

POTTSVILLE ASSOCIATE REFORMED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



THE LORD'S DAY
DECEMBER 6, AD 2020

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!”
Psalm 100:4

For Reflection

Westminster Larger Catechism in Modern English, Questions 27-29

Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring on mankind?

A. The fall brought on mankind the loss of communion with God and his displeasure and curse, so that we are by nature children of wrath, slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all the punishments of this world and that which is to come.

Q. 28. What are the punishments of sin in this world?

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as a blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God on the creatures for our sakes, and all the other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, states, relations, and employment, together with death itself.

Q. 29. What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?

A. The punishments of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comforting presence of God, and very grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in the fire of hell forever.

A FEW THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- We believe that Christian Worship is a renewal of covenant vows between Christians and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- a gracious and thankful conversation between God and His people. Consequently, our worship contains lots of congregational participation. Your part is in bold, but don't worry if you get a little lost. Just keep your bulletin handy throughout the service.
- We are a family of families worshipping together. We are teaching our children to worship as they worship with us. If they cry or squirm, it's OK; God has ordained "praise" from our children and infants.
- Restrooms are located both in this building and in the Fellowship Hall.

Welcome and Preparation

Silent Prayer of Preparation: Gracious and merciful Father, quiet our hearts, our hands, our minds and our souls as we draw near to You. Give rest where there is weariness, peace where there is conflict, and assurance where there is anxiety. Grant us faith to believe that you speak, ears to hear what you say and a will to live as you desire. Prepare us now to delight in you, O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Christ's name, Amen.

Preparation:
In worship, God speaks. He is not merely spoken about. Listening and responding require our preparation. Take a moment to be still and know that He is God.

God Calls Us to Worship

Psalm 50:1-5

The Mighty One, God the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.
Our God comes; he does not keep silence;
before him is a devouring fire,
around him a mighty tempest.
He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
"Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"

Call to Worship:
We need to be called to come and worship because we are prone to think we are at the center of all things. Or perhaps we struggle to believe that God wants us to draw near. So God takes the initiative and calls us to come and worship Christ who is the center.

We Respond to God's Call

Luke 1:68-72, 77-79

Pastor: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people
People: And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,
Pastor: As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
People: To show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,
Pastor: To give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God,
People: Whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Pastor: To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Prayer of Adoration

Songs of Praise

Worship through singing.
Worship is a gracious conversation between God and His people. He speaks grace through His Word and we respond together in gratitude through prayer and praise as a congregation. Singing is an important way we express our love for God and remind ourselves of our place in His redemptive story.

Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Public Domain. Words: Charles Wesley. Music: Rowland Prichard. CCL# 11359088

1. Come Thou long-expected Jesus

Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the saints Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

2. Joy to those who long to see thee

Dayspring from on high, appear;
Come, thou promised Rod of Jesse,
Of thy birth we long to hear!
O'er the hills the angels singing
News, glad tidings of a birth
"Go to him, your praises bringing;
Christ the Lord has come to earth."

3. Come to earth to taste our sadness,

He whose glories knew no end;
By his life he brings us gladness,
Our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number,
Born within a cattle stall;
This the everlasting wonder,
Christ was born the Lord of all.

4. Born Thy people to deliver,

Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Call to Confession

Romans 3:23-24

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Confession of Sin

Turn to us, O Lord, and be gracious. For Your Name's sake, pardon our guilt, for it is great. Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

Assurance of Pardon

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Confession of Faith

Nicene Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds: God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: Who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit, of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord, and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

Confession of Sin. God calls us to draw near, but our sin is a barrier we cannot cross on our own. The good news is that God has provided a way of reconciliation through Jesus. Confession of sin both acknowledges our need for God's mercy and celebrates its abundance in Christ.

Assurance of Pardon: God declares in the gospel that everyone who repents and believes in Jesus Christ is forgiven and made clean.

Confession of Faith.: Creeds, confessions and catechisms are summaries of what we believe the Bible teaches about the central truths of the Christian faith. We confess them together in worship as a way of professing our common faith.

Pastor: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

People: Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,

Pastor: Though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

People: Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

Pastor: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

People: God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;

Pastor: God will help her when morning dawns.

People: The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

Pastor: The Lord of hosts is with us;

People: The God of Jacob is our fortress.

Pastor: Come, behold the works of the Lord,

People: How he has brought desolations on the earth.

Pastor: He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;

People: He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

Pastor: "Be still, and know that I am God.

People: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

Pastor: The Lord of hosts is with us;

People: The God of Jacob is our fortress.

Scripture/Sermon: "Compare and Contrast," Ephesians 2:1-3, 12

Sermon: Some view the sermon as a way to get principles for right living. Others see it as an interesting or inspirational talk.

In reality, as we open the Scriptures we encounter Jesus Christ. Therefore, as you listen, pray to be open to his leading, exhortation, encouragement and healing.

Pastoral Prayer & 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. 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

Songs of Parting

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Words: Phillip Brooks, Music: Lewis Redner, Public Domain, CCL# 11359088

1 O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by:
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Benediction

Numbers 6:24-25

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Doxology

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

The Last Word:
God always has the last word. A benediction is a "word of blessing." God sends us out, but not before He reminds us that wherever the coming week may take us, physically, emotionally or spiritually, He goes with us.

What Do You Believe?

An early Christian pastor once wrote, "in essential things, unity, in debated things, liberty, and in all things, charity." In regard to essential things we believe the basic tenets of the Christian faith as spelled out in the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed. In regards to debated things we hold many distinctive beliefs which define us as an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

- We are a Biblical Church that believes in the inerrant and sufficient Scriptures as our only rule of faith and practice, able to make us wise unto salvation and useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking, and training us as disciples.
- We are a Reformed Church which believes that grace flows necessarily out of God's sovereignty. Grace is the work of God alone. Man's free-will is a faculty God employs, but saving grace depends upon the work of the Spirit powerfully renewing man's will to accept God's gracious offer of salvation.
- We are an Evangelical Church which believes that we are called to "preach the gospel to every creature under heaven" (Mark 16:15) as Christ's ambassadors as though God were making His appeal through us to implore men to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). God's sovereign choice is one of the "secret things" which we cannot know. Therefore, we preach the gospel earnestly and urgently.
- We are a Presbyterian Church which believes that God has called men to be Elders to provide spiritual oversight, instruction, counsel and encouragement to the Church. The word Presbyterian comes from the ancient Greek word for 'elder.' Our church's elders exercise care for the families in our congregation under the authority of other elders from several neighboring states. This larger group of elders is called a Presbytery.
- We are a Connectional Church. We are under the authority of the Mississippi Valley Presbytery and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod. Through these connections, we work with other churches in North America and across the world to spread the gospel to every creature under heaven.
- We are a Confessional Church. Our basic doctrines are expressed by the Westminster Confession of Faith and its Larger and Shorter Catechisms. This confession and its catechisms summarize what we believe the Bible teaches in regard to key doctrines. We do not hold them to be inerrant or infallible, but we do believe that they accurately express the central truths of the Christian faith.

What To Expect as We Resume In-Person Worship

We are glad you are here, but, as always, Scripture guides our behavior in worship. Much of this guidance pertains to our commitment to our care and concern for one another in worship. Below is the guidance from our Session regarding how we may faithfully resume “in person” corporate worship while exercising Christian prudence and concern for the spiritual and physical needs of others.

- We will continue to live stream our service for those who need to be more cautious about gathering in person.
- If you are sick or exhibiting symptoms of illness, or have had fever within 24 hours, or have had contact with any Covid-19 positive individuals within 14 days, please remain home and join us for worship through the livestream.
- We will have hand-sanitizer available at every entry and in the restrooms.
- If you feel comfortable wearing a mask, we encourage you to do so. The use of cloth masks are a courtesy and benefit to others. While they may not protect you from illness, they will protect others from illnesses you may have, even if you are not showing symptoms.
- We encourage families to sit together.
- Please try to maintain a distance of 6 ft between family groups. This can be accomplished by keeping one row of seating between you and others.
- Orders of service, containing everything you need to participate in the liturgy, will be placed on each end of alternating rows of seats in order to limit “touch.” These will continue to be available online before the service as well, and we may be able to project them.
- You may enjoy in person fellowship outside before and after the gathering, but please limit contact and maintain distancing when inside our gathering spaces.
- You may continue to give your tithes and offerings by mail or online. We will also have a secure offering box by the door as you enter and exit. Thank you for faithful giving.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Our Session has decided on the following procedures for our “in person” gatherings for worship. We will meet at 10:30 am, each Lord’s Day. But we will practice careful social distancing. If you need more time before returning due to your concerns and/or commitments, continue to join us by live stream and plan to return as soon as practicable. For details on our plans for social distancing and our “one-another” approach to meeting, please go to the COVID-19 tab on our website.
- Did you know that you can now Give Online? To find out more go to <http://pottsvillearp.org/> and click on the “Giving Link.”

CONTACT US

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