

BARBARA RUSTIN

MAKE ROOM FOR FAITH



Sunday, February 25, 2024 — The Second Sunday of Lent

The First Church in Albany (Reformed Church in America)

Founded in 1642; Continuing in Ministry Today.

In response to God's unconditional love for all people made known to us in Jesus Christ, we are called to be a welcoming and affirming community. The First Church in Albany includes young and old, families, couples and singles, rich and poor, persons of various races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities, differing physical and mental abilities, believers and seekers. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down dividing walls and building a community where we are loved.

Prelude Reflection *A haiku for today's worship service*

Abraham believed,
Faith reckoned as righteousness,
Hope's promise received.

Prelude "Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God" Carl F. Mueller

Tolling of Bell *Bell tolled by children of First Church*

Processional Hymn "We Are People on a Journey" (see insert)

For each Sunday leading up to Palm Sunday during this season of Lent, five congregants will process with common Christian symbols of worship, signifying our Lenten journey to the cross. These common Christian symbols of worship are a cross (or cloth to drape the cross with), a candle lighter, the church's bible, and the sacramental elements of water, wheat, and vines.

Welcome, Announcements, & Blessing *Isaiah 40:31*

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Call to Worship

Votum: Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.
Amen.

Leader: Lenten pilgrims, we are invited to journey through this season of Lent,

People: towards the One who calls us to a life of faith.

Leader: We walk with the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus, wherever he leads us,

People: even though we carry our fears, our doubts, and our longings with us.

Leader: Like Abraham, we hope against hope and trust in your promises,

People: even when those promises seem foolish in the moment.

Leader: For great is your faithfulness, O Lord! You will not forsake us.

People: You do not change, and your compassion never fails.

Leader: Let us worship this God who is always faithful!

***Opening Hymn** *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"* (see insert)

Prayer of Confession *Based on Romans 4*

God who never changes, we confess that we are often fickle people, changing our loyalties and affection based on our circumstances and self interests. Send your Spirit anew today, so that we might change and become faithful like Abraham who "did not weaken in faith, but grew strong in his faith and gave you glory, being fully convinced that you are able to do what you promise." Amen.

Time of silence

Assurance of Pardon & Fulfillment of the Law

Friends of Jesus, the Apostle Paul writes that Abraham "hoping against hope" believed, and "therefore, it was reckoned to him as righteousness"— a righteousness that blessed all peoples of the world. Because Abraham trusted God, he was blessed, and so were others. Do the same, and be set free!

***Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us spend a few moments greeting one another.

Children's Message & Blessing

Prayer for Illumination

Promise-making God, we trust that you have a Word for us today. We open our hearts to you now to receive your Word and promises. Amen.

Sermon Text Romans 4:13-25

For the promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), and the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore "it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon

Make Room for Faith

A Prayer of Blessing on the Word

***Hymn of Response** *"Faith Begins by Letting Go "* (see insert)

Profession of Faith Q&A 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism

Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true all that God has revealed to us in Scripture; **it is also a wholehearted trust which the Holy Spirit creates in me by the gospel**, specifically that God has freely granted, not only to others but to me also:

**forgiveness of sins,
eternal righteousness,
and salvation.**

These are gifts of sheer grace, granted solely by Christ's merit. [Christ's trust and faithfulness, even to the cross, that was reckoned as righteousness to me and to you.]

Tithes & Offerings: *If you would like to connect more with the life and mission of First Church, please fill out a Welcome Card found in your pew and place it in the offering as it goes by.*

Offertory

"Praise Him"

J.S. Bach

*Praise him, praise the great Creator,
Praise him, praise the great Creator,
For his goodness;
For his bounty showered upon us throughout the year.*

***Doxology** #592 in pew hymnal

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The Lord's 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.**

***Sending Hymn**

“Standing on The Promises”

(see insert)

***Charge & Blessing**

Postlude

“Allegro Maestoso”

G. Blake

Note: Please join Rev. Trey in Zimmerman Hall for the start of our Second Hour Lenten series on worship following coffee time.



Preacher: Rev. Trey Tirpak

Liturgist:

Organist: Iteke Prins

Vocalist and/or Specialist:

Audio/Visual: Joshua Bliss and Stephen Reohr

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A poster for 'SOUP & SANDWICHES THURSDAY'. The background is a light gray surface with various fresh ingredients like tomatoes, herbs, and peppers scattered around. On the left, there are three bowls of soup: a green one at the top, a red one in the middle with croutons and basil, and a yellow one at the bottom with orange slices. The text 'SOUP & SANDWICHES' is in large, bold, yellow letters, and 'THURSDAY' is in large, bold, black letters. Below this, the text 'Are you in the mood for good, warm, homecooked soup? Join us on Thursday between 11:30am-1pm' is in black. At the bottom right, there is a small photo of a person in a green jacket and hat standing next to a red cooler. Below the photo, the text 'The First Church in Albany' is written in white.

SOUP & SANDWICHES
THURSDAY

Are you in the
mood for good,
warm, homecooked
soup? Join us on
Thursday between
11:30am-1pm



The First Church in Albany

Lent 2024

Ash Wednesday
Feb. 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday
12pm Worship in Chapel

Feb. 18, 2024

First Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Texts

Feb. 25, 2024

Second Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Texts

Mar. 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent

Women in the Bible: Naomi

Mar. 10, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Women in the Bible: Deborah

Mar. 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Women in the Bible: Esther

Mar. 24, 2024

Palm Sunday

We process with Palms like those
in Jerusalem to begin Holy Week.

Mar. 28, 2024

Maundy Thursday

Service at 7pm in Sanctuary

Mar. 29, 2024

Good Friday

Capital Area Council of Churches
Noon Service, Location TBD

Mar. 30, 2024

Holy Saturday

Details TBD

Mar. 31, 2024

Easter Sunrise Service

FOCUS Easter Sunrise Service at
West Capital Park at 6:30am

Mar. 31, 2024

Easter Sunday

10am; We receive new members

Prayers, Concerns & Joys

- Kathleen and Glenn Claydon as they mourn the death of brother-in-law John Sullivan.
- Also Kathleen Claydon, recovering from a health issue.
- Rose Hunsberger and family as they mourn the death of her father
- Ned Monthie, recovering from surgery
- Michelle Williams, for recovery
- Matt, cousin of Barb Andrews with health issues
- Rev. Dr. Mashona as she continues her health journey
- Mia Westman
- Becky Gardner
- Requests for the Tirpak Family
 - Trey's uncle, with cancer, family friend, with cancer, and a family friend who is caring for a terminally ill child
- Ginny Giguere
- Donna Schultz
- Jeff Curry
- Family of Gillian Persons and for her sister Sylvia
- Carol LaBatte
- Sam, son of Barb and Dave Andrews, with continued health concerns
- Charnelle Jones
- Family of Norma Jean Ballou
- Ken Lucas, friend of Philip Labatte
- Kokese Ballou
- For Jennifer Recene Gallagher
- Alexis Parry, niece of Cheryl Gowie
- Gail Santimaw, friend of Judith Utley-Suess
- John Utley, brother of Judith Utley- Suess
- Judith Utley-Suess, for strength
- Harold Bushnel
- Alex Bliss
- Mary Weijola
- Cheryl Gowie
- Ralph McNeil, brother of Norma Jean Ballou
- Anthony, of the Brown Family
- Olivia Gaydushek
- Clergy, staff and leaders of the First Church in Albany as they plan Lent and Holy Week Events.
- Prayers for Ukraine, Israel and Palestine and all areas of conflict across the globe. May we all remember to lead with love.
- For an end to gun violence here in Albany, in the U.S., and around the world.

If you have a concern or joy you would like to share with our church family,
email office@firstchurchinalbany.org or call the office at 518-463-4449

February 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1  Potluck & First Thursday Night of Worship 		Albany Classis Meeting 9am Bethany Ref.
4 <i>G</i>  Communion Sunday  Focus Worship Delmar	5  Prayer Shawl Meeting	6  Elders' Meeting	7  AA	8  Choir Rehearsal	9	10
11 <i>T</i>  Communion Sunday	12 	13  Ash Wednesday	14  AA 	15  Castle Island (Bilingual Montessori) Play 6pm	16	17
18 <i>M</i>  Communion Sunday	19  Presidents Day Pantry & Office Closed	20 	21  AA 	22 	23	24
25 <i>T</i>  Communion Sunday	26 	27  Focus Board Mtg.	28  AA WMA Mtg.	29  Choir Rehearsal		

Key:



Indoor Worship
10am



Communion
Sunday



Coffee
Hour



Pantry
9am



Centering
Prayer 12pm



Book
Study



Soup &
PB&J
11:30am



Choir
Rehearsal



Weather vanes

Preacher: *M* Rev. Dr. Mashona Walston *T* Rev. Trey Tirpak *G* Guest



First Church in Albany

110 North Pearl St.
Albany NY 12207
518-463-4449

www.firstchurchinalbany.org

We Are People on a Journey

System 1:

Chords: A, E, A, E, E/D#

Vocal: 1 We are peo - ple on a jour - ney, fol - lowing
2 We are peo - ple on a jour - ney, tak - ing

System 2:

Chords: C#m7, A2, E, A

Vocal: where up the Mas - ter walks. We are peo - ple on a
the cross of Christ. We are peo - ple on a

System 3:

Chords: E, F#m7, E, A, E

Vocal: jour - ney in the sha - dow 7 of the cross.
jour - ney, mov - ing on from death to life.

System 4:

Chords: A2, E

Vocal: What com - pels? The face of Je - sus!
We re - lease the sin that tan - gles.

Who pro - tects? Our faith - ful guide:
We re - lin - quish all ac - claim.

he who treads the road of ser - vice,
We re - ceive the suf - fering Sav - ior,

Christ the Lord, the cru - ci - fied.
he our glo - ry, wealth, and fame.

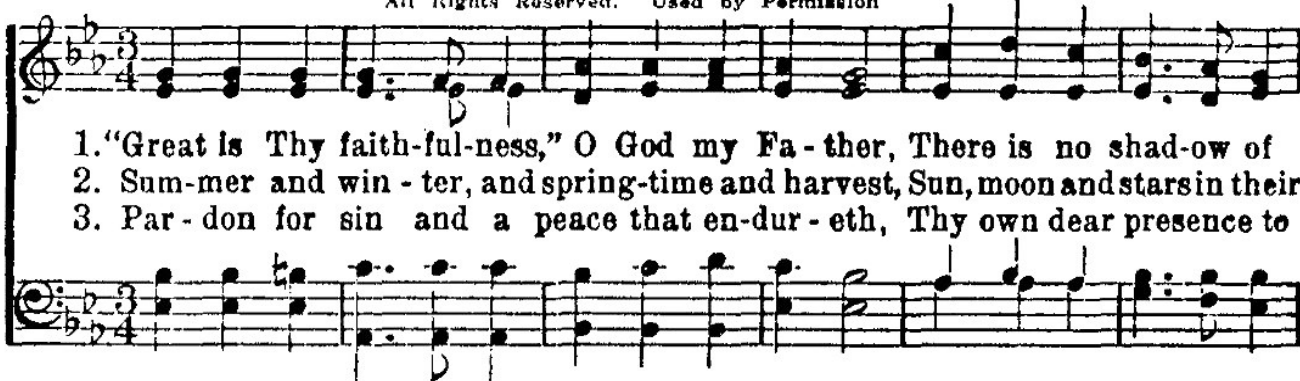
To stanzas

Great is Thy Faithfulness

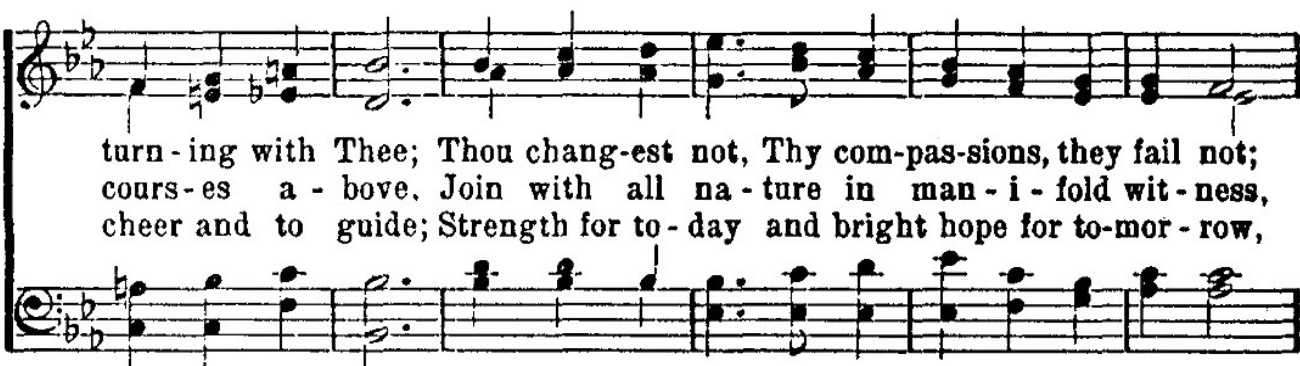
T. O. CHISHOLM

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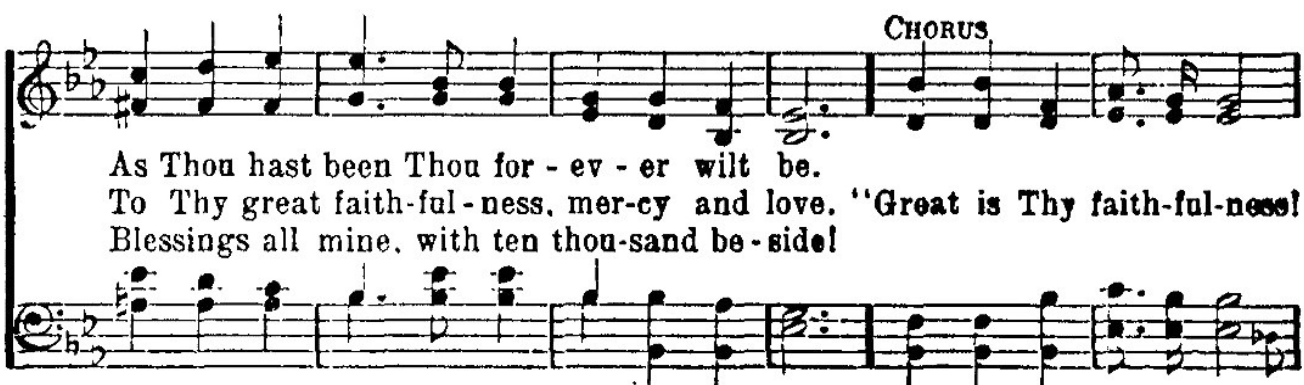
WILLIAM M. RUNYAN



1. "Great is Thy faith-ful-ness," O God my Fa-ther, There is no shad-ow of
2. Sum-mer and win-ter, and spring-time and harvest, Sun, moon and stars in their
3. Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, Thy own dear presence to

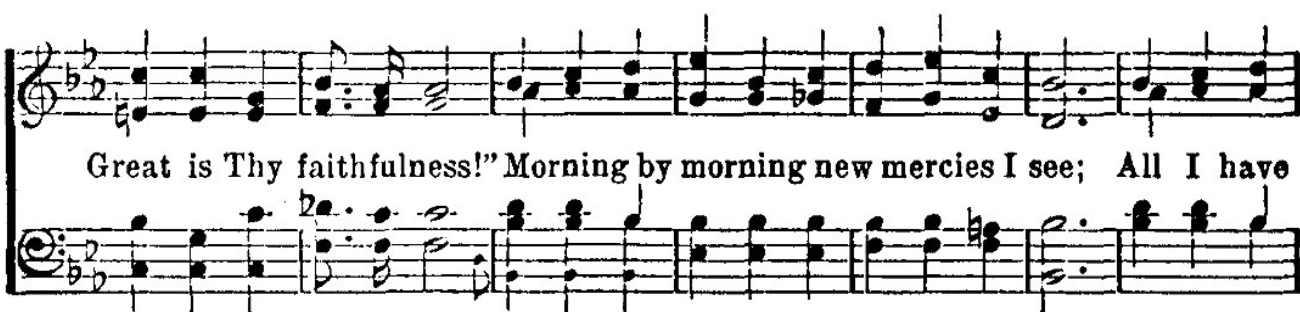


turn-ing with Thee; Thou chang-est not, Thy com-pas-sions, they fail not;
cours-es a-bove. Join with all na-ture in man-i-fold wit-ness,
cheer and to guide; Strength for to-day and bright hope for to-mor-row,

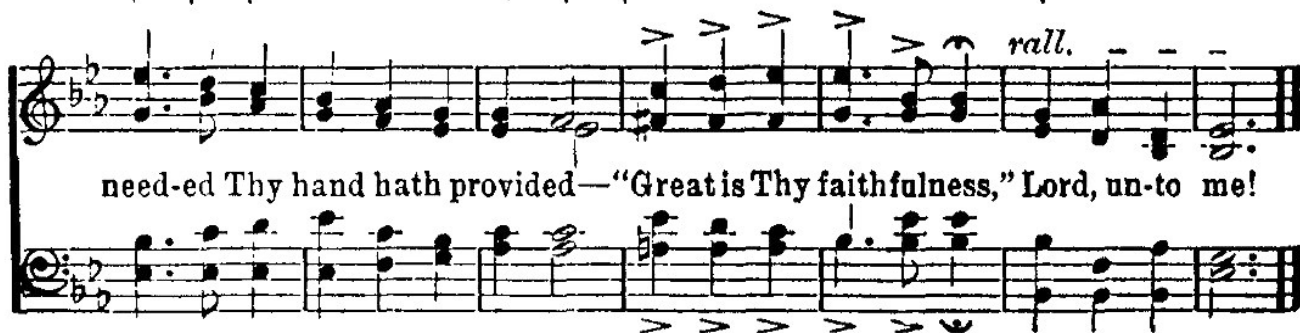


CHORUS

As Thou hast been Thou for-ev-er wilt be.
To Thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy and love. "Great is Thy faith-ful-ness!
Blessings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!



Great is Thy faithfulness!" Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have

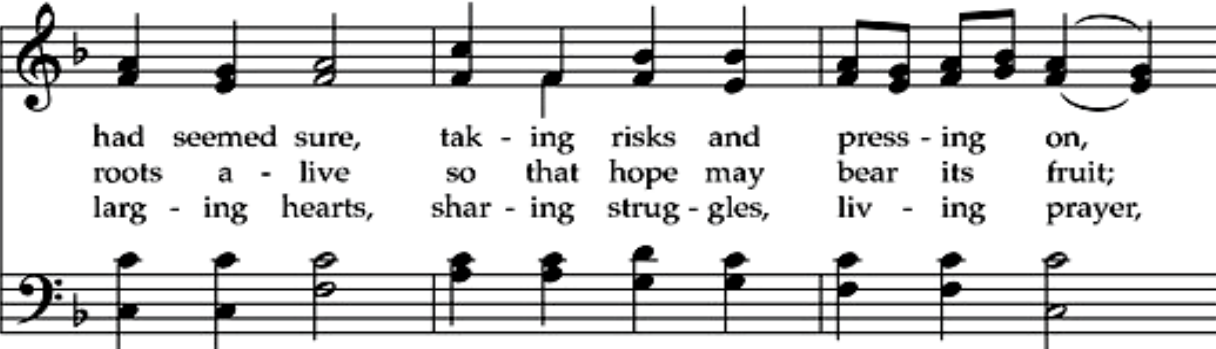


need-ed Thy hand hath provided—"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, un-to me!

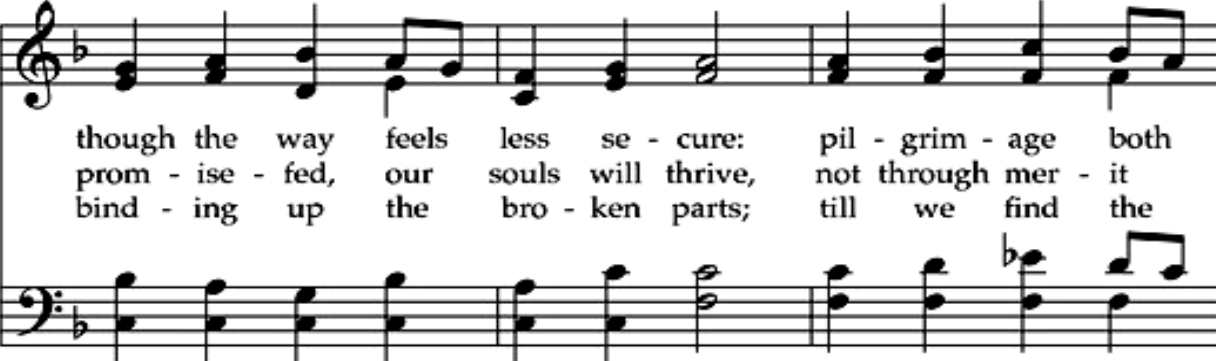
Faith Begins by Letting Go



1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what
 2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem - ory's
 3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en -



had seemed sure, tak - ing risks and press - ing on,
 roots a - live so that hope may bear its fruit;
 larg - ing hearts, shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer,



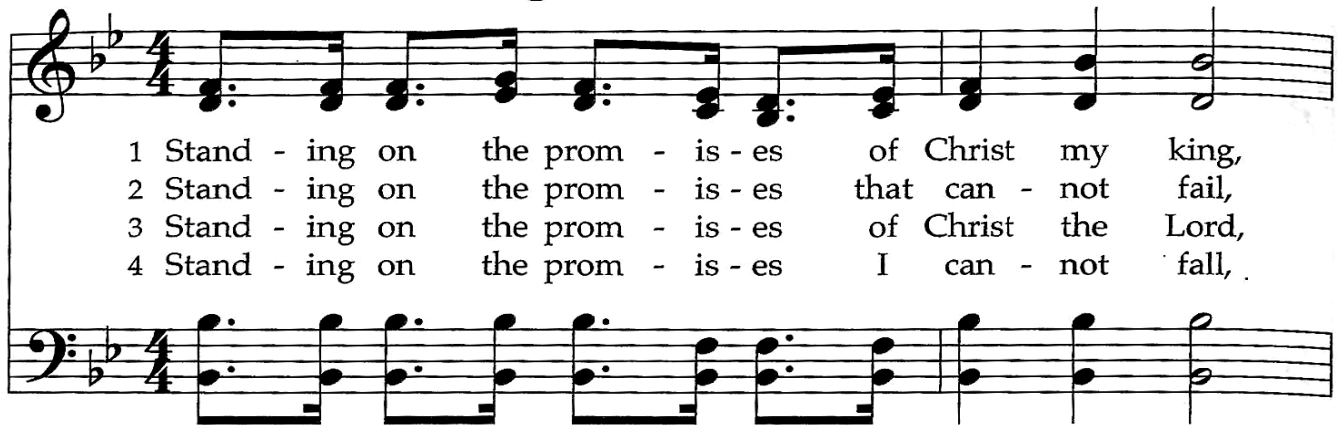
though the way feels less se - cure: pil - grim - age both
 prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive, not through mer - it
 bind - ing up the bro - ken parts; till we find the



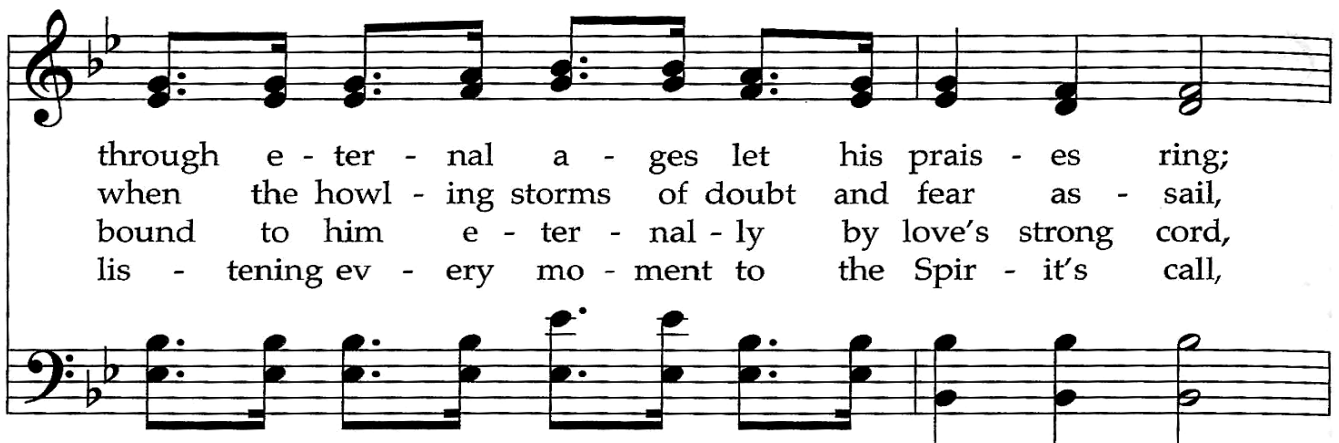
right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.
 we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
 com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

This text affirms that faith is not a state of being but a process of becoming what we are called to be in relationship to God, other people, and the world. The movement from one stage of faith to another is suggested by gestures of the hand: letting go, holding on, reaching out.

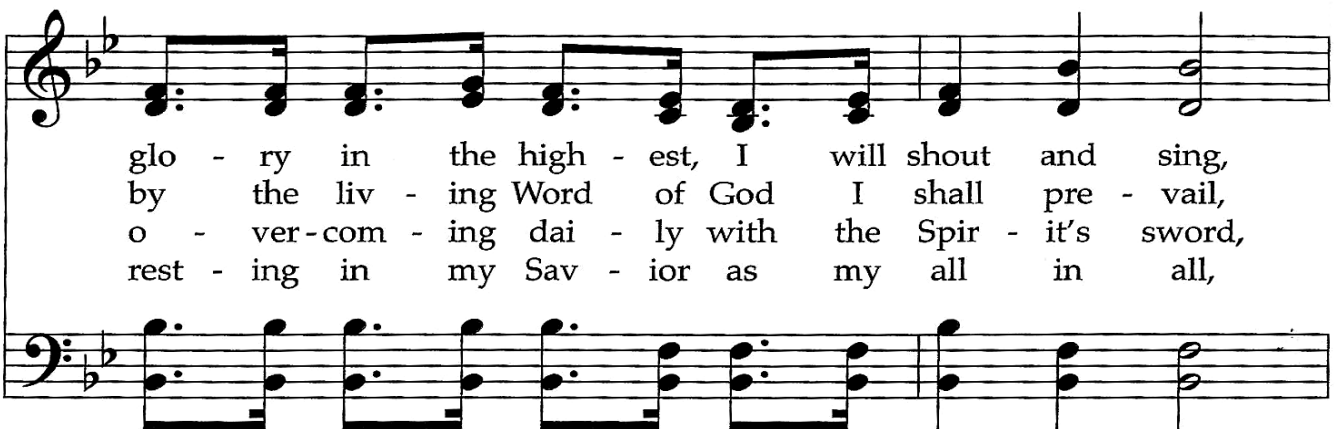
Standing on the Promises



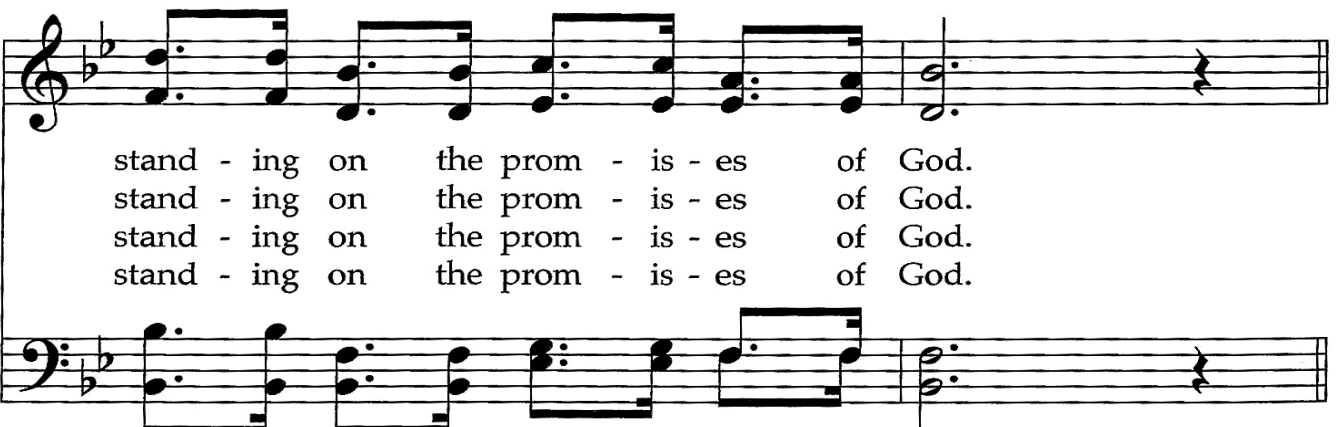
1 Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ my king,
2 Stand - ing on the prom - is - es that can - not fail,
3 Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ the Lord,
4 Stand - ing on the prom - is - es I can - not fall,



through e - ter - nal a - ges let his prais - es ring;
when the howl - ing storms of doubt and fear as - sail,
bound to him e - ter - nal - ly by love's strong cord,
lis - tening ev - ery mo - ment to the Spir - it's call,



glo - ry in the high - est, I will shout and sing,
by the liv - ing Word of God I shall pre - vail,
o - ver - com - ing dai - ly with the Spir - it's sword,
rest - ing in my Sav - ior as my all in all,



stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.

Refrain

Stand - ing, stand - ing, stand - ing,
stand - ing on the prom - is - es, stand - ing on the prom - is - es,

stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God my Sav - ior;

stand - ing, stand - ing, stand - ing,
stand - ing on the prom - is - es, stand - ing on the prom - is - es,

I'm stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.

Perhaps because this hymn is so well known, its language sounds vaguely scriptural; but while there are various biblical uses of "stand" and "promise(s)," the two words are never combined. The confidence here is similar to that of "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" (see no. 353)