

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Unison*)

We believe in God, whose love is not distant or untouched by suffering, but enters fully into the fragile life of the world. We believe in Jesus Christ, who stood at the tomb of a friend and wept, revealing a God whose heart is moved by human sorrow. In his life we see love without armor, compassion without limits, and courage stronger than fear. We believe the Spirit of God is at work among us, softening hardened hearts, awakening courage where there was resignation, and forming communities where grief is honored and hope is kept alive. We believe the church is called not to withdraw from the world's pain but to stand within it — bearing witness to mercy, defending the dignity of every neighbor, and refusing every lie that says some lives matter less. We believe that even in a world where death and loss are real, God's love is stronger. And so we choose the risky grace of love: to remain open, to remain compassionate, to remain faithful to Christ's living way. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER (*Unison*)

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.

OFFERING *Abide With Me* arr. Jason W. King

*DOXOLOGY 710 *We Lift Our Voices* OFFERING

We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering. Lord, use our voices; Lord, use our hands; Lord, use our lives; they are yours: we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you. We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering; we are an offering.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN 819 *Be Still, My Soul* FINLANDIA

*CHARGE & BLESSING

*SENDING HYMN 541 *God Be With You Until We Meet Again* RANDOLPH

God be with you till we meet again; loving counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you till we meet again.

*POSTLUDE



March 22, 2026

*Covenant Presbyterian Church
1065 Gaines School Road
Athens, Georgia 30605*

www.coupresathens.org

COVENANT at WORSHIP

Liturgical Color: PURPLE

11:00 am Worship

Fifth Sunday in Lent

GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTARY

I Saw the Cross of Jesus

arr. Michael Ryan

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, all who carry sorrow.

Come, all who know love and loss.

Come, all who have wept beside the tombs of this world.

Come, all who long for new life where death has spoken.

Jesus does not stand far off from human grief.

Jesus comes near, weeps with us, and calls us by name.

Come, let us worship the Lord whose heart remains open to the world.

Let us worship God!

*HYMN 757

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples

KINGSFOLD

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Tender and merciful God, you created us for love, yet we confess how often we make ourselves smaller in order to feel safer. We guard our hearts rather than give them. We turn from the pain of others when it asks too much of us. We confess that we have practiced selective compassion. We have wept over some suffering while ignoring the suffering our society makes ordinary. Forgive us, O Christ, for the ways we resist your tender courage. Unbind us from fear. Soften what has grown hard in us.

Teach us again the strength of compassion, the holiness of presence, and the costly grace of love that does not turn away. Hold us in your mercy, and lead us into the brave and living way of Jesus. In his holy name we pray.
(Silent prayers of confession)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS (Responsive)

Hear the good news:

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Not even death can separate us from the love of God.

In Christ, we are met in our grief, held in mercy, and called again into life.

My friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God! Amen.

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*RESPONSE 423

Create In Me a Clean Heart, O God

SARADAY

Create in me a clean heart, O God: create in me a clean O God, create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit with in me.

LISTEN FOR THE GOOD NEWS

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE

Psalm 130

Pew Bible, p.562

SECOND SCRIPTURE

John 11:1-44

Pew Bible, p.980-981

PROCLAMATION

Love Without Armor

Rev. Tom Buchanan

*HYMN 834

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

PRECIOUS LORD