

Clifton Presbyterian Church is a welcoming Christian Community driven by compassion, generosity, resilience and service to others.

Breath Prayer:

INHALE: God, in you *EXHALE:* we live and move and have our being.



May 3, 2026
Fifth Sunday of Easter

WE GATHER TOGETHER TO WORSHIP GOD

*Words in **BOLD** indicate the congregation reading together. Words of the worship leader are in PLAIN type. An asterisk * indicates that the congregation may stand, as you wish.*

Gathering Song GtG 243

Be Not Afraid

Be not afraid; sing out for joy!

Christ is risen, alleluia!

Be not afraid; sing out for joy!

Christ is risen, alleluia!

Time of Prayer and Care

Prelude

*** Call to Worship**

One: We are here to worship the Lord of heaven and earth,

All: Our God made the world and everything in it.

One: We worship the One who gives life and breath to all things.

All: For in God we live and move and have our being.

One: Let us praise God together.

Presbyterian Hymnal 275 God of Our Life *vv 1, 3

**God of our life, through all the circling years,
we trust in thee.**

**In all the past, through all our hopes and fears,
thy hand we see.**

**With each new day, when morning lifts the veil,
we own thy mercies, Lord, which never fail.**

**God of the coming years, through paths unknown
we follow thee.**

**When we are strong, Lord, leave us not alone.
Our refuge be.**

**Be thou for us in life our daily bread,
our heart's true home when all our years have sped.**

Prayer of Confession

One: The proof of God's amazing love is this:

While we were still sinners Christ died for us.

Because we have faith in him,

we dare to approach God with confidence.

In faith and humility, let us confess our sins

before God and one another. Let us pray.

All: Ever-present God,

we come before you

knowing we have ignored

your promised Holy Spirit

living within us.

Therefore, we forfeit peace

and bear needless worry.

We become confused

and deaf to your voice of truth.

We struggle with obedience to your Word

and fight an overwhelming sense of loneliness.

Forgive us!

**Help us to remember that we are never alone,
that you are with us and for us,
by the power of your Spirit abiding in us,
the Spirit of Jesus the Christ,
our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Assurance of God's Grace *Romans 8:31-32*

One: If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not withhold his own Son,
but gave him up for all of us,
will he not with him also give us everything else?
Believe the good news of the gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.

Sing Praise Presbyterian Hymnal 123

Jesus Christ is Risen Today *vv 4*

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!

praise eternal as God's love; Alleluia!

Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

The Peace of Christ

One: We believe that the church is the body of Christ,
the family of faith with one common name: Christian.

Like many families,
when we get together,
we revel in the reunion.

At Clifton Presbyterian Church
the passing of the peace is a robust time
of reconnecting with old friends
and welcoming new ones.

If it all gets too much,
feel free to return to your seat
and let it all happen around you.

We trust that you are caught up
in the love that binds us all together,
even if you'd rather just sit.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us share that peace with one another.

Those in the sanctuary are invited to greet those around you.

Those on zoom are invited to offer greetings in the chat.

Offering our Gifts to God

For those who would like to make a physical offering, the offering plates are available in the middle of the sanctuary. Donations can also be made online. www.cliftonpc.org

One: In great gratitude to God that we are never left to our own devices,
let us give joyfully and generously for God's work in the world. Let us pray.

**All: Lord God,
in our buildings
that have been dedicated as churches....
In our homes
that hold a special security and sense of comfort....
In our communities
where we enjoy freedom
and the chance to enjoy all the opportunities....
let there be an acceptable return
in the acknowledgements we make,
appreciating all that you have given to us.
May we live respectfully within creation,
and generously in the kindness we show.
Receive the gifts that we offer you.
Bless them, and may they be used to build the Kingdom,
here in this place and beyond. Amen.**

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

**Prayer for Illumination Come and Fill Our Hearts
Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
You alone, O Lord, are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia!**

First Reading Luke 9:46-48 (NRSVUE)

⁴⁶ An argument arose among them concerning which one of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side ⁴⁸ and said to them, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me, for the least among all of you is the greatest."

One: God be in our listening, God be in our understanding.

All: Amen.

Second Reading Acts 17:16-31 (NRSVUE)

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this pretentious babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) ¹⁹ So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. ²³ For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said,
‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

²⁹ “Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰ While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

One: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

**Paul and the Early Church:
Longing for God**

Diane Walton Hendricks

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD AND ARE SENT TO THE WORLD

Communion Anthem

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Thanksgiving, Prayers of the People, and the Lord's Prayer

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

One: It is truly right... As our Savior taught us, we are bold to pray,

**All: 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.**

Breaking of the Bread and Communion of the People

Hymn GtG 527

Eat This Bread

**Eat this bread; drink this cup;
come to Christ and never be hungry.**

**Eat this bread; drink this cup;
trust in Christ and you will not thirst.**

Prayer After Communion

Minute for Ministries

Ringling of the Bell

Charge and Benediction

Benediction Response Presbyterian Hymnal 111

Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing

Good Christians all, rejoice and sing!

Now is the triumph of our King!

To all the world glad news we bring:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We can be reached at office@cliftonpc.org

Liturgy from *Spill the Beans Worship Resource* or *The Presbyterian Outlook*.

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License #A- 721138 and CCLI License 20618208.

Thanks to those leading us in worship

Hosts:

Liturgist:

Prayer Notetaker:

Technical Team:

Nursery Volunteer:

Mission Elder:

Sanctuary Flowers:

CPC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Diane Walton Hendricks, Pastor

John Kim, Music Director

Hannah Harris, Lead Vocalist

Debbie Kilpatrick, Office Administrator

Kate Trussell, Preschool Director

Rev. Dr. Lynn Stanton-Hoyle, Pastor Emerita