of every good gift. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Now, help us to be grateful, accountable, and, with praise and thanksgiving, to give of ourselves generously, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

Offertory

My Shepherd Will Supply My Need
St. Stephen's Parish Choir
Sarah Bloxham, oboe, Brandon Coprich, flute

arr. by Mack Wilberg

-A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself. For Anglicans there are two great sacraments: Eucharist and Baptism.

As continuation of thousands of years of spiritual practice, talent, treasure, and oblations are offered before the altar in our response to God's care and nurture.-

Please stand as you are able.

Doxology

Old 100th

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures,
here below. Praise God, you hosts in heav'n a -
bove; Praise God the Trin - i - ty of Love. A - men.

-The Sursum Corda (Lift up your hearts) is a form of introduction to prayer handed down over the centuries. This dialogue is an invitation for the people joining in the Eucharistic offering, to raise minds and hearts to "things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

Priest: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to God.**

Priest: Let us give thanks.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

-We praise God for the long arc of salvation history. We do not approach with petition but simply with grateful remembrance of all that God has done.-

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

-The holiness of God is a strong theme in the Old Testament, present here in the Sanctus, which echoes the words of the high angels in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Our worshipful cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is coupled with the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

Sanctus #S 125

Proulx

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, heaven_ and earth_ are full_ of your
 glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san-na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes_ in the
 name_ of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san-na in the high- est._____

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin, brought us into your life, reconciled us to you, and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said: "Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

Priest and People

**Dying, you destroyed our death.
 Rising, you restored our life.
 Christ Jesus, come in glory!**

-The epiclesis is the point at which the church, through the voice of the Celebrant, asks God to make holy, 'sanctify', 'send', 'pour', 'breathe', both the gift of bread and wine and also the gathered community.-

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with blessed Stephen, and all your people, into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.

A - men, a - men, a - men!

A - men, a - men, a - men!

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

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 trespasses,
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

-The fraction (breaking of the bread) is a crucial link between what has come before and what comes after it. Christ has offered his life for us, and the breaking of the bread makes it possible for all to share in that life.-

Please remain standing during the Fraction Anthem.

Fraction Hymn #S 154

Hurd

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Christ our Pass - o - ver is sac - ri - ficed for us; there - fore let us keep the feast.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

-The outward and visible sign in the sacrament of the Eucharist is the bread and the wine. We eat and drink the sacramental foods. Through the inward and spiritual grace of this sacramental action we are reconstituted as Christ's body, infused with Christ's life, and empowered to be Christ's presence in the world.-

The Gifts of God for the People of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Please be seated.

All are welcome to receive communion. The table we set belongs to God. Wherever you find yourself on your spiritual journey you are welcome to receive the Bread and Wine made holy.

The church teaches that temporal isolation cannot constrain the sacrament's ineffable power. Calling us to "massive, corporate, spiritual communion,"

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

Priest and People say together:

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please follow usher instructions for taking communion.

Communion

-In the post communion prayer we give thanks for the sacramental signs of Christ's presence to us and we ask God to empower and accompany us into the world to witness to God's love.-

Please stand as you are able.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

O God our Redeemer,
through our Savior Jesus Christ
you have assured your children of eternal life
and in baptism have made us one with him:
deliver us from the death of sin
and raise us to new life in your love,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
by the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

-The blessing is God's promise to be with us as we leave communal worship and return to the world to serve God and God's people.-

Blessing

May God, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

May Jesus, who in bursting from the grave won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

May the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Christ, empower you and fill you with his peace.

And the blessing of God almighty, the one, holy and undivided Trinity be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

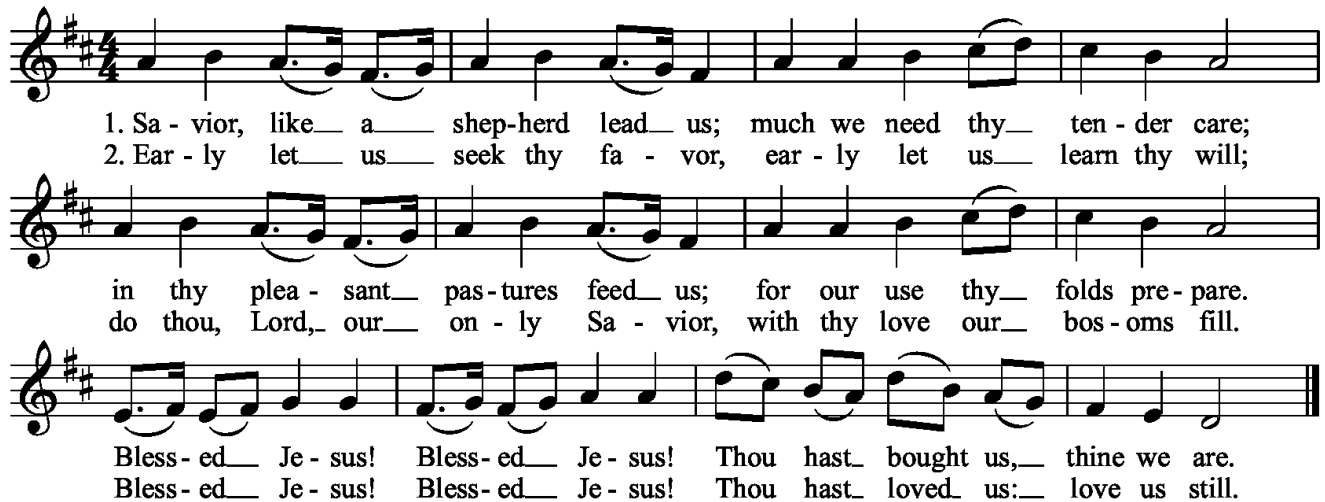
-Processions have long been an important part of liturgical worship. At the conclusion of the service the retiring procession represents the carrying of the Gospel message into the world.

Those who wish to may bow in reverence as the cross passes to acknowledge Christ's sacrifice upon it-

Closing Hymn #708

“Savior, like a shepherd lead us”

Sicilian Mariners



1. Sa - vior, like a shep-herd lead us; much we need thy ten - der care;
2. Ear - ly let us seek thy fa - vor, ear - ly let us learn thy will;
in thy plea - sant pas - tures feed us; for our use thy folds pre - pare.
do thou, Lord, our on - ly Sa - vior, with thy love our bos - oms fill.
Bless - ed Je - sus! Bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast bought us, thine we are.
Bless - ed Je - sus! Bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast loved us: love us still.

-The dismissal asserts the relationship between worship and living. It is a call to mission, a call to live the baptismal and Eucharistic life in the world.-

The Dismissal

Priest: Alleluia, Alleluia. Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Prayers of the People taken from *Praying the Scriptures* by Jeremiah D. Williamson, ©2014 by Jeremiah D. Williamson. All Rights Reserved.

Spiritual Communion Prayer: St. Alphonsus de Liguori, 1696-1787

From *The Hymnal 1982*: #174 "At the Lamb's high feast we sing", Words: Latin, 1632; tr. Robert Campbell (1814-1868), alt. Music: *Salzburg* melody Jakob Hintze (1622-1702); harm. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). #S 125 Title: The Holy Eucharist, Holy, holy, holy Lord: *Sanctus* Setting: From *A Community Mass*, Richard Proulx (b. 1937). #S 154 Title: Fraction Anthem: Christ Our Passover, Setting: From *New Plain-song*, David Hurd (b. 1950). #343 "Shepherd of souls", Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854), alt. Music: *St. Agnes*, melody John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876); harm. Richard Proulx (b. 1937), after John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876). #S-280 Glory to God, *Gloria in excelsis*, Canticle 20, Setting Robert Powell (b. 1932).

From *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*: #69 *In the Garden*, Words and Music: C. Austin Miles (1868-1946).

The Great Amen from *Mass of Creation* by Marty Haugen © 1984, G.I.A. Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission.

Doxology — Music: Old 100th, melody from *Pseumes octante trois de David*, 1551, alt.; harm. After Louis Bourgeois (1510?-1561?).