



Bedford Presbyterian Church

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021 at 10 AM

Worship-at-a-Distance Format

GATHERING TOGETHER

Chimes

Gathering Music

“Ride On, King Jesus”

arr. Burleigh

Sean Michalski, soloist

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor John Sawyer

PREPARING FOR THE WORD

Call to Worship¹

Elder Sean Michalski

Before we were born,

Before we took our first breath,

Before the week started,

Before the year started,

Before we said, “I love you,”

Before we said, “I’m sorry,”

Before we figured out who we really are,

Before we figured out who we want to be,

Before it all —

God loved us.

Unconditionally and freely,

Fully and honestly —

God loved us.

Again and again, this is where our story begins.

Let us worship God!

Hymn # 610 (see below) “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

AZMON

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon (Responsive)

God of love, We forget the beginning of the story — that we were made from love, to be love, to give love. Instead of rooting our narrative in the goodness refrain of creation, we skip ahead and find our worth at the fall, with Cain and Abel, lost in the wilderness. We forget that first there was you, and you are love. We forget that out of that love you created us. We forget that from the very first day, you loved first. We forget, because a love like that doesn’t make sense to us. Forgive our low self-esteem. Forgive our resistance to love ourselves. Forgive our hesitation to trust that even we could be made good. And forgive our tendency to pass that doubt on — from generation to generation. Write a new beginning for us that roots our confidence in your unrelenting love. With hope we pray, again and again. Amen.

¹ Some of the prayers and readings in today’s services are by The Reverend Sarah Are and adapted and used with permission from A Sanctified Art, LLC.

Family of faith, no matter what we do, where we go, or what we tell ourselves — God is love, and God is loving us.

Again and again, we are claimed, held, forgiven, and cared for.

In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself — thanks be to God. Amen!

Sung Response (Hymn # 581)

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

Children's Sermon

Pastor John Sawyer

Prayer for Illumination

Elder Sean Michalski

First Scripture Reading

John 3:14-21

Listen now for the Word of God.

Our ears are open. . .

Second Scripture Reading

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Pastor John Sawyer

. . . The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Saved”

Pastor John Sawyer

(Wondrous Love – Again and Again)

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Hymn # 653 (see below) “Give Thanks to God Who Hears Our Cries”

MORNING SONG

Statement of Faith – from A Sanctified Art

Deacon Belinda King

We believe God is love — Unconditional, constant love. We believe this love exists for all, choosing each and every one of us, day after day, again and again and again. We believe that God's love is like a river. Rivers cannot help but flow toward the sea; God's love cannot help but move toward us. We are swimming in it. We believe that God loved first. We believe that God breathed life into dust. We believe that God said, “This is good,” and because we believe that God loved first, we strive to build lives that reflect God's love. May we begin again here. Amen.

Call for the Offering

Deacon Belinda King

Offertory

“Were You There”

arr. Burleigh

Sean Michalski, soloist

*At this time, you are invited to offer your tithes and offerings,
by writing a check and putting it in an envelope to the church,
or through our church's online giving website
(<https://bedfordpresbyterian.org/giving/one-time-gifts-pledges/>),
or by scanning this QR code and making a donation.*



*Your giving has a direct impact on the ministry and mission
of Bedford Presbyterian Church! Thank you!*

Song of Response (Hymn # 606)

OLD HUNDREDTH

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.***

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

Deacon Belinda King

**Merciful God, we thank you for your wonderful works among humankind.
Accept this offering with the dedication of our lives and help us be an emblem of
your steadfast love for all the world, in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer ("debts/debtors")

Pastor John Sawyer

**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.**

GOING FORTH IN GOD'S NAME

Hymn # 215 (see below)

"What Wondrous Love is This"

WONDROUS LOVE

Charge and Benediction and Peace

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And with you.

Closing Song

NORTHUMBRIA MORNING BLESSING

***May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever he may send you.
May he guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.
May he bring you home, rejoicing, at the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home, rejoicing, once again into our doors.***

Postlude



Liturgists and Leaders in today's worship service –

The Reverend John Sawyer, Pastor
Mrs. Barbara Flocco, Director of Music
Elder Sean Michalski, Liturgist and Special Music
Deacon Belinda King, Liturgist
Marc Murai, Elder Michael Chen, and Kirk Wilson, Sound and Video Technicians
Members of our IT and Communications Committee and Covid-19 Task Force

Information on ways to access audio and video versions of today's service can be found at
www.bedfordpresbyterian.org.

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing 610

1 O for a thou - sand tongues to sing my
 2 The name of Je - sus charms our fears, and
 3 Christ speaks, and lis - tening to his voice new
 4 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as -
 5 To God all glo - ry, praise, and love be

dear Re - deem - er's praise, the glo - ries of my
 bids our sor - rows cease, sings mu - sic in the
 life the dead re - ceive; the mourn - ful wak - en
 sist me to pro - claim, to spread through all the
 now and ev - er given by saints be - low and

God and King, the tri - umphs of God's grace!
 sin - ner's ears, brings life, and health, and peace.
 to re - jice; the poor in heart be - lieve.
 earth a - broad the hon - ors of thy name.
 saints a - bove, the church in earth and heaven.

SPANISH

- 1 *Mil voces para celebrar
 a mi Libertador,
 las glorias de su majestad,
 los triunfos de su amor.*

KOREAN

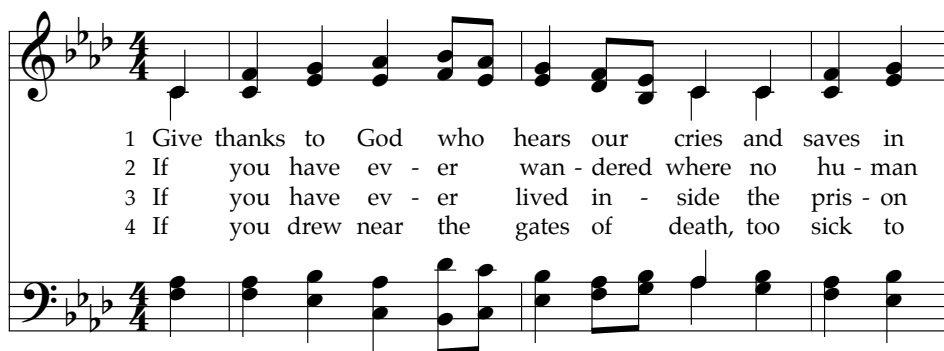
- 1 만 입이 내게 있으면
 그 입 다 가지고
 내 구주 주신 은총을
 늘 찬송하겠네

This text comes from an eighteen-stanza hymn the author wrote to mark the first anniversary of his life-changing conversion experience. It is now customarily the first hymn in Methodist hymnals worldwide. This tune, adapted from a German composer, is the usual North American setting.

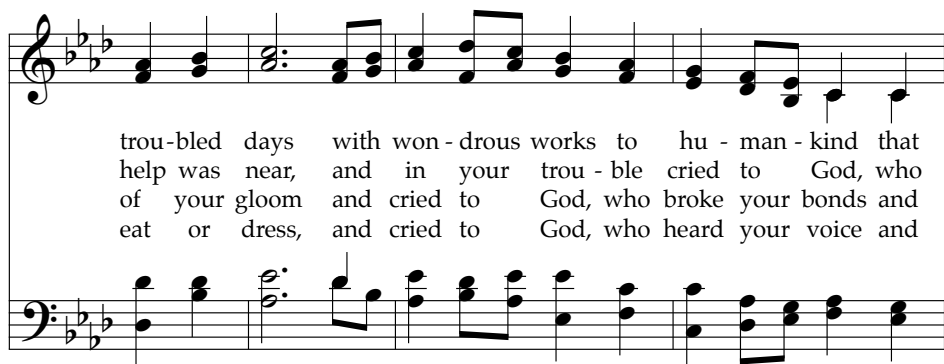
653

Give Thanks to God Who Hears Our Cries

(Psalm 107)



1 Give thanks to God who hears our cries and saves in
2 If you have ev - er wan - dered where no hu - man
3 If you have ev - er lived in - side the pris - on
4 If you drew near the gates of death, too sick to



trou-bled days with won - drous works to hu - man - kind that
help was near, and in your trou - ble cried to God, who
of your gloom and cried to God, who broke your bonds and
eat or dress, and cried to God, who heard your voice and



call for high - est praise. Let all who know God's
res - cued you from fear, then thank the God of
raised you from your tomb, then praise the One who
healed all your dis - tress, then sing with sounds of

The singing of psalm paraphrases is the most long-standing musical practice in Reformed tradition, dating from John Calvin's own congregation in Geneva in the 16th century. This recent paraphrase of Psalm 107 illustrates the interpretive flexibility that is a hallmark of the form.

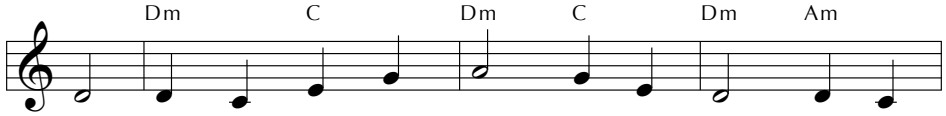
THANKSGIVING

The image shows a musical score for a Thanksgiving hymn. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff, aligned with the notes. The lyrics are: 'sav - ing love sing grate - ful songs al - ways. stead - fast love who dries your ev - ery tear. sets you free, who makes dry plac - es bloom. ho - ly joy; God's won - drous works pro - fess.'

5 If you have felt your courage fail
before a violent sea
and cried to God, who stilled the storm,
and made the wild wind flee,
then in the congregation praise
the One who heard your plea.

6 So praise the One whose love is great,
whose kindness is well-known.
Consider well the healing hand
and help you have been shown,
and tell the world what God has done.
Praise God and God alone!

What Wondrous Love Is This 215



1 What won - drous love is this, O my soul, O my
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing
 3 To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What
 down, when I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
 sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to
 on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this that caused the Lord of
 I was sink - ing down be - neath God's righ - teous
 God and to the Lamb who is the great I
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful



bliss to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul, for my
 frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul, for my
 AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will
 be, and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul!
 soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul!
 sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!
 on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

With its ballad-like repetitions before and after each stanza's central narrative lines, this meditative text needs performance in order to be effective. Its haunting melody proves the means of convincing us that the only adequate response to "wondrous love" is to "sing on."