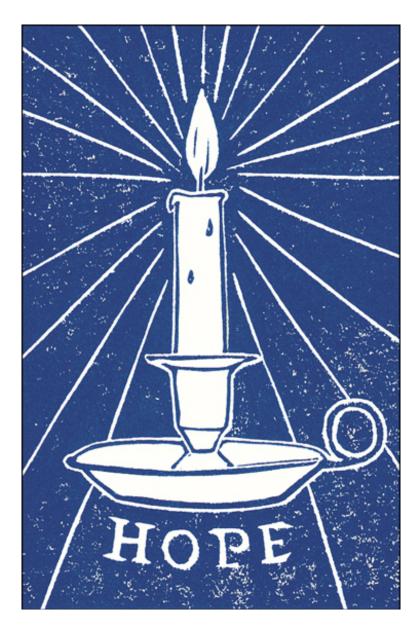


CORNERSTONE Presbyterian Church



Service of Celebration and Gospel Renewal

Third Sunday of Advent—Glory

20 December 2020

Pastoral Notes

Dear Cornerstone Family,

Every Advent about this time, I pull together a few quotes from my Yuletide reading to share. This year, sadly, my seasonal reading was cut short by research for upcoming articles, conferences, and classes. Even with that, I sneaked in a bookish exploration or two, running wild in grand mystery of the incarnation. Below are a few jewels from my treasure hunts, as we draw the waiting season of Advent to a close and prepare for the festivity of Christmas.

"Maybe Christmas" he thought, "doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more."—Dr. Seuss

"Christmas says there is a cosmic scheme of things. God made us as his image to reflect his glory. We have sinned and fallen short of that glory (Romans 3:23). But the Son of God, who is the very image of God (Colossians I:15), was sent by God, and came in love to restore his image. Through faith in him, we discover that our lives fit into the 'cosmic scheme of things.' He recreates in us a love for himself and restores us to fellowship with himself, which transforms self-directed love into love of our neighbors. That is the destiny for which we were created."—Sinclair Ferguson

"Jesus, Lord, we look to thee, On this day of thine own Nativity; Show thyself the Prince of Peace; Bid our jarring conflicts cease."—Charles Wesley

"In the Christian story, God descends to reascend. He comes down; down the from the heights of absolute being into time and space, down into humanity... down to the very roots and seabed of the Nature He has created. But He goes down to come up again and bring the whole ruined world with Him. One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated burden. He must stoop in order to lift; he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulders."—C.S. Lewis

"There is nothing so secular that it cannot be sacred, and that is one of the deepest messages of the incarnation."—Madeline Engle

"We have nearly arrived at the great merry-making season of the year. On Christmas day we shall find all England enjoying themselves with all the good cheer which they can afford. Servants of God, you who have the largest share in the person of him who was born at Bethlehem, I invite you to the best of all Christmas fare—to nobler food than makes the table groan—bread from heaven, for your spirit. Behold, how rich and how abundant are the provisions which God has made for the high festival which he would have his servants keep, not now and then, but all the days of their lives."—C.H. Spurgeon

Grace & Peace,

5/ate

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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.

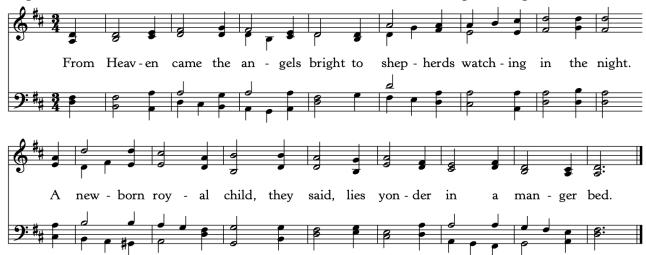
This is the pattern of his love in redeeming and saving his people.

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—From Heaven Came the Angels Bright, Vs I



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

Call to Worship—from Psalm 96:I-9

Pastor: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

All: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

Pastor: For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

Men: For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

Women: Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Pastor: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!

All: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;

bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Pastor: Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

Hymn of Praise—Angels We Have Heard on High



Text: Traditional French Carol. Music: Traditional French Melody.

Old Testament Reading—Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

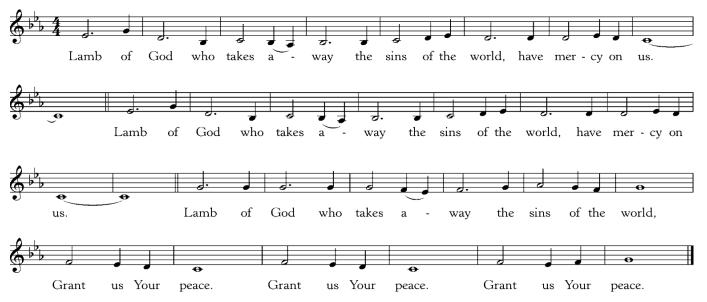
Elder: This is the Word of the Lord.

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 I:29; Music: Franklin Agnus Dei, Gregory D Wilbur, 2009. ©2009 Greyfriars Press.

Congregational Prayer of Confession

Pastor: Knowing ourselves to be sinners,

we approach the glorious incarnation of Christ,

his coming into the world, with awe.

All: In the beginning was the Word, And the Word was with God,

And the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him,

and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him,

Yet we did not know Him.

He came to His own.

And we did not receive Him.

But to all who did receive him, he gave the right to become children of God,

To those who believed in His name.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

For the law was given through Moses;

grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

(from John 1)

Silent Prayers of Confession

Assurance of Pardon—based on Isaiah 7:14, 53:4-6

Pastor: Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign.

All: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Pastor: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;

All: upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

Pastor: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;

All: and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Hymn of Praise—Angels from the Realms of Glory



Text: James Montgomery, 1816, 1825; Music REGENT SQUARE, Henry Smart, 1867.

GOD TEACHES US THROUGH HIS WORD

The Reading of the Word—James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

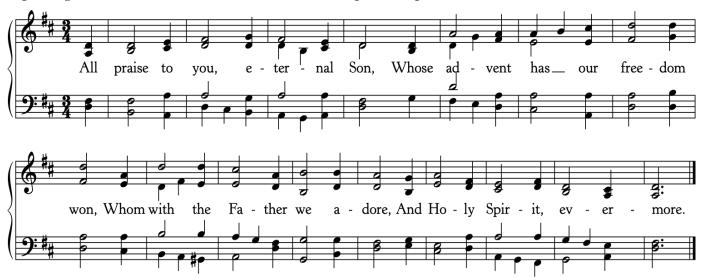
Leader: The grass withers, the flower fades;

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

Sermon—Christ, Our Certain Hope, pt 4 Establish Your Hearts

—Ben Griffith, Pastor

Sung Response—From Heaven Came the Angels Bright



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

Profession of Faith—from Philippians 2:5-II

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



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—All My Heart This Night Rejoices



Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-76, Tr by Catherine Winkworth, 1829+78; Music: BONN (FROLICH SOLL), Johann Georg Ebeling, 1637

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

Communion Hymn—God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen



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—Hark! a Thrilling Voice is Sounding



Text: 5th century, trans. Edward Caswall, 1849; Music: MERTON (MONK), William H. Merton, 1850

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 Luke 1:76-79

Go before the Lord to prepare His ways. Give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high—to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Amen*.

Sung Response—To Us a Child of Hope is Born, Vs I



Text: John Morrison, 1781; Music: KINGSFOLD, English Folk Tune.

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

Women's Ministry

Come study the Psalms with other Cornerstone ladies beginning in January. There are three day and time options on both ends of the county. Sign up on the website or app. Contact Martha or Julie for more info or if you have questions. women@cstonepres.org

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)

Advent Devotionals

Advent devotionals are available at both chapel entrances. These provide readings for each day until January 6. Pick one up at either chapel entrance.

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 – One-Day-Getaway!

We will be kicking off the Spring semester Saturday, January I6, at Deer Run Camp with a day of worship, teaching, eating and games. Cost is \$20, and scholarships are available. Register and find more info on the website or app. Questions? Contact Taylor Thompson: youth@cstonepres.org



- I. Take a few moments to reflect on what you are waiting on during this particular season of life. How has the Lord been working on your patience lately?
- 2. What do you find most difficult about life "in the gap"?
- 3. Identify a particular difficult circumstance in your life. How does it bring fresh courage and patience to remember that "there is more here than meets the eye"?
- 4. Why is the thought of Jesus returning as a "judge" comforting, and not terrifying, for the Christian?
- 5. How does reflecting on God's heart (his compassion and mercy) establish your heart?
- 6. What are some other key take-aways from today's message?

CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Presbyterian Church in America

Pastor: Nate Shurden (615-618-4707 Office) or nate@cstonepres.org
Assistant Pastor: Ben Griffith (601-606-2687) at ben@cstonepres.org
Assistant Pastor: Tony Giles (615-430-8801) or tony@cstonepres.org
Worship and Chief Musician: Greg Wilbur (615-512-4156) or greg@cstonepres.org
Office Administrator: Susan Bumpus (615-618-4707) or office@cstonepres.org
Administrative Assistant for Discipleship: Martha Brooks martha@cstonepres.org
Home Fellowship Information: HFG@cstonepres.org
Women's Ministry: Martha Brooks and Julie Kesler at women@cstonepres.org
Men's Ministry: Ron Moffat or men@cstonepres.org
acting Youth Director: Taylor Thompson (717-371-0848) or youth@cstonepres.org

Acting Youth Director: Taylor Thompson (717-371-0848) or youth@cstonepres.org
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

Ruling Elders

Deacons

*Mark Elliott (615-477-1041) Wes Pittman (615-393-0365)
Matt Faulk (714-801-7596) Brent Roberts (615-394-0662)
Dan Fiedler (615-812-4032) *Jim Robinson (615-587-0442)
Kevin McClung (615-243-9228) Todd Russell (615-319-4803)
Mike Payne (615-579-6453) David Steffens (615-557-5316)

Matt Suits (706-218-2823) Casey Taggart (662-813-3563) Larry Thompson (901-734-1520) Bob Vermilye (615-943-8139)



Post Office Box 407 Franklin, Tennessee 37065 www.cornerstonepresfranklin.org (615) 618-4707

All Scripture quotations from the English Standard Version

