

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF METUCHEN



"The Return of the Prodigal Son" by Rembrandt, circa 1636

**March 8, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.
3rd Sunday in Lent**

**Our vision is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength,
and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**

Livestreamed on our website and Facebook/FPC Metuchen

270 Woodbridge Avenue, Metuchen, NJ 08840

www.fpcweb.org

(732) 491-2300

GATHERING

ENTRANCE OF CHRIST'S LIGHT

Wendy Kukowski

Candles are lit to represent the presence of Christ, offering a moment to center ourselves to worship.

PRELUDE Reverie

Joy Ringers

Sandra Eithun

WELCOME & TIDINGS

Rev. Dr. Fred G. Garry

*CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 102 adapted

Leader: We gathered to hear the word of God;
We will listen for the hope of salvation.

All: For the one who is weary . . . hope.
For the one who is heavy laden . . . rest.
For those in need of joy . . . gladness.
For those in need of forgiveness . . . mercy.

Leader: This is the house of the Lord.
Let us be ready for the word of God.

*HYMN 166 Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days

ST. FLAVIAN

*OUR PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION – Unison

Rev. Khayla J. Henry

God of steadfast love, hear our confession.
Forgive us our imbalance.
For too much greed,
For too little kindness,
For too much fear,
For too little trust.
Give us a spirit of balance.
Let us find a way to abide in your Holy Spirit.
God of steadfast love, accept our confession. Amen.

*KYRIE

Lord, have mercy up on us.

Christ, have mercy up on us.

Lord, have mercy up on us.

Written for Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY by Peter DuBois

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Khayla J. Henry

Leader: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God.

During Lent, the Gloria is omitted as God's people reflect on the solemn, penitential nature of this season, in which we ask, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" The Gloria returns at Easter.

ANTHEM Comfort Me, Dear Lord

Carol Choir

Robert Leaf

CHILDREN'S TIME

Sue West

Nursery care up to age 2 is available in Room 107. Children 4 years to 2nd grade can join Bridget Sanger in the GLOW room. Older children remain in worship.

THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Luke 15:11-24 (New Testament page 78)

Nikolai Ratzkovich

This is the Word of the Lord . . . **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM Guide Me, Savior, Through Your Passion

Henry Gerike

Junior Choir & Westminster Choir

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING Luke 15:25-32 (New Testament page 78)

This is the Word of the Lord . . . **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Love Makes You Better"

Rev. Dr. Fred G. Garry

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

SETTLING OF THE WORD

***HYMN 418** Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

SOFTLY AND TENDERLY

***CONFESSION OF FAITH** (*from the Brief Statement*) – **Unison**

Rev. Khayla J. Henry

In life and in death we belong to God.

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:

preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed, and blessing the children,
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY Jesus, I Will Ponder Now

Wilbur Held

***DOXOLOGY**

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Rev. Khayla J. Henry

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you . . . **And also with you.**

*RESPONSE

Choir: All:

When they build walls we will build bridge- es, o - pen up a dif- f'rent way, — when they close their eyes, we will sing, — whe- ther you're a friend or a stran- ger, one world we're travel - in' through, whe - ther you're fear - ful — or in dan - ger, peace — be with you.

Written by Penny Stone (adapted)

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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 let us not fall into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*HYMN 291 Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

I WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

In keeping with the season of Lent, the postlude is omitted and will return at Easter.

*Our greeter this morning is June Young, and the ushers are Betty Kopetz,
Sandra Lалуw, and Reynolds Shaw.*

*The flowers in the Sanctuary are given by Emily Kertscher in loving memory of her sister, Cheryl Venable,
who passed away February 26, 2026.*

*We are grateful to our Junior Choir, Westminster Choir, and Joy Ringers for offering
musical leadership in our worship service today.*

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:11-24

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate for this son of

mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

SCRIPTURE READER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:25-32

"Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.' "

SCRIPTURE READER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

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Lord, Who throughout These Forty Days

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1 Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and
 2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend and did the vic-tory
 3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion-
 4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be

pray, teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
 win, O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.
 tide, yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
 past, an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

Like many of this author's hymns, this text was written primarily for children but works equally well in reminding adults how Lent connects us with Christ's temptation in the wilderness and prepares us for Easter. The 16th-century English psalm tune provides sturdy support.

418 Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 O for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain

watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
 par - don for you and for me. "Come home, come home!

You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,

Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

This 19th-century gospel hymn has often been used as a hymn of invitation at evangelistic services. Its imagery is primarily based on Jesus' parable in Luke 15:11-32, commonly called "The Prodigal Son." Each singer thus becomes a wandering child who is urged to return home.

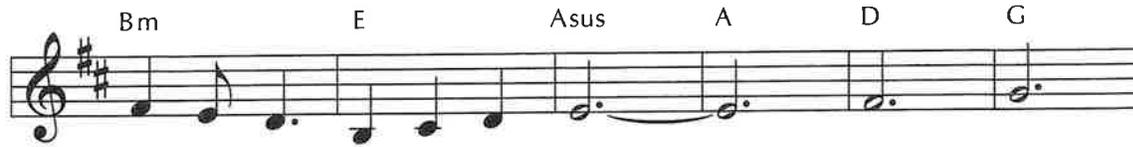
291 Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

Spirit

Refrain



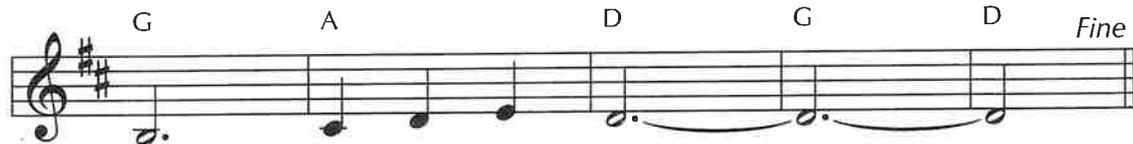
Spir - it, spir - it of gen - tle-ness, blow through the



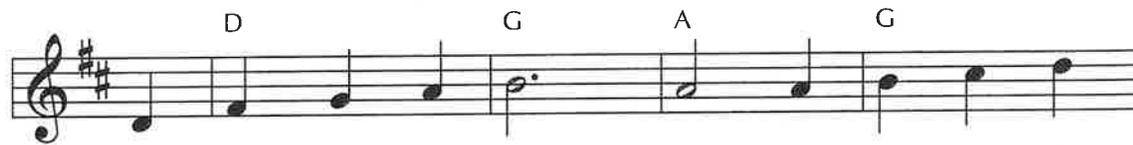
wil - der-ness, call - ing and free. Spir - it,



spir - it of rest - less - ness, stir me from plac - id-ness,



wind, wind on the sea.



- 1 You moved on the wa - ters; you called to the
- 2 You swept through the des - ert; you stung with the
- 3 You sang in a sta - ble; you cried from a
- 4 You call from to - mor - row; you break an - cient



deep; then you coaxed up the moun - tains from the
 sand; and you goad - ed your peo - ple with a
 hill; then you whis-pered in si - lence when the
 schemes; from the bond - age of sor - row the

As the author/composer reminds us in the refrain, the Spirit is both gentle and restless. The stanzas reinforce a sense of the Spirit's activity through a wide range of verbs, initially in the past tense; but they become more urgent in the present tense of the fourth stanza.

OUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST

To be added in the weekly Prayer List, individuals must give permission for their names to be included. CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE – 732-491-2300 to add a person to the prayer list. Persons requested to be on the prayer list will remain for one month, unless requested to keep for a longer period.

Jackson Alcantara (*grandson of Lori Nielsen*)
*Lynne Angley
John Bertelsen and family (*Brother of Amy Bertelsen-Robles*)
Linda Burr (*June Young's sister*)
Pat Byrne (*Sue Harmon's brother-in-law*)
Dorothy Canary (*aunt of Sue Harmon*)
Luis Canton (*Laurie Toth's father*)
Art Cabbage (*father of Laura Draper*)
*Mary Kay Dangremond
Darla Dimatteo
George Doerbecker (*friend of Kristina Scoglio*)
Hank Frank, Jr. (*Deb Teall's partner*)
*Judy Fuller
Marc Gale (*Marie Gale's husband*)
*Marie Gale
*Doris Gulotta
*Joey Hale (*Son of Matt and Laura Hale*)
*Margaret Hathaway
Teresa Prete-Kaltenbach (*friend of the Hajjar family*)
*Susan Kozo
*Patricia Lagay

Jetty Mailangkay (*wife of Rev. Herby Moningka*)
Dennis Maiuro (*Colleen Walker's brother-in-law*)
*Ed Meyer
Elliot Miller (*Larrie Servino's brother*)
Michael Murach (*Kristina Scoglio's cousin*)
Virginia Newton (*Virginia Shaw's mother*)
Lisa Qualben (*friend of Nancy Leardi*)
Jeff Rubin (*friend of June Keehbler*)
*Dave Ryder
Angela Sampoli (*friend of Dawn Adam*)
Cara Moskal Scacco (*niece of June Young*)
Karen Scoglio (*Kristina Scoglio's mother*)
*Lorraine Sheaffer
*Deb Sorensen
Katie Strittmatter (*friend of Kozo-Mollison family*)
Bud Wilson (*friend of Niall Corbalis*)
David Wong
*Lynn Hendricks Wong

Names highlighted in boldface were recently added
*Members of the church

OUR CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS OF COMFORT
to Emily Kertscher and her family on the passing of
her sister, Cheryl Venable, on February 26.

PASTORAL CARE:

If you or a family member is in the hospital, please contact Rev. Dr. Fred Garry at (315) 771-3590 or Rev. Khayla J. Henry at (843) 312-7288. **Hospitals no longer contact clergy when a parishioner is admitted.** We are more than ready and glad to visit. Please contact us even if it is to pray for you. You can also call the church office (732) 491-2300 during office hours.

FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY:

David Garry, Coast Guard Cutter Bear, Philadelphia, PA (*Son of Fred & Kathy Garry*)
MSgt. David Hansen, USAF (*Son of Elaine Hansen*)
MC1 Kevin Leitner, U.S. Navy, San Diego, CA (*Sue Harmon's cousin*)
Lt. Cmdr. Krista Marquard, U.S. Public Health Service, Lawrence, KS (*Bill & Susan Marquard's daughter-in-law*)
Major Matthew McQueeney, Pilot & DO, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho (*Son/Stepson of Amy & Pete Bellisano*)
LT John Alexander Petr, U. S. Navy, San Diego, CA (*Pennix Family friend*)
*CPT Bradley Shaver, U. S. Army – Ft. Carson, CO (*Brother/Son of Greg and Julie Walton Shaver*)
CPT Julia Harris Switzer, MD USAF (*Granddaughter of Grace Hammesfahr*)
Petty Officer 1st Class Mason Weingarten, Coast Guard (*Bill & Susan Marquard's grandnephew*)

THIS WEEK

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

And by appointment for other times

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Worship Service - Sanctuary and Virtual 9:30 a.m.

Habitat Pancake Breakfast – Dining Room 10:30 a.m.

Indonesian Worship Service – Sanctuary Noon

MONDAY, MARCH 9

DBSA Support Group – Deacons Room 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

PW Coordinating Team – PW Lounge 11:00 a.m.

Care Team – Office Conference Room 3:00 p.m.

Carol Choir – Choir Room 4:00 p.m.

Unicameral Board – Chapel / Zoom 7:30 p.m.

AA Support Group – Deacons Room 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Men’s Breakfast – Dining Room 7:30 a.m.

Buildings & Grounds – PW Lounge 8:30 a.m.

Pastoral Bible Study – PW Lounge 10:30 a.m.

Lenten Concert – Sanctuary Noon – 12:30 p.m.

Westminster Choir – Choir Room 6:30 p.m.

Trinity Ringers – Bell Loft 7:00 p.m.

Youth Group – Room 201 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Concord Ringers – Bell Loft 9:30 -10:15 a.m.

Local Mission – Auditorium 11:45 a.m.

Junior Choir – Choir Room 4:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Joy Ringers – Bell Loft 5:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Covenant Ringers – Bell Loft 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Mission Commission – PW Lounge 7:00 p.m.

Senior Choir – Choir Room 8:00 - 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

Women’s AA Support Grp – Deacons Rm. . . 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

FULL CHURCH CALENDAR ONLINE:

Scan the QR code or visit our website

<https://bit.ly/4emWby6>



CHURCH STAFF:

Senior Pastor/Head of Staff Rev. Dr. Fred G. Garry

Associate Pastor Rev. Khayla J. Henry

Pastor Emeritus Rev. Robert A. Beringer

Parish Associate Rev. Dr. Glory J. Thomas

COMING SOON

- Mar 15 2nd Hour: A Fool’s Boast – Chapel – 10:30 am
- Mar 15 Youth Commission – PW Lounge – 10:30 am
- Mar 15 Community Dinner – Social Center – 5:00 pm
- Mar 17 Social Justice – PW Lounge – 7:30 pm
- Mar 18 Lenten Concert – Sanctuary – Noon - 12:30 pm
- Mar 18 Finance Commission – Office Conf. Room – 7:00 pm
- Mar 18 Prayer Shawl Circle – Session Room – 7:00 pm
- Mar 19 Crafty Ladies – PW Lounge – 1:00 pm
- Mar 19 Junior Club – GLOW Room – 5:30 pm
- Mar 22 2nd Hour: Psalms – Chapel – 10:30 am
- Mar 25 Lenten Concert – Sanctuary – Noon - 12:30 pm
- Mar 25 Lunch & Games – Dining Room – 12:30 - 3:00 pm
- Mar 29 Open Font Baptism – Sanctuary – 8:30 - 9:30 am

TREASURER’S TWO CENTS

Offerings & Gifts Received March 1

Pledge	\$ 7,374
Non-pledge	\$ 170
Loose Plate	\$ 135
Per Capita	\$ 966
Deacons	\$ 266
Other funds	\$ 299

TOTAL: \$ 9,210

OTHER RECEIPTS \$860

(Building Rental and Parking)

HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

Direct Cash or check in the plate are always welcome!

Online From our website fpcweb.org/give, click on the **Give Online** button. This will redirect you to the Vanco app to set up your donation.

Thank you for your generous support!

Indonesian Pastoral Supply Rev. Leksmana Leonard

Director of Music Ministries Jordan Klotz

Minister of Music Emeritus Brenda Arnold Day

Director for Christian Education Nancy Leardi

FPC FAMILY SCOOP

All the information you need in one place!

If you have a child or youth participating in any of our various programs, including music, **THIS IS FOR YOU!**

We are streamlining our eblasts so at a glance, families can view what is the schedule for the upcoming week. We also have a section for what's ahead to help families plan their schedule.

Simply scan the QR code to take you to the sign up, and once you have filled this with your email and name, you will be instantly subscribed!

Questions?

See Rev. Khayla Henry,
Jordan Klotz, or Nancy Leardi.



An Invitation
OPEN FONT
Baptism
Palm Sunday
March 29
8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
In the Sanctuary

all things have become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV

We offer to the community an open font baptism this Palm Sunday. All are welcome, adults and children alike. No church membership or donation is expected or required as we extend this invitation. Feel free to call the church office if you are interested to be baptized, or if you have questions.



EASTER PLANT ORDER FORM

Due March 22nd



Celebrate the glory of Easter morning this April 5th by decorating our church with your Easter plant orders to honor your loved ones. You have a choice of white lilies, yellow tulips and pink tulips.

To participate, fill out a form from the Narthex or the Social Center foyer, and return with your payment **to the Church Office by Sunday, March 22nd**. Please **note lilies and tulips have different prices**. You are welcome to bring home your plant order, or if you choose not to, our deacons will deliver them to those who can be blessed with these.

IMMIGRATION RESOURCES

If you're interested in learning more about immigration issues, please stop by the table outside the chapel to pick up informational flyers. We also have a sign-up sheet for those interested in visiting the volunteer tent outside Delaney Hall in Newark, the biggest detention center on the East Coast. We will plan a date soon for a group of us to go.

For information about needed donations, please email Caitlin Mollison (mollisoncaitlin@gmail.com).



For those attending Camp Johnsonburg this summer, PW is again offering Nancy's Camperships for FPC youth in grades 1 to 12 in the Fall. Camperships are given in memory of Nancy Blomn-Kipnis, an advocate for Camp Johnsonburg. To learn more about the 2026 Summer camp offerings, you may visit <https://www.campjburg.org/summer-camp/>.

As you plan for summer camps, take advantage of Nancy's Camperships by filling out a form available in the Narthex, Church office, or download from our website <https://fpcweb.org/resources/forms/> and look for the application for campership.

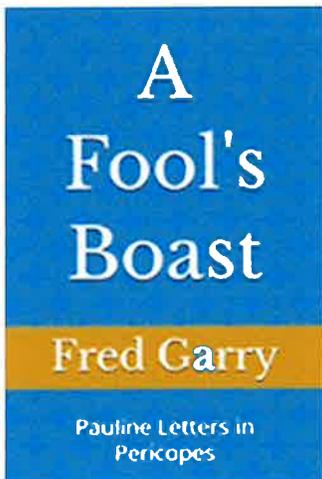
Habitat for Humanity **ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST** **FPC MEMBERSHIP YOUTH MINISTRY**

MARCH 8, 2026 AT 10:30AM

SEE YOU IN THE DINING ROOM AFTER WORSHIP!

Join us for our Annual Pancake Breakfast and let's support our youth as they prepare for Habitat for Humanity in Roanoke, VA. Join us in the Dining room after worship. We will have pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee, tea, and orange juice. All proceeds go directly to our youth to make this year's trip a success!

Join us March 15th in the Chapel
SECOND HOUR:



Offered as a Lenten devotional, this book covers the letters of the Apostle Paul to churches presented in pericopes, with the goal that they be “read with care and appreciation, with caution and trust, with devotion and critique to bring peace.”

Explore the book together with Rev. Garry and Helen Burr-Cackowski and hope that you will find nuggets to inspire you and build you up. Books are available in the Narthex or the church office for a suggested donation of \$5.

FREE COMMUNITY DINNER
MARCH 15, 5:00 PM
SOCIAL CENTER DINING ROOM

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day, and enjoy our menu of corned beef and cabbage, vegetarian shepherd's pie, salad, rolls and butter, and homemade dessert! Join us in community and fellowship.

ALL ARE WELCOME! WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU!

If you are interested to volunteer, we welcome the extra hands – before, during and after the dinner. Please email Gilly McKie, gilly@mckie.com or call the church office.

LENTEN CONCERT SERIES

**WEDNESDAYS AT NOON
 IN THE SANCTUARY**

- March 11** Jordan Klotz, organ
- March 18** Lyndon Ji, piano
- March 25** Eleanor Rees, soprano

We are excited to have our Director for Music Ministries Jordan Klotz as our featured artist this week.

Join us for some peace and calm in your day, each Wednesday of Lent. For only half an hour, refresh yourself with beautiful music for quiet reflection.