



**seeking:**

*How do we  
begin again?*



Abigail Charbeneau is our guest pianist in this morning's worship service. Abigail lives in New Hampshire and is on the piano faculty at both Plymouth State University and St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. She is also the organist and accompanist at South Congregational Church in Concord, and is married to Sarah Dan Jones. Abby has a bachelor's in piano from Skidmore College, and a master's in both performance and in pedagogy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. There, she also served as organist and accompanist at Garden Hills Baptist Church, where Greystone member Tim Hendrix served as Minister of Music. We welcome Abby and are glad to have her leading us in worship today.

*With Christ as the Cornerstone, we will build a church of living stones,  
where every member is a minister and is equipped to express God's love  
by word and deed to all people.*

*Based on 1 Peter 2:5, 6*

# The Worship of God

March 5, 2023

The Second Sunday in Lent

## Gathering Music

### Prelude

“My Lord, What a Morning!”  
Abigail Charbeneau

Traditional Spiritual;  
arr. Calvin Taylor

### Welcome

Anna Beth Cross

### † Call to Worship

One: What is it like to begin again?

**All: It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.  
It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.  
It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.  
It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.**

One: May we find God in our seeking.

**All: May we learn as we go.**

One: May we be brave enough to begin again.

**All: Let us worship the God of new beginnings.**

### † Opening Hymn 393

“Breathe on Me, Breath of God”

Words by Edwin Hatch,  
Music by Robert Jackson

**Breathe on me, Breath of God; fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.**

**Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,  
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.**

**Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine,  
until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.**

**Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,  
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.**

† *Please rise in body or spirit.*

*During the last stanza of our Opening Hymn,  
all children are invited to come forward for today's children's sermon.*

## Children's Sermon

April Alston

### † Centering Song

### "Seeking"

Words and music by  
Christian McIvor ©2023

What are we seek-ing?\_ Where do we hear God speak-ing?\_ May our

ques-tions lead to deep-er un-der-stand-ing\_ through a faith and love that nev-er stop ex pand-ing.

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The musical score is written for voice and piano in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains the first two lines of lyrics. The second system contains the remaining lyrics and is marked with a '5' at the beginning, indicating a fifth measure rest. The music features a simple, melodic line for the voice and a supporting piano accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

## Call to Confession

Steve Rose

### Prayer of Confession

One: God of new life, you call us into unknown places,

**All: and we bury our heads in the sand.**

One: You promise all the stars in the sky,

**All: and we doubt it can be true.**

One: You speak of new life in the Spirit,

**All: and we tell ourselves we've missed our chance.**

One: Over and over and over again, you invite us closer to you.

**All: Show us the way. Forgive our mistakes. Give us the courage to begin again with you.  
Amen.**

## Words of Forgiveness

One: Join me in saying:

**All: We belong to God. We are held in God's love. We are made new. Amen.**

## Offertory Anthem

“Hold On”  
GBC Choir

Words by Adam Tice,  
Music by Sally Ann Morris

When pain or sorrow is too much to bear;  
when your heart feels numb, unable to care,  
when faith seems so pointless that you cannot pray,  
when no one knows quite what to say, then

Refrain:

hold on, hold on,

to find a way to get through.

And when your hope is gone and you can't hold on,  
we will hold on to you.

If God is silent when you need to hear  
that you're not alone, that comfort is near;  
if you are abandoned when you need a friend,  
when all good things come to an end, then

(Refrain)

And when it looks like there's no end in sight,  
know all that is wrong can still be made right.  
You're never alone; God has promised to be  
with us even when we can't see, so

(Refrain)

## † Doxology

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

O WALY WALY;  
Words by Neil Weatherhogg,  
Music: Scottish Folk Melody

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

## † Prayer of Dedication

Laura Nelson

**Scripture Reading**

John 3:1-17

David Cross

**Sermon**

*How do we begin again?*

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

**Silent Reflection**

**Communion**

Chrissy Tatum Williamson and April Alston

**Prayer after Communion**

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

✠ **Musical Response**

“Who on Earth can Find God’s Kingdom?”

NETTLETON;

Words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette,

Music from Wyeth’s *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813

**Who on earth can find God's kingdom? Who can know God's wondrous reign?**

**How can we receive the freedom of a people born again?**

**Can we hear the winds a-blowing — where they come from and return?**

**Can we see God's kingdom growing? These are things we long to learn.**

**Nicodemus said to Jesus, "God must be at work in you!**

**Rabbi, you're a God-sent teacher; we can see the signs you do!"**

**Jesus saw his faith and questions, so he spoke these words of love:**

**"Surely, none can see God's kingdom, till they're born from God above."**

**Nicodemus kept on wondering, "How can one be born anew?"**

**Jesus said, "This is the birthing that God's Spirit brings to you.**

**If you want to see God's kingdom, do not be at all surprised.**

**You can't see God's Spirit moving, yet it's working, changing lives."**

**God, we see your world around us, and we wonder what will be.**

**Is your loving reign among us; is it something yet to see?**

**May we trust your Spirit's moving, giving life and hope and birth.**

**May we trust what you are doing, joy of heaven, hope of earth.**

**Celebrating Community**

Anna Beth Cross

**Benediction**

Chrissy Tatum Williamson

*We invite you to remain in the sanctuary for a special extended postlude offered by our guest artist, Abigail Charbeneau. The piece, "Appalachian Morning" is a contemporary piece written by Paul Hally, and exudes the joy and hope we have through faith in God.*

**Postlude**

“Appalachian Morning”

By Paul Halley

Abigail Charbeneau

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"Renacimiento" by Carmelle Beaugelin | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

## Cover Art:

**“Renacimiento”** by Carmelle Beaugelin,

Inspired by John 3:1-17, Conté crayon, charcoal, acrylic, gold gild on paper

I was raised in a Spanish-speaking Pentecostal church in Miami called “Renacimiento.” A simple translation

of *renacimiento* to English means “rebirth” or “renaissance.” For my small Pentecostal church, *renacimiento* meant far more than the symbolism of being “born-again” Christians. It was a perpetual reminder that each time the saints gather to encounter Jesus, the Spirit calls us to continuous transformation, calling dead things into new life and Holy Spirit-filled revival.

It is no wonder that Nicodemus seeks Jesus in the cover and darkness of night. It is in the quiet of night that our deepest fears startle us awake, that our anxieties of the day keep us from sound rest, and that the fear of the death of our dreams and bodies looms. As rapper Nas wrote in his debut album, *Illmatic*, “sleep is the cousin of death.”<sup>3</sup>

Yet Jesus challenges Nicodemus’ seeking in the night with a call to be born again, to *renacimiento*. Not just improvement, but transformation. Not simply resuscitation of what is and was, but a complete resurrection of what could and will be.

In this image, a metaphorically disrobed, aging, and vulnerable Nicodemus, surrounded by the milky gray swirls of water and spirit, wonders: *How can this be? Haven’t I reached past my benchmarks? How is it that you are calling me to begin again?*

We may see ourselves in Nicodemus today, holding the same questions in the sleeplessness of our darkest nights. Yet, what if we chose to hold fast to the faith that responds to our seeking? Jesus promises us that the winds and waters of the Spirit will lead us toward our own new beginning. Each of us will experience *renacimiento* if we dare to seek it.

—Carmelle Beaugelin

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3 Nas. “N.Y. State of Mind.” Track 2 on *Illmatic*. Columbia Records, 1994.