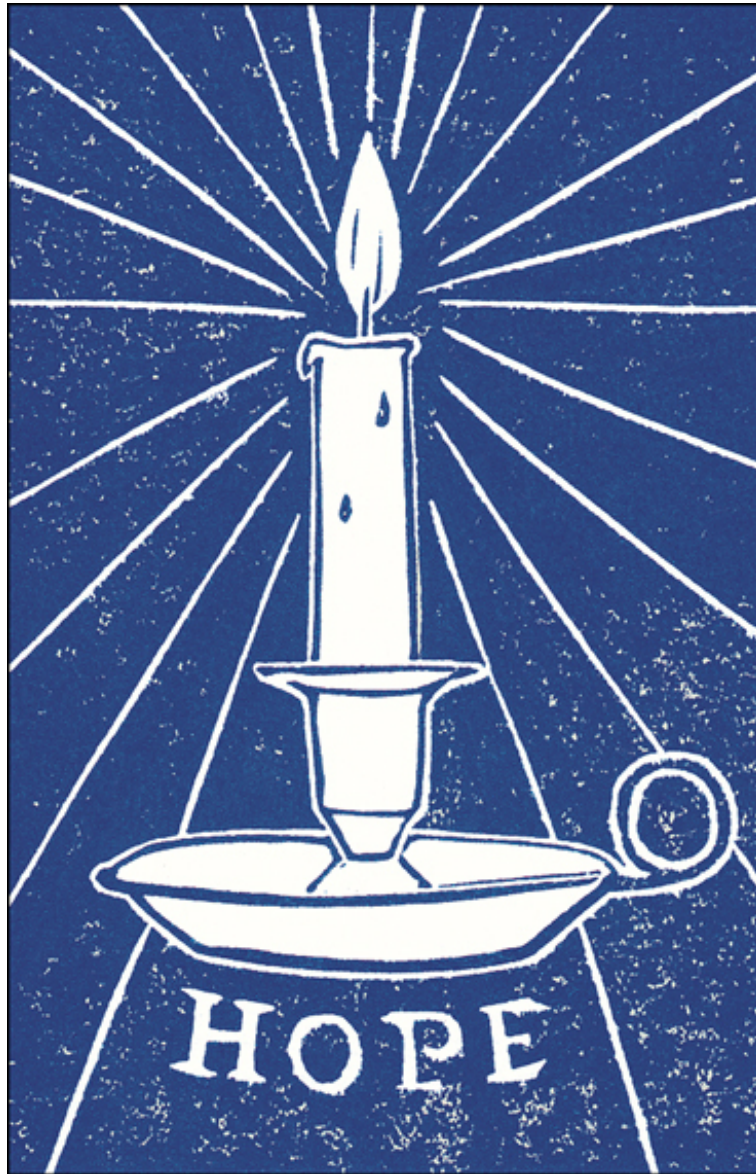




CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND GOSPEL RENEWAL

Third Sunday of Advent—Joy

13 December 2020

Pastoral Notes

I asked Martha Brooks, co-leader of our Women's Ministry, to write this week's Pastoral Notes.

Ever since our girls were born, they have spent one day a week at my parents' house. This sacred day gave me a break from diapers and chicken nuggets and gave the girls a day with someone much kinder than I who was delighted to change the Barbie doll's dress for the one hundredth time. Even now, when it isn't basketball/track/school play season, Mom picks them up from school once a week, and she brings out the good snacks, and basically does anything they want for three hours until Preston picks them up and forces them to come back to our house "because that's where WE live!"

We have always referred to this day as "Grandma Day" even though my Dad has been there most of the time as well. And while he may not have always gotten in on the princess tea parties (although "The King" was known to make an appearance every now and again) he has his own special things he does with the girls. One of those things involves heading out, beginning in early January, walking or piled into the golf cart, and looking for signs of Spring—buds, patches of green grass, the beginnings of a nest. Dad is an outdoor kind of guy, and he is of the school that thinks snow is awful, ice is worse, and 95 degrees is just about right. When the girls were little and would spot those first signs of Spring, usually crocuses and buttercups, Dad's excitement about the hope of warmer days sure to come would spill over onto them, and they would return home declaring the time had come to get out our bathing suits because Grandpa says it's almost Spring! Well, no, I'd explain, it's below freezing and here's your puffy coat and hat and hurry up and stuff your hands into these mittens. (Parenting tip: Don't try to put gloves on little kids. They cannot do it. Can. Not. Mittens are your friends.) But yes, Spring will come. That's a promise. You can hang your bathing-suit-hopes on it.

I don't know if we've ever collectively had a time when we've needed something to hang our hopes on more than after 2020. In many ways, for many people, it's been a year fraught with hopelessness. A year full of cancellations, disappointments, uncertainty, and loss at every turn. Time and again Preston and I have answered our daughters' many questions, "We don't know. We just don't know."

The thing we keep coming back to is this: we trust Scripture. We are sure of that. Let's go to Scripture. Let's take our disappointments and our lost hopes, and let's see what the Lord says about them. And every time we open the Word and listen to God speaking—listen to His promises—it's like the hope of those first crocus buds that promise Spring: "I will... I did... I am... I came... *I am coming...*"

And there hangs our hope.

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed by the kindness of God to leave us His Word. To leave us these buds of hope. And while there is so much value in sitting down every day and simply *reading* Scripture, there is also much value in *studying* Scripture in a community of believers—wrestling together, noticing things we never did before, discovering the magnificent truths that are our certain future. To that end, the Women's Ministry is offering multiple Bible study times beginning in January, all working through selected Psalms. In addition to facilitating the study of Scripture, we want to deepen the community of believers, so we facilitate some fun, too! The groups have periodic fellowships where we pull out the good snacks and learn more pieces of each other's stories and laugh a lot. We've also been known to cry together and drop everything and pray as we bear each other's burdens. We are putting legs on the phrase "walk through life together." Sign-ups will open this week; be sure to watch your email.

Join us. Come study Scripture with your sisters. Discover afresh where you can hang your hopes.

Grace, Martha Brooks

Worship is a response to the love of God that brings us out of darkness into his light. The rhythm and flow of the service reflects this present reality as God calls his people and reveals himself, forgives their sins, teaches them from his Word, the Bible, feeds them, and then sends them out to live what they have learned.

This is the pattern of his love in redeeming and saving his people.

Prelude, Announcements, and Preparation

GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE AND REVEALS HIMSELF

God calls His people to worship and come before Him. The Creator of all things reveals Himself through His Word and calls us into His presence.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath—Good Christian Men, Rejoice, Vs 2

Good Christ-ian men, re - joice— With heart and soul and voice!— Now ye hear of
end-less bliss: Joy! Joy! Je - sus Christ was born for this; He hath op - ened heav-en's door, And
man is blessed for - ev - er - more. Christ was born for this.— Christ was born for this.—

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Text: Medieval Latin Carol, Tr by John Mason Neale, 1853; Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German Melody, 14th c.

Call to Worship—from Psalm 98:I-4

Pastor: Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

All: His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.

Pastor: The LORD has made known His salvation;
He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.

Men: He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

Women: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Pastor: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;

All: Break forth into joyous song and sing praises! For He has done marvelous things!

Hymn of Praise—Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let Earth receive her King;
Joy to the Earth! The Saviour reigns: let men their songs employ;
 No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove

Let every heart prepare Him room,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 He comes to make his blessings flow
The glories of His righteousness

And Heav'n and nature sing, and Heav'n and nature sing,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
 Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,

And Heav'n and nature sing and Heav'n and na-

And Heav'n, and Heav'n and nature sing.
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
 Far as, far as the curse is found.
And wonders, wonders of His love.

ture sing

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719, from Psalm 98; Music: ANTIOCH, arr. by Lowell Mason, 1836

Old Testament Reading—Isaiah 49:8-13

8 Thus says the LORD:

“In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you;

I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people,
to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages,

9 saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’

They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture;

10 they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them,
for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.

11 And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up.

12 Behold, these shall come from afar,

and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.”

13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing!

For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

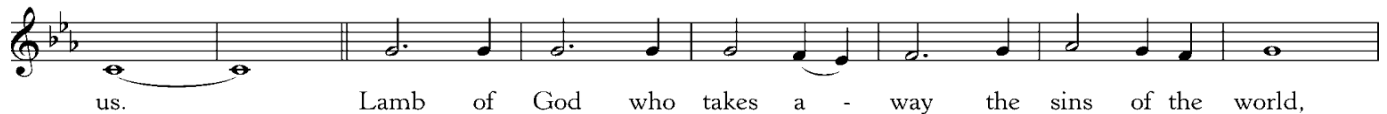
Elder: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO CONFESSION, REPENTANCE & RECONCILIATION

The People of God respond to His Word by confessing their sins, repenting of their sinful ways, and seeking God’s favor through the reconciling work of Jesus, the Son of God.

Sung Response—Lamb of God



Text: John 1:29; Music: FRANKLIN AGNUS DEI, Gregory D Wilbur, 2009. ©2009 Greyfriars Press.

Congregational Prayer of Confession

Pastor: When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

(cf 1 Corinthians 4:5)

All: Have mercy on us, O God,
according to Your steadfast love.
According to Your abundant mercy,
blot out our transgressions.
Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us of our sins,
for we know only too well our transgressions,
and our sin is ever before us.
Against You, You only, have we sinned
and done what is evil in Your sight,
so that you may be justified in Your words
and blameless in Your judgment.
Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being,
and You teach wisdom in the secret of our hearts.
Purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean;
wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow.
Let us hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You have broken rejoice.
Hide Your face from our sins,
and blot out all our iniquities.
Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
Restore to us the joy of Your salvation,
and uphold us with a willing spirit.

(from Psalm 51)

Silent Prayers of Confession

Assurance of Pardon—Colossians 1:11-14

Pastor: May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might,

All: for all endurance and patience with joy,

Pastor: giving thanks to the Father,

who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

All: He has delivered us from the domain of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption,
the forgiveness of sins.

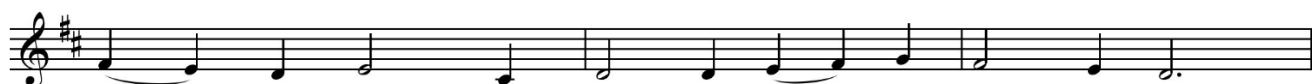
Hymn of Praise—On Christmas Night



On Christ - mas night all Christ - ians sing, To
 Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since
 When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, Then
 All out of dark - ness we have light, Which



hear the news the an - gels bring, On Christ - mas night all
 our Re - deem - er made us glad, Then why should men on
 life and health come in its place, When sin de - parts be -
 made the an - gels sing this night, All out of dark - ness



Christ - ians sing, To hear the news the an - gels bring,
 earth be so sad, Since our Re - deem - er made us glad,
 fore his grace, Then life and health come in its place;
 we have light, Which made the an - gels sing this night:



News of great joy, news of great mirth,
 When from our sin he set us free,
 An - - - gels and men with joy may sing,
 "Glo - - - ry to God and peace to men,



News of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.
 All for to gain our li - ber - ty?
 All for to see the new - born King.
 Now and for ev - er - more. A - men."

Text: SUSSEX CAROL, Traditional English Carol

GOD TEACHES US THROUGH HIS WORD

The Reading of the Word—I Thessalonians 5:23-24

²³ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Leader: The grass withers, the flower fades;

All: **But the Word of our God will stand forever.**

Sermon—Christ, Our Certain Hope, pt 3

Kept for the Coming of the Lord

—Tony Giles, *Pastor*

Sung Response—From Heaven Came the Angels Bright

The image shows a musical score for a sung response. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, Whose ad - vent has__ our free - dom won, Whom with the Fa - ther we a - dore, And Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more." The music is written in a simple, homophonic style suitable for congregational singing.

Text: Martin Luther; Music: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621.

Profession of Faith—from Philippians 2:5-11

We believe, that though Christ Jesus was in the form of God,
He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men.
And being found in human form,
He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Therefore God has highly exalted Him
and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name,
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. Amen.

Sung Response—Gloria

WOMEN

Glo-ry to God in the high - est! Peace to His peo-ple on earth.

MEN

Glo-ry to God in the high - est! Peace to His peo-ple on earth. We praise earth. Glo-ry to God in the high - est! Peace on earth. We praise You! We bless You! We a - dore You! We glo - ri - fy! We give You thanks for Your glo - ry. We give You thanks for Your glo - ry. We give You thanks.

CCLI #11121087 Text: Luke 2:14; Music: FRANKLIN GLORIA, Gregory D Wilbur, 2012 ©2012 Greyfriars Press.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

God offers to His people the gift of communion with Him through the grace of the sacrament and we respond in thanksgiving.

Words of Institution and the Lord's Table

Guidelines for the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the family meal for Christians. We invite all baptized Christians who are members of a congregation that proclaims the gospel, and who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ to join us.

If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer. You can find some sample prayers on the next page. We hope that this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with His people, the church.

At Cornerstone, we come forward to receive communion. We have options for wine and grape juice. The bread and wine or juice are stacked together.

Hymn of Communion—Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;
 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth He stood,
 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard on the way,
 At His feet the six - winged ser - aph; cher - u - bim, with sleep - less eye,

pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in His hand,
 Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
 as the Light of light de - scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,
 veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,

Christ our Lord to earth de - scend - eth, our full hom - age to de - mand.
 He will give to all the faith - ful His own self for heav'n - ly food.
 that the pow'rs of hell may van - ish as the dark - ness clears a - way.
 "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

Text: Liturgy of St. James, 5th c. Adapted by Gerard Moultrie, 1864, Music: PICARDY, 17th c. French Melody

Prayers for Those Not Taking the Lord's Supper

If you are not able to partake in the Lord's Supper today, please use this time to meditate on one of the following prayers.

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth. Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. *Amen*

Prayer of Belief. Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. *Amen*

Prayer of Commitment. Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship through membership in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people, and live in the fullness of your Spirit. *Amen*

Hymn—See Amid the Winter's Snow

See, a - mid the win - ter's snow, born for us on earth be - low,
 Say, ye ho - ly shep - herds, say - what's your joy - ful news to - day?
 Sa - cred in - fant, all di - vine, what a ten - der love was thine,

see the ten - der Lamb ap - pears, prom - ised from e - ter - nal years. Lo, with - in a
 Where fore have ye left your sheep on the lone - ly moun - tain steep? "As we watched at
 thus to come from high - est bliss down to such a world as this! Teach, O teach us,

man - ger lies he who built the star - ry skies: he who, throned in height sub - lime,
 dead of night, lo, we saw a won - drous light; an - gels sing - ing, 'Peace on earth,'
 ho - ly child, by thy face so meek and mild, teach us to re - sem - ble thee,

sits a - mid the cher - u - bim. Hail, thou e - ver - bless - ed morn! Hail, redemp tion's
 told us of the Sav - ior's birth." Hail, thou e - ver - bless - ed morn! Hail, redemp tion's
 in thy sweet hu - mil - i - ty. Hail, thou e - ver - bless - ed morn! Hail, redemp tion's

hap - py dawn! Sing through all Je - ru - sa - lem, Christ is born in Beth - le - hem.
 hap - py dawn! Sing through all Je - ru - sa - lem, Christ is born in Beth - le - hem.
 hap - py dawn! Sing through all Je - ru - sa - lem, Christ is born in Beth - le - hem.

Text: Edward Caswall, 1851; Music: SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW, John Goss, 1870.

GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND IN GRATEFUL PRAISE

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The 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.
And 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*

Hymn of Praise—Thou Who Wast Rich

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are as follows:

Thou who wast rich be--yond all splen--dor, all for love's sake be--cam--est poor;
Thou who art God be--yond all prais--ing, all for love's sake be--cam--est man;
Thou who art love be--yond all tell---ing, Sav--ior and King, we wor-ship thee.

thrones for a man---ger didst sur-----ren-----der, sap---phire--paved courts for sta-----ble
stoop-----ing so low, but sin-----ners rais-----ing, heav'n-ward by thine e-----ter-----nal
Em-----man--u-----el, with--in us dwell--ing, make us what thou wouldst have us

floor. Thou who wast rich be--yond all splen--dor, all for love's sake be--cam--est poor.
plan. Thou who art God be--yond all prais--ing, all for love's sake be--cam--est man.
be. Thou who art love be--yond all tell---ing, Sav--ior and King, we wor-ship thee.

CCLI #11121087 Text: Frank Houghton, 1894-1972;
Music: QUELLE EST CETTE ODEUR AGREABLE, French Carol Melody, Arr. Charles Kitson, 1930.

GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE OUT TO BE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

After calling His people into His presence, forgiving their sins, instructing them in His Word, and providing a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb, God sends His people into the world to show His light in the darkness.

Benediction—from Jude 1:24-25

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Sung Response—From Heaven Came the Angels Bright, Vs 3

Re - jice there - fore that through his Son Your God with you is now at
one. He took on hu - man flesh and bone, And you, his broth - ers, are God's own.

The image shows a musical score for a sung response. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "Re - jice there - fore that through his Son Your God with you is now at one. He took on hu - man flesh and bone, And you, his broth - ers, are God's own." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

Text: Martin Luther; Music: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, Arr Michael Praetorius, 1609.

Welcome to Cornerstone! We're glad you're visiting with us today and would love the opportunity to welcome you personally. We invite you to fill out our visitor card by following this link.

<https://cornerstonepresbyterianchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/40/responses/new>



Focus on Church Ministry

Children's Ministry

The Children's Ministry is in need of a PreK teacher beginning in January, 2021. We also need folks who are willing to step into classrooms and sub when regular teachers and assistants have to miss. If you would like to be a part of the important work the Children's Ministry is doing in laying a foundation for our covenant children, go to the app or website to fill out an interest form, or contact Meredith Suits. elementary@cstonepres.org

Advent Devotionals

Now available at both chapel entrances.

Prayer

We have a Cornerstone Prayer Team that meets every Tuesday, either in person on the third floor or via Zoom. We would be honored to pray for you, and would love to have you join the team. Contact prayer@cstonepres.org to submit prayer requests or join the team.

On the Bookshelf

Consider picking up one (or both!) of these new books to prepare your heart as we celebrate the Advent season. The Bookshelf is at the top of the stairs outside the church office. Payment is on your honor, on the top shelf.

The Christmas We Didn't Expect, David Mathis (\$8)

Repeat the Sounding Joy, Christopher Ash (\$9)

Year End Giving

Any gift for tax credit in the year 2020 should be postmarked by December 31. Questions? Contact Susan Bumpus in the church office.

615-618-4707 or susan@cstonepres.org

Giving

There are boxes for tithes and alms at both entrances to the chapel, or you can give safely and securely online through the website or app.

Exploring Cornerstone Class

If you're interested in learning more about Cornerstone or uniting in membership, please join Pastor Nate for the next Exploring Cornerstone Class in early 2021. In this class, you will learn about the history, beliefs, vision, and ministries of Cornerstone as well as meet key ministry leaders. The class dates and details will be determined in relationship with registrants. If you have any interest in being a part of this class, please email Susan Bumpus today. susan@cstonepres.org

Cornerstone Youth – Save the Date!

One-Day-Getaway! Saturday, January 16, at Deer Run Camp. Cost will be \$20, and registration will begin next week. Scholarships are available. Watch your email for more details and a registration link. If you have a 7th-12th grader and want to receive CY emails, please email Taylor Thompson. youth@cstonepres.org



Today's message is taken from I Thessalonians 5:23-24. Please take time to discuss the questions below with your family, friends or Home Fellowship Group.

1. How do we square Paul's prayer that we be "kept blameless" with the ongoing struggle with sin in our lives? How does the sure answer to Paul's prayer ("he will surely do it") give you hope while we wait for his appearing?
2. When you consider "the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" what stirs within you? hope? joy? fear? concern? relief? What do you imagine it will be like? How might a heart saturated in the love of the Father anticipate Christ's coming?
3. Where have we seen the faithfulness of God displayed in the biblical narrative? Where have you seen the faithfulness of God displayed in your life?
4. What was your biggest personal takeaway from today's message?

CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Presbyterian Church in America

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Assistant Pastor: Tony Giles (615-430-8801) or tony@cstonepres.org

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Administrative Assistant for Discipleship: Martha Brooks martha@cstonepres.org

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Men's Ministry: Ron Moffat or men@cstonepres.org

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Children's Director: Meredith Suits (865-250-3579) or elementary@cstonepres.org

Nursery Coordinator: Christy Shurden or nursery@cstonepres.org

Prayer Requests: prayer@cstonepres.org

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Terry Cheney (615-579-7089)

Chuck Emerson: *Emeritus* (615-943-8443)

Joe Haworth (615-289-7543)

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All Scripture quotations from the English Standard Version

