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*March 22, 2026*  
*11:00AM*

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### OUR INVITATION

Because we believe that every person is a beloved child of God, on a journey to God, with God, we welcome ALL people, *without exception*, to participate fully in the life of this church.

### OUR MISSION

First United Methodist Church exists to build a community where all people are invited to know God's love and to join God in transforming the world.

### OUR VALUES

*Justice.* Working to eradicate injustice for the excluded and marginalized. *Bridge-Building.* Nurturing multigenerational friendships and community partnerships. *Storytelling.* Sharing our stories of faith and of growth. *Active Learning.* Pursuing knowledge and understanding of God. *Service.* Seeking mutually empowering service opportunities. *Constructive Disruption.* Disrupting systems of power to create positive change.

### OUR FAMILIES

We love children in worship. Activity clipboards and other materials for children are available at the back of the Sanctuary. Our Family Room in the balcony offers rockers, books, toys, and a diaper change station for parents with infants and toddlers. Childcare is available from 8:45AM-12:15PM for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in EDU Room 102.



LEARN MORE AT  
[www.fumcaustin.org](http://www.fumcaustin.org)

# GATHERING AS THE CHURCH

*Asterisks (\*) indicate an invitation to stand as you are able.*

## GATHERING VOLUNTARY

### GREETING

*As you prepare for worship, please greet your neighbors and fill out a Connections Card. You can find the printed version in the pew in front of you or you can use the QR code on the front page of the FUMC Weekly. To let our pastors know about a prayer request for you or someone you love, you can use the printed Connections Card that will be placed in the offering basket when it is passed or you can use the QR code found on the front of the FUMC Weekly.*

*Response:* I was glad when they said to me,  
**“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”**

Psalm 122:1

## ENTERING THE HOLY

### INTROIT

The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;  
such a Way, as gives us breath;  
such a Truth as ends all strife;  
such a Life as killeth death.

Words: George Herbert

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Into this world we are born,  
**into the beauty and sorrow of everyday life.**

Into this day we awake,  
**into possibility and the unknown.**

Into this church we are welcomed,  
**into God’s grace and each other’s truth.**

So let us worship our God this day,  
we who are called and loved.

Beth Merrill Neel, *Hold Fast to What is Good*

### \* HYMN 57

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Stanzas 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7

## HEARING GOD’S WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O Lord,  
your Word is a lamp to our feet  
and a light to our path.

Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love,  
and strength to follow on the path you set before us;  
through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE

John 11:1-7, 17-27, 38-44

HYMN

I Am the Bread of Life

Stanza 1 sung seated as children come forward



1. I am the Bread of life. You who come to me shall not  
2. I am the Res - ur - rec - tion, I am the  
3. Yes, Lord, we be - lieve that you are the



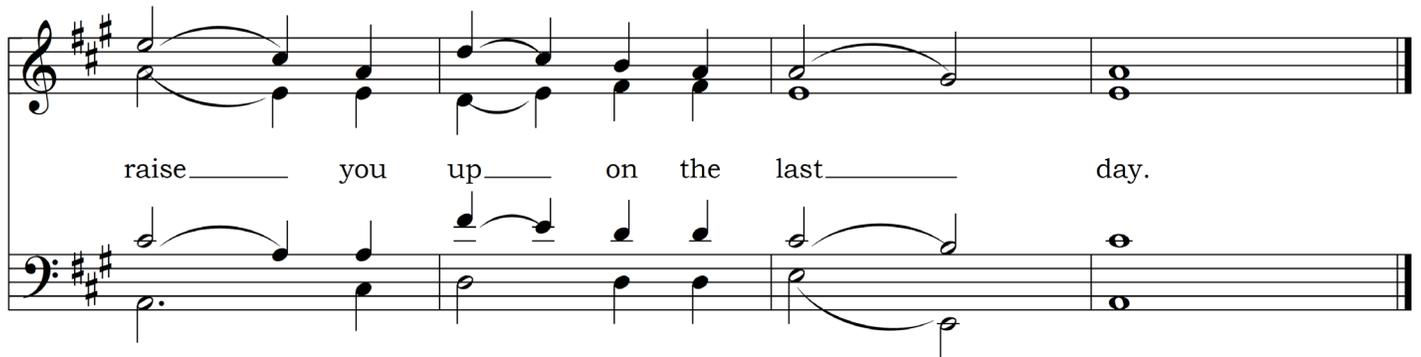
hun - ger; and who be - lieve in me shall not thirst.  
life. If you be - lieve in me,  
Christ, the Son of God,



No one can come to me un - less God beck-ons. And I will  
ev - en though you die, you shall live for ev - er.  
Who has come in - to the world.



raise you up, and I will raise you up, and I will



raise you up on the last day.

Words and Music: John 6 and 11, adapt. S. Suzanne Toolan; Arr. Betty Pulkingham

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## HYMN

I Am the Bread of Life

*Stanzas 2 and 3 sung seated as children return to their seats*

## SERMON

# RESPONDING IN FAITH

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*As we pray, please join in the response:*

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our God in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory, forever.

Amen.

## INVITATION TO THE FAITH JOURNEY

*Are you interested in what it means to be a member of First Church? First Steps is an informal gathering where you can meet the pastors and staff, learn about United Methodist beliefs, hear more about our many ministry opportunities, ask questions about this community of faith, and explore whether membership at First Church is your next step in faith. Lunch is provided and childcare is available in EDU Room 102. To sign up, fill out a Connections Card and place it in the offering basket or go online at [fumcaustin.org/first-steps](http://fumcaustin.org/first-steps).*

## OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS TO GOD

## OFFERTORY

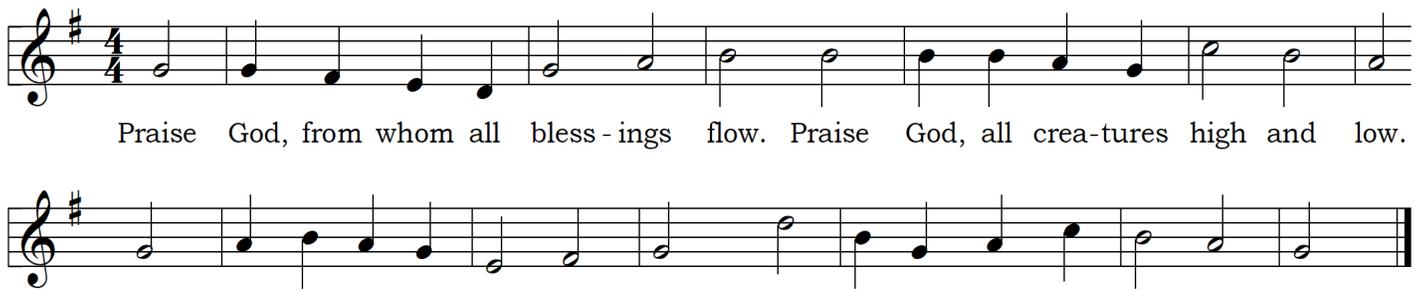
## Nearer, My God, to Thee

Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee,  
even though it be a cross that raiseth me.  
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God to thee.  
Oh let the way appear, leading to heaven,  
all that thou sendest me, in mercy given.  
Thy Spirit beckons me, nearer, my God to thee.  
There in my Father's home, safe and at rest,  
there in my Savior's love, perfectly blest.  
Age after age to be nearer, my God to thee!

Words: Sarah F. Adams and Edward H. Bickersteth, Jr.

Music: Lowell Mason; Arr. Dan Forrest

## \* PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God, all crea - tures high and low.

Praise God, in Je - sus ful - ly known: Cre - a - tor, Word, and Spir - it one.

Words: Brian Wren © 1989 Hope Publishing Co.

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Music: *Old 100th*; Attr. Louis Bourgeois

## GOING OUT TO SERVE

### BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Let us pray:

**God, our gracious Creator,**

**we give you thanks for the gift of life  
to these who celebrate their birthdays in March.**

**Grant that they may make this new year in their lives  
an offering that will enrich your world and give you glory.**

**Cause them to grow in wisdom and grace  
and strengthen their trust in your goodness**

**all the days of their lives;  
through Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

The Book of Common Prayer, 1979, alt.

## \* BENEDICTION

## \* HYMN 534

Be Still, My Soul

## VOLUNTARY

+ + +

## CHANCEL FLOWERS

The flowers are placed on the chancel by Doug and Janet Camp in celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary today.

## WORSHIP LEADERS

*Preacher:* Reverend Taylor Fuerst

*Liturgist:* Reverend John Hathaway

*Music:* Scott Davis

*Cello:* Nicholas Key

## GIFTS MAKE TRANSFORMATION POSSIBLE

Cash or checks will be received during the offertory. We also have three convenient ways to give online: (1) use your smartphone to scan the QR code provided on the front page of the FUMC Weekly and follow the prompts; (2) use the FUMC App on your smart phone; and/or (3) make an online donation at [fumcaustin.org/giving](http://fumcaustin.org/giving).

## SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00-10:45AM

### ADULTS

Our classes offer adults a wide selection of age groups, study topics, and learning styles. Many classes are meeting in person and online. Visit [fumcaustin.org/sundayschool](http://fumcaustin.org/sundayschool).

### YOUTH

Sunday School for 6th through 12th grade begins in the Great Hall of the Family Life Center. Learn more at [fumcaustin.org/youth](http://fumcaustin.org/youth).

### CHILDREN

Sunday School for preschool through 5th grade is located on the first floor of the Sanctuary Building. Learn more at [fumcaustin.org/children](http://fumcaustin.org/children).



**ORDER DEADLINE: MARCH 30**

A traditional symbol of Easter, the lily is a flower that seemingly dies away, then returns with new life each year.

You are invited to place lilies in the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday to the glory of God and in honor of or in memory of loved ones. Plants cost \$20 each and are florist quality and great for replanting so you can enjoy them long after Easter. You may order lilies by filling in the form below and placing it in basket during the offering or mailing it to the church office; by contacting Tami Kellberg at [tami@fumcaustin.org](mailto:tami@fumcaustin.org) or 512-478-5684 (ext. 226); or by using the QR code. If paying by check, please write "Easter Lily" on the memo line of your check.



Orders must be received by 10:00AM on Monday, March 30. Plants may be picked up after the 11:00AM worship service on Easter Sunday, April 5.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of donor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number (in case of questions)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amount enclosed (make check payable to FUMC)

The lily is in honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The lily is in memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# LOVE BOLDLY. LEAD COURAGEOUSLY.

Give the gift of leadership to faith communities around the world.

Dear Church,

I have never been to seminary, but my life and faith have been formed by my parents, my sister, and so many dear friends who were shaped by theological education. In seminary, the pastors I know and love had their certainty stretched. As they became more deeply connected to the story of God, the answers they thought they had often gave way to questions and doubts—and eventually to wisdom and wonder. Their study and preparation transformed them into pastoral leaders who impact not only their own faith, but mine, yours, and everyone else's in the communities they serve.

**Their guidance became a gift shared with all of us—and it's a gift I continue to receive.**

When the Council of Bishops asked churches across the United Methodist connection to take a special offering for theological education outside the United States, **I felt that call acutely.** For twelve years, I had the privilege of serving on the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. During that time, I visited theological schools and met leaders in Mozambique, Liberia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. **I witnessed firsthand the vitality of the worldwide church—and the challenges pastors face when they long to study more deeply but lack the resources to do so.**

Many of us in the United States may not realize the disparity: while U.S. seminaries benefit from significant endowments and denominational support, most theological schools outside the U.S. have little or no financial foundation. **Fewer than five percent of United Methodist clergy abroad have access to a theological master's degree,** even though hundreds of pastors are ready and eager to pursue one.

Our worldwide church also carries a complicated history shaped by colonialism and marked by deep divisions in recent years, including over the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ siblings. **These are real wounds. They are also a call to act. Supporting theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines is one way we can begin to address long-standing disparities and form leaders who embody reconciliation, justice, and hope.**

I believe education transforms leaders—and that well-formed leaders strengthen communities. My hope is that this initiative will raise up leaders who love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously. **If this vision resonates with you, I hope you will support this work. Together, we can help nurture leaders whose wisdom, courage, and compassion will bless the church and the communities they serve for generations to come—and become the same kind of gift that faithful pastors have been in each of our lives.**

With gratitude and resurrection joy,

Rachel Wright,  
FUMC Austin Senior Director of Strategy



Gifts, marked "Easter Offering" may be placed in the offering basket, mailed to or brought by the church office, made online at [fumcaustin.org/giving](http://fumcaustin.org/giving), or by using the QR code provided and following the step-by-step instructions. Be sure to select "Easter Offering" from the drop-down menu.

