



The Ordination of Jeff Chu

Saturday, April 6, 2024  
11 o'clock in the morning

Special Session of the Reverend Classis of Rockland-Westchester

Old First Reformed Church  
Brooklyn, New York

Prelude

“The Promise”  
“Your Labor Is Not in Vain”  
“See the Love”

Welcome

*Those who are joining us online might wish to have elements ready for communion.*

\*The Votum, Sentences, and Salutation (from Psalms 124:8, 96:11, and 95:6-7)

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it.

**People: Amen.**

Leader: Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. For the Lord is our God.

**People: And we are the people of God’s pasture, and the sheep of God’s hand.**

Leader: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**People: Amen.**

\*Hymn: “How Great Thou Art”

**O Lord, my God, when I, in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed**

**(Refrain) *Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art***

**When burdens press, and seem beyond endurance,  
Bowed down with grief, to God I lift my face;  
And then in love God brings me sweet assurance:  
“My child! for thee sufficient is my grace.”**

***Refrain***

**When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration  
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art**

***Refrain***

*\*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

\*The Prayer of Confession

**Most holy and gracious God, in Christ, you have reconciled all things and marked us as your own. You have given us a new identity and called us to live in your new creation. Yet we have not been fully faithful to your call. We have been satisfied with injustice and welcomed sinful separation. We have forged our own identities and broken bonds with our siblings in Christ. We have resisted the gift you died to give. Forgive us, we pray, in the name of Jesus, for the sake of the world. Amen.**

\*The Assurance of Pardon

\*The Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.**

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#### THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

A reading from the Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 61:1-6a

The spirit of the LORD God is upon me  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
God has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display God's glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.  
Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks;  
foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines,  
but you shall be called priests of the LORD;  
you shall be named ministers of our God.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

The psalm: 116 (*Dilexi quoniam*)

I love the LORD, who has heard  
my voice and my supplications.  
Because God's ear was inclined to me,  
therefore I will call on the LORD as long as I live.  
The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.  
Then I called on the name of the LORD,  
"O LORD, I pray, save my life!"  
Gracious is the LORD and righteous;  
our God is merciful.  
The LORD protects the simple;  
when I was brought low, God saved me.  
Return, O my soul, to your rest,  
for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.  
For you have delivered my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.  
I walk before the LORD  
in the land of the living.  
I kept my faith, even when I said,  
"I am greatly afflicted";  
I said in my consternation,  
"Everyone is a liar."  
What shall I return to the LORD  
for all God's bounty to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD;  
I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all God's people.  
Precious in the sight of the LORD  
is the death of God's faithful ones.  
O LORD, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.  
You have loosed my bonds.  
I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice  
and call on the name of the LORD.  
I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all God's people,  
in the courts of the house of the LORD,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem.  
Praise the LORD!

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

A reading from the Epistles: Romans 8:33-39

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or

sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

\*The Gospel: John 21:1-14

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Lector: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

\*Hymn: "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

**Come, thou fount of every blessing;  
tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
sung by flaming tongues above;  
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
mount of God's unchanging love!**

**Here I raise my Ebenezer;  
here by thy great help I've come;  
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,  
safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
wandering from the fold of God;  
he, to rescue me from danger,  
interposed his precious blood.**

**O to grace how great a debtor  
daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now, like a fetter,  
bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
prone to leave the God I love;  
here's my heart; O take and seal it;  
seal it for thy courts above.**

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#### THE SERVICE OF ORDINATION

The Presentation

The Vows

\*The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was  
conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under  
Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the  
dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is  
seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the  
living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of  
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life  
everlasting. Amen.**

Song: "You Say"

The Ordination

*Classis members and ordained clergy are invited to come forward for the laying-on of hands.*

\*The Response

The Bestowal of the Stole

*The stole signifies the yoke of Christ. It symbolizes Christ's call on Jeff's life and Jeff's vow to serve. As it is written in Matthew's Gospel: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart..... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

Charge to the Ordinand

Charge to the Congregation

Leader: Siblings, you have heard how great is the charge that Jeff is undertaking, and you have heard his vows and his declarations. Will you now bless him in his ministry?

**All: We will.**

Leader: Will you continually pray for him?

**All: We will.**

Leader: Will you uphold and encourage him in his ministry?

**All: We will.**

\*Hymn: "I Vow to Thee, My Savior"

**I vow to thee, my Savior, all things from earth above,  
entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love—  
The love that's always humble, the love that stands the test,  
that lays upon God's altar the dearest and the best;  
The love that never falters, the love that knows the price,  
the love that stands indebted before your sacrifice.**

**O tell me of the kingdom that stands the test of time,  
O lead me to its gateway, and speak the word sublime  
that tells me I'm forgiven, my name is in the Book,  
the Cross of Jesus holds me, as heavenward I look;  
baptized into a living hope, I'll walk the path that's new;  
and the prize of God in Jesus forever I'll pursue.**

**So light the fire within me, and let me fan the flame,  
and fill me with the Spirit, that I may bear your Name;  
in season and in hardship, to run my given race,  
O keep me ever-burning until I see your face.  
I vow to you, my Savior, that where your feet have trod,  
I'll serve and follow faithfully, my Master and my God!**

**When today I hear your calling, to serve, to help, to heal,  
I'll go forth. I'll answer boldly. In power you reveal.  
To the lost, the brokenhearted, to the children, I will go,  
In your wondrous name, Lord Jesus, to see your kingdom grow.  
I vow to thee, my Savior, all things from earth above,  
entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love.**

The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

The Passing of the Peace

Leader: God's peace be with you.  
**All: And also with you.**

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**THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Invitation to Communion

\*The Communion Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
**All: And also with you.**  
Leader: Lift up your hearts.  
**All: We lift them up to God.**  
Leader: Let us give thanks to God Most High.  
**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

How right it is to praise you, gracious God, for in the beginning, when the world was fresh from your hand, you made us neighbors—one people in many kinds, for each other, and so you entrusted to us your justice and your joy. But we kept them for a few and denied them to many, creating worlds of poverty and pain. And so we broke each other's hearts. But you did not reject us. In the fullness of time you sent us Jesus, who was born of Mary and full of grace and truth. By his ministry of mercy, you restored us to each other and to you, mending our hearts and repairing the world. And by his Spirit you impel us even now to be for each other what our Savior is for us. We give you glory, and we praise your name singing:

**All: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory! Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest!**

\*Remembrance and Consecration

Christ has died, **Christ has died.**  
Christ is risen, **Christ is risen.**  
Christ will come again. **Christ will come again.**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread which we break may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Grant that, being joined together in him, we may attain to the unity of the faith and grow up in all things into him Christ our Lord. And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf and these grapes from many hills into one cup, grant, O Lord, that your whole Church may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.



## Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

### \*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all God's benefits, who forgives all our iniquity, who redeems our lives, and who crowns us with steadfast love and mercy.

**All: The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Leader: God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

**All: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is God's love for us.**

Leader: And as far as the east is from the west, so far does God remove our sins from us. As a parent has compassion for their children, so God has compassion for us— God, who did not spare God's own Son, but gave him up for us all, and will also give us all things with him.

**All: Therefore shall my mouth and heart show forth the praise of the Lord, from this time until forevermore. Amen.**

### \*Hymn: "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go"

**O Love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.**

**O Light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.**

**O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.**

**O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust, life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.**

### \*Benediction

### Postlude

"Voluntary on Thaxted"

*Preacher:* the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber

*Presiding Officer:* the Rev. John VandenOever, vice president, Rockland-Westchester Classis

*Liturgists:* the Rev. Mihee Kim-Kort, the Rev. Cheri Kroon, the Rev. Kristen Livingston, the Rev. Noah Livingston, Alex Reyes, Caleb Won, Ryan Won

*Lectors:* Frances Adams, Gretta Adams, Sarah Bessey, the Rev. Winnie Varghese, the Rev. Jabe Ziino

*The Presentation Committee:* the Rev. Sam Clover and Joanne Fernandez (representing the Human Support Committee of Rockland-Westchester Classis), Bill Hertlein (representing the Reformed Church of Bronxville), Anna Fellers (representing the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley), the Rev. Jonathan Bow (representing Crosspointe Church)

*The Bestower of the Stole:* Tristan Ashby

*Delivering the Charge to the Ordinand:* the Rev. Werner Ramirez

*Delivering the Charge to the Congregation:* the Rev. Jonathan Bow

*Musicians:* the Rev. Stephen Claybrook, Rachel Kurtz, Hana Lehmann, the Rev. Noah Livingston, Aleeza Meir, Wes Willison

*Cantors:* Jeff Cribbs and Jenn Cribbs

*Communion Servers:* Beth Adams, the Rev. Dr. Miriam Barnes, Heather Cuevas, the Rev. Jodi Houge, the Rev. Alicia Crosby Mack, Jodi MacLean, the Rev. Chris Palmer, the Rev. Cari Pattison

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We gather for worship at Old First every Sunday at 11 a.m. Tomorrow, Jeff will be preaching from John 20:19-31. All are welcome.

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Beloveds,

Thank you for being here. What an honor to have friends and loved ones from every stage of my life present to bear witness. It's a joy, too, to welcome you to Old First, a church with such rich history as well as so much meaning for Tristan and me.

Old First began gathering for worship in 1654, when "Brooklyn" was a farming village called Breuckelen. I first set foot in this sanctuary, which dates to 1891, just over 15 years ago. I'd been out of church for years; I was told repeatedly that I had to choose between my sexuality and my faith. Guilt returned me to the pews—I couldn't savor a Sunday-morning mimosa when, in my heart, I could hear my late grandmother rebuking me for not going to church—but it was love that kept me coming back. Every week, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Meeter insistently proclaimed God's gracious love in a way I'd never heard before. His preaching helped to save my life. In 2012, he presided at our wedding.

My great-grandfather was a missionary and church planter, my grandfather a pastor and professor, my grandmother a deacon and a Bible teacher. So I was reared to honor the Church's work in the world. Still, even after my return to church, I doubted that I had anything beyond a passive place in ecclesiastical life. Me of little faith! This congregation called me as an elder and then set me on a path to seminary and onward to ordination.

Today's liturgy comes mostly from the RCA's Book of Church Order. Two additions: 1. The affirmations from the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley and Crosspointe Church. Neither church is in my denomination. Both saw my gifts and created paths to ministry for me when many in the RCA couldn't and wouldn't. I'm so grateful their voices will be heard. 2. The congregational charge. We don't all share the same beliefs, yet you've offered such encouragement and grace. I'm here because of your friendship. You've helped to sustain me—and I will need your support as the work continues.

Two of today's musical selections have particular significance. I first heard "I Vow to Thee, My Savior" at All Souls Langham Place in London, where I attended services as a closeted, confused young man. I couldn't sing the words wholeheartedly then, but I wanted them to be true. "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" was on a playlist made by my friend Noah for my first day of seminary. We sing both songs today as testimony.

Special thanks to Old First for reminding me that God is love; the Reformed Church of Bronxville, which took me in as an ordinand; and Central Reformed in Grand Rapids, which gave me a temporary post-seminary job when nobody else would.

Finally, I must pay public tribute to my beloved Tristan. When we met, I was a full-time writer at *Time*, I didn't go to church regularly, and I wasn't sure how I felt about God. True love creates space—space to learn, to grow, to change. Compassionate and steadfast, Tristan has loved me well. It's largely because of him that I know how to love.

With gratitude and in hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials "JLB" with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the letters.

