



Presbytery of Eastern Virginia
143rd Stated Meeting
October 28, 2025

We gather to bring our whole selves to God in worship - employing our voices in liturgy, prayer and song; engaging our senses through visual symbols and the experiences of taste and touch; and embodying our unity as members of the Body of Christ. We pray that our worship today will inform and enrich us as we meet to do the work that God has given us to do as the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia.
- PEVA Worship Planning Team

***Call to Worship** *(based on Psalm 130, Romans 8, and John 11)*

Out of the depths we cry, O Lord; You hear our voice and set us free.

**There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus—
only life in the Spirit.**

What once bound us in fear,
Christ has liberated with love.

**The Spirit of God dwells in us,
calling us to rise and serve.**

Let us worship the God who frees us,
**the Christ who calls us,
and the Spirit that sends us.**

***Hymn – (Glory to God #697)**

Take My Life

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

God of life, You call us out of the tombs that trap us, yet we cling to what keeps us bound.
You invite us into freedom, yet we hold on to habits of fear, selfishness, and despair.
You loose our bonds, yet we wrap others in judgment, binding them with labels and shame.
Forgive us, O God.
Speak again Your life-giving word,
until we rise, unbound,
ready to serve Your kingdom
with joy and with love.
Amen.

** Please rise in body or spirit.*

***Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news:
The same Jesus who called Lazarus from the tomb
calls us into new life today.
What was dead is alive again.
What was bound is loosed.
In Christ we are forgiven and set free:
Thanks be to God!

Song of Praise - (Glory to God #15, v4)

*All who for love of God forgive,
all who in pain or sorrow grieve,
Alleluia! Alleluia!*
*Christ bears your burdens and your fears;
so, even in the midst of tears,
sing praises! Alleluia!*
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer for Illumination

Unbinding God, you call us out of the depths, out of tombs of fear and shame, out of the bindings that hold us back. As we hear your Word read and proclaimed, loosen what keeps us from hearing, unwrap our hearts from distraction, and set our minds free to be guided by Your Spirit. Amen.

Scripture Reading - John 11:44

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon – “Unbound for Service”

The Rev. Cecelia “CeCe” Armstrong

Affirmation of Faith (from the Brief Statement of Faith, 1991)

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.

The Service of Installation

The Rev. Dr. Melissa Sumner Long, General Presbyter of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

Sentences of Scripture

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all are one in Christ Jesus.

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as we were called to the one hope of our calling,
One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Call to Discipleship

We are called by God to be the church of Jesus Christ, a sign in the world today of what God intends for all humankind.

The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Prayers of Intercession

God, God of freedom and grace,
You call us from the tombs that imprison us—
tombs of despair, of fear, of shame—
tombs of racism, inequality, and xenophobia—
and You set us free for life abundant.
We pray for those who feel bound today:
for the sick and suffering,
for the lonely and grieving,
for those weighed down by poverty or injustice.
Unbind them, O Christ,
and let them go free.
We pray for Your church,
that we may not hoard our freedom,
but use it in service to Your kingdom—
speaking truth, doing justice,
and loving with abandon.
Send Your Spirit upon us,
that we may hear Your voice calling our names,

and rise to serve you with courage and joy.
We ask all this in the name of Jesus,
the Resurrection and the Life,
who taught us to pray... *[Lord's Prayer]*

Offertory

Christ unbinds us for the sake of our souls and for the sake of the world. We live our freedom by sharing what we have to build God's kingdom of love and justice. The offering that we receive today will go to the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies, which recruits, equips, sustains, and celebrates those who serve as chaplains within U.S. Federal Government departments, agencies, and auxiliaries and the families who support them.

Hymn during offertory – God's Work, Our Hands (*see attachment*)

***Doxology** - (*Glory to God #15, v6*)

*O sisters, brothers, take your part,
and worship God with humble heart.*

Alleluia! Alleluia!

*All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One!*

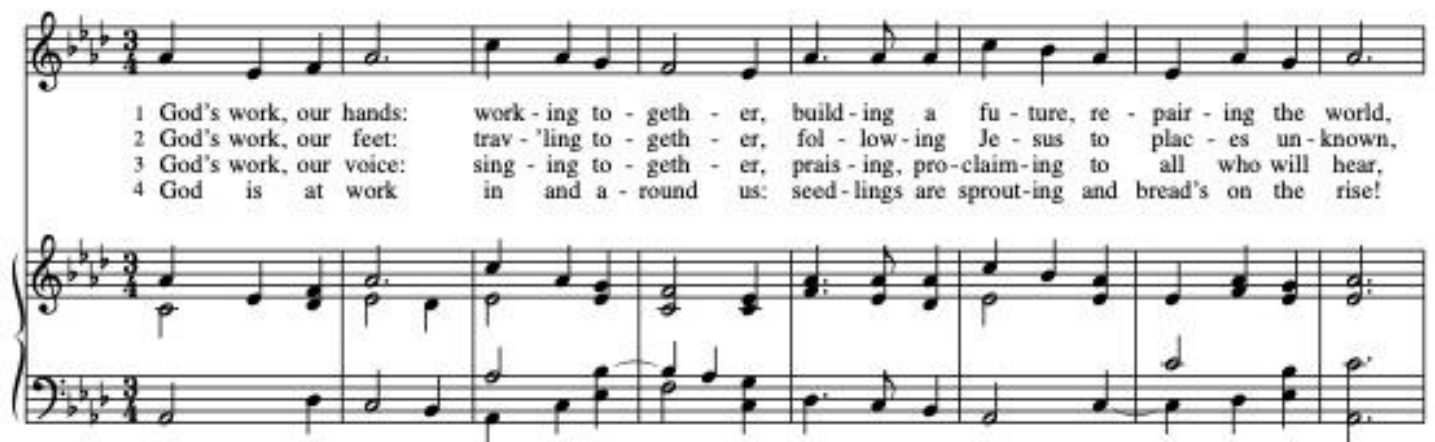
Sing praises! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Presentation of Gifts/Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Spirit of Life,
take what we bring today
and set it free for Your work.
Let these gifts become food for the hungry,
welcome for the stranger,
healing for the broken,
and hope for the despairing.
Unbind them, and unbind us,
that Your kingdom may come
through these gifts of grace. Amen.

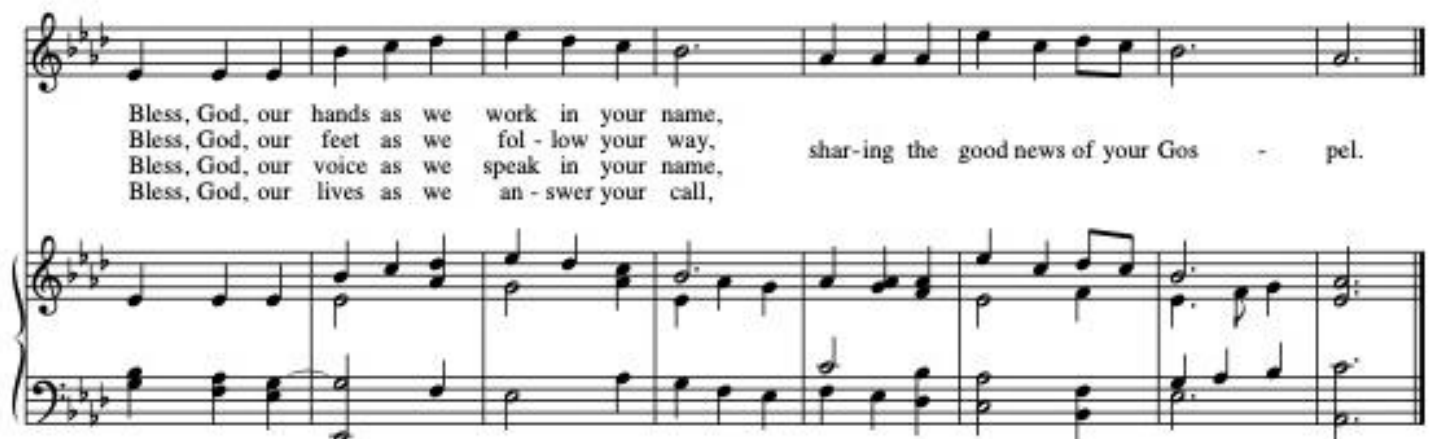
God's Work, Our Hands



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er, build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
 2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er, fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
 3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er, prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
 4 God is at work in and a - round us: seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens, feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
 walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom, run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
 pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice, claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
 Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored, gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
 Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way, shar - ing the good news of your Gos - pel.
 Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
 Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,

Text: Wayne L. Wold
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Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Rev. CeCe Armstrong
The Rev. Dr. Melissa Sumner Long

Invitation

Beloved of God, come to the table
where Christ calls us by name.
Here the grave clothes fall away.
Here burdens loosen and hope takes breath.
This is not a table of achievement
but of grace—
for the bound and the weary, the
searching and the joyful.

Come as you are,
for Christ makes us whole.

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right and our delight to thank you, O God.
From the dawn of creation you called the world good
and formed a people for freedom.

When we were bound, you broke our chains;
when we were lost, you sought us;
when death enclosed us, you spoke life.

In Jesus—friend of the poor and lifter of the lowly—
you cried at a tomb and then commanded: “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Therefore with Lazarus and Mary and Martha,
with saints and angels and all creation, we praise you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus took bread, and reminded us of our freedom.
“Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
After recounting the story of the Israelite’s liberation from Egypt, he took the cup, saying:
“This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

In Christ we are free; in Christ we stand tall! Therefore, in joy we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts—
that this bread may be for us the body of Christ,
this cup the life-blood of the new covenant.
Unbind us by your mercy;
raise us to newness of life;
make us one with Christ, one with one another,
and one in ministry to the world you so love—
until every tear is dried and every chain is broken,
through Jesus Christ our Liberator, who taught us to resist the powers of this world by teaching
us this 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.

*Communion will be served by intinction. You are invited to come forward down the center aisle in two lines,
receive the bread and dip the portion of bread in the cup.*
*Then, “unbind” by cutting your fabric, placing the remaining pieces in the basket,
and offering that which binds us to the Jesus who “binds the strong man.” (Mark 3:27)*

Anthem during communion – *Broken Yet Chosen*

Miller & Thompson

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God, we thank you for this meal of mercy.
You have met us at this table, called us by name, and unbound what binds us.
As you fed your people with manna, feed us now with courage and compassion.
Send us out as bread for the hungry, companions for the lonely,
and advocates for the oppressed.

Take our lives—our time, talents, and treasures—and make of us a living offering.
By your Spirit, help us live as our true selves, made good in your image,
walking in our divine purpose and opening wide spaces of grace wherever we go;
through Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. Amen.

Closing Hymn - (*Glory to God #853*)

We Are Marching in the Light of God