

POTTSVILLE ASSOCIATE REFORMED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



THE LORD'S DAY
MARCH 21, AD 2021

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

For Reflection

So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

-- John 10:7-9

"How does God fulfill our ultimate longing? He does so in many ways: by being the perfect fit for our very nature, by satisfying our longing for interpersonal relationship, by being in his omniscience the end to our search for knowledge, by being in his infinite being the refuge from all fear, by being in his holiness the righteous ground of our quest for justice, by being in his infinite love the cause of our hope for salvation, by being in his infinite creativity both the source of our creative imagination and the ultimate beauty we seek to reflect as we ourselves create."

— James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*

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 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 138:4-8

All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth,
and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies,
and your right hand delivers me.

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

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

Psalm 138:1-3

Pastor: I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;

People: Before the gods I sing your praise;

Pastor: I bow down toward your holy temple

People: And give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,

Pastor: For you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

People: On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased.

Prayer of Adoration

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.

Songs of Praise

Facing A Task Unfinished

Words: Frank Houghton, Music: Samuel Wesley, Refrain, Keith & Kristin, Getty. CCL# 11359088

Facing a task unfinished, that drives us to our knees
A need that, undiminished, rebukes our slothful ease
We, who rejoice to know Thee, renew before Thy throne
The solemn pledge we owe Thee, to go and make Thee known

Where other lords beside Thee, hold their unhindered sway
Where forces that defied Thee, defy Thee still today
With none to heed their crying, for life, and love, and light
Unnumbered souls are dying, and pass into the night

Refrain:

We go to all the world
With kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

We bear the torch that flaming, fell from the hands of those
Who gave their lives proclaiming, that Jesus died and rose
Ours is the same commission, the same glad message ours
Fired by the same ambition, to Thee we yield our powers [Refrain]

O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired
Saviour, whose love constrained them, to toil with zeal untired
From cowardice defend us, from lethargy awake!
Forth on Thine errands send us, to labour for Thy sake [Refrain]

We go to all the world
His kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

Call to Confession

Romans 3:23-26

[A]ll 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, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith... It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

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.

Confession of Sin

from Psalm 51

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out our transgressions. Wash away all our iniquities and cleanse us from our sin. Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within us. Do not cast us from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and grant us willing spirits, to sustain us.

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

Assurance of Pardon

Romans 10:15-17

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

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.

Confession of Faith

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell.¹ The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,² the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

¹ That is, He remained under power of death until the third day.

² "catholic" means "universal".

Pastor: So if there is any encouragement in Christ,

People: Any comfort from love,

Pastor: Any participation in the Spirit,

People: Any affection and sympathy,

Pastor: Complete my joy by being of the same mind,

People: Having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Pastor: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,

People: But in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Pastor: Let each of you look not only to his own interests,

People: But also to the interests of others.

Pastor: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ

Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

People: But emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Pastor: And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,

People: Even death on a cross.

Pastor: Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

People: So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Scripture & Sermon: "The Open Door" Revelation 3:7-13

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 Thanksgiving

Amazing Grace

Public Domain, Words: John Newton, Music: New Britain, CCL# 11359088

Amazing grace! - how sweet the sound -
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
his Word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.

And when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we've first begun.

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, are available as you enter. These will continue to be available online before the service as well.
- 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

- Friday, April 2, we will gather around the bonfire at church for a Good Friday service of songs and readings. Prepare your favorite Mediterranean food and join us at 6:00 pm.
- 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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