

CORNERSTONE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND GOSPEL RENEWAL

Third Sunday of Advent—Joy
17 December 2023

Pastoral Notes

Dear Cornerstone Family,

You know what they say about December? It's the ~~happiest~~ sickest time of the year. At church last Sunday, news was spreading. In hushed tones, I kept hearing, "Something's going around. So-and-so is under the weather. Such-and-such is down for the count." 'Tis the season.

With almost prophetic accuracy, the plague descended on the Shurden house that very evening. In the waning hours of the Lord's Day, I had this vague foreboding that I was coming-down-with-something. In the middle of the night, there was nothing vague about it. I was sick! And I mean *sick*. Sore throat, cough, fever, chills, headache, body aches...you name it, I had it.

God's sovereignty notwithstanding, the timing could not have been worse. Our annual leadership Christmas soiree was on the calendar for Tuesday evening, December 12th. This year our theme was "A Classy Christmas at the Corner House." Delicious fare, festive drinks, and Mariah Carey karaoke—it was all you could want and more. Sadly, when it became clear that this "something going around" was no joke, we pulled the plug. And Mariah Carey cried.

As I write this Pastoral Note, I am far from out of the woods. Checking thermometer once more—yep, 100.5. Still sick. As if I needed a thermometer to confirm I'm still sick. You'd think feeling like death warmed over would be clue enough. But don't worry, there is an upside to all this. My sides hurt so bad from coughing that I'm finally getting in that core exercise I've needed all year. It feels good to tick off one of my new year's resolutions ahead of time. #winning

Thankfully, I'm an easy patient. I pretty much nurse myself. All I require is Gatorade, Zicam, Chloraseptic, cough syrup, Tylenol alternated with ibuprofen, extra pillows and blankets, eye mask, essential oils, relaxing Christmas music, homemade chicken noodle soup, a variety of Christmas treats, several good books, my iPhone, and...pretty much constant attention and pampering. What, too much to ask?

Forgive me, I've clearly been couped up too long. I've managed to waste pretty much this entire article talking about how terrible this sickness has been. (Do you feel pity for me yet?)

Truth is, I haven't cornered the market on sickness and suffering this December. Far from it! As I convalesced at home this week, I took time, as strength allowed, to work my way through the church rolls and catch up on number of phone calls, emails, and text messages. Many of those contacts circled around trials you're passing through right now—trials far more significant than my seasonal ailment. Hearing you rehearse Scriptural promises, share testimony, and then pray together (over the phone from a healthy distance!) had the unintended but blessed consequence of putting my small potato troubles in eternal perspective. Which, if I'm honest, is exactly what my soul needed.

Your faith and example this week ministered to me in a way no Z-pack or steroid shot could. For you (ad)ministered to me gospel elixir. That is, the one and only cure that does not promise immediate remedy for life's troubles, but rather treats the sickness behind all sicknesses, namely, sin and death, and ensures our eternal well-being. After all, this is the very mission of Christmas: "For this reason, Christ came into the world to save sinners..." (1 Timothy 1:15).

We are wasting away. Lord knows I feel it. And I bet you do, too. But, let's not let that get us down. For these light and momentary afflictions are a part of grand design. They are God's holy means of preparing for us an eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). Should we be further readied this Christmas for that coming eternal weight, it would be a very merry Christmas indeed.

Your servant,



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.

Introit—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 in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are placed between the staves. The first system covers the first line of lyrics, the second system covers the second line, and the third system covers the third line. The piano accompaniment features a steady, rhythmic pattern of chords and single notes.

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

Call to Worship—from Psalm 98:1-4

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.

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

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

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

Pastor: Break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

For He has done marvelous things!

Hymn of Praise—Angels We Have Heard on High

An - gels, we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Glo - ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o,

glo - ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o.

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

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

Lamb of God who takes a - way the sins of the world, have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God who takes a - way the sins of the world, have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God who takes a - way the sins of the world,

Grant us Your peace. Grant us Your peace. Grant us Your peace.

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

Congregational Confession of Sin—based on Psalm 51:1-4, 6-10, 11-12

Pastor: Lord, we come before you in prayer and confession. 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.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: 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.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Pastor: 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.

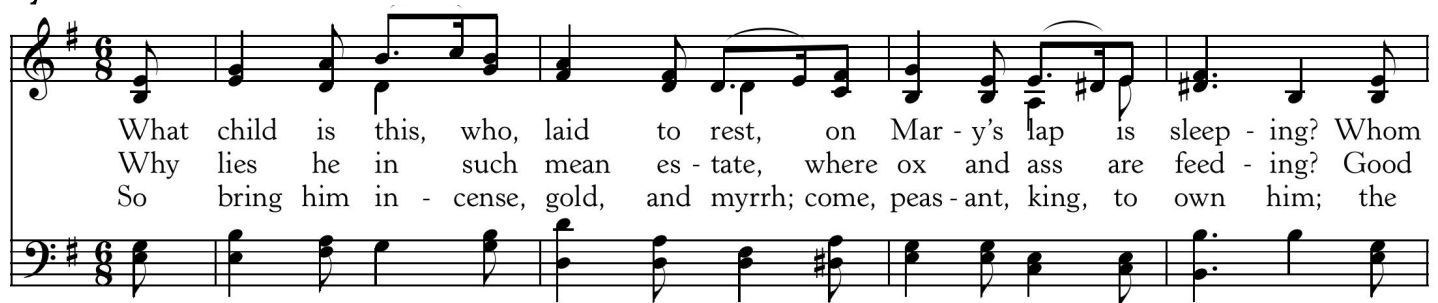
All: Lord, forgive our sins.

Silent Prayers of Confession

Assurance of Pardon—Colossians 1:11-14

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 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—What Child is This



What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing? Whom
Why lies he in such mean es - tate, where ox and ass are feed - ing? Good
So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him; the

an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by:

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y.
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y.
 joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y.

Text: William Chatterton Dix, 1865; Music: GREENSLEEVES, 16th Century English

Sacrament of Baptism

—Zion Abdiel Roberts, *daughter of Brent & Andrea Roberts*

“For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. ‘And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you and to your seed after you.’ Therefore, believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your house.” (Acts 2:39; Gen. 17:7; Acts 16:31)

Parental Vows:

1. Do you acknowledge your own, as well as your child’s, need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?
2. Do you claim God’s covenant promises for her, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus—and only to the Lord Jesus—for her salvation, just as you do for your own?
3. Do you now consecrate your child to God; will you in humble reliance upon His sovereign grace set before her a godly example—praying with and for her, teaching her the good hope of the Gospel, opening to her the truth of the Scriptures, and striving by every means of grace God provides, to bring her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Congregational Vow:

Will you as a covenant community joyously commit to assisting these parents in the Christian nurture of this child?

GOD TEACHES US THROUGH HIS WORD

The Reading of the Word—Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”(which means, God with us).

²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Leader: The grass withers, the flower fades;

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

Sermon—The Name Above All Names Part 3

Jesus Christ, Son of God

—Nate Shurden, *Pastor*

Sung Response—The First Noel, Vs 6

Then let— us all in one ac - cord Sing prai - ses to our heav'n - ly Lord;
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught, And with His bloodman - kind hath bought.
No - el, — no - el, No - el, no, el, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

The musical score is written for a piano accompaniment. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are printed below the treble clef staff of each system. The first system ends with a double bar line, the second with a double bar line, and the third with a double bar line.

Text and Music: Old English Carol

Sursum Corda

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You,
Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

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 for Your glo - ry. We give You thanks.

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

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.

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. Proceed to the first table to partake of the bread, and then to the second tables to drink the cup of wine/juice.

Hymn of Communion—Glory in the Darkest Place



Out of the depths of si-lent night Im-man - u - el, come hear our cry.
Out of the depths of si-lent night A Sav - ior born, a moth - er's sigh.



Our grief is strong, our bur-dens great. The night is long and hope is faint.
The dark-ness trem - bled at this star. A beam of hope for troub-led hearts.



You came to set the cap-tives free, A Morn-ing Star of joy and peace.
You came to make Your bless-ings known. And bear our curse of death a - lone.



Why does this dark-ness feel so deep? Lord, help our wear - y spir - its see.
You came to share our suf-fer - ing So in our sor - row we could sing:

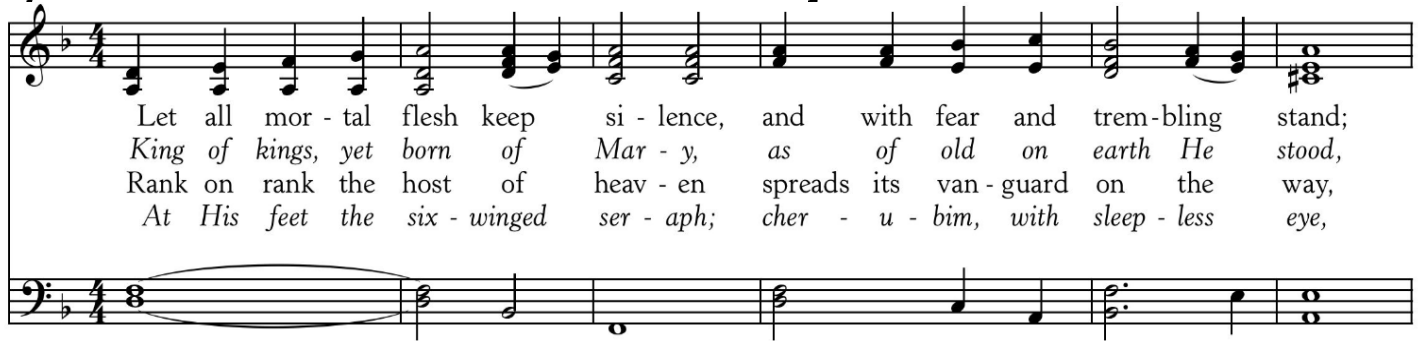


Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry in the dark - est place.

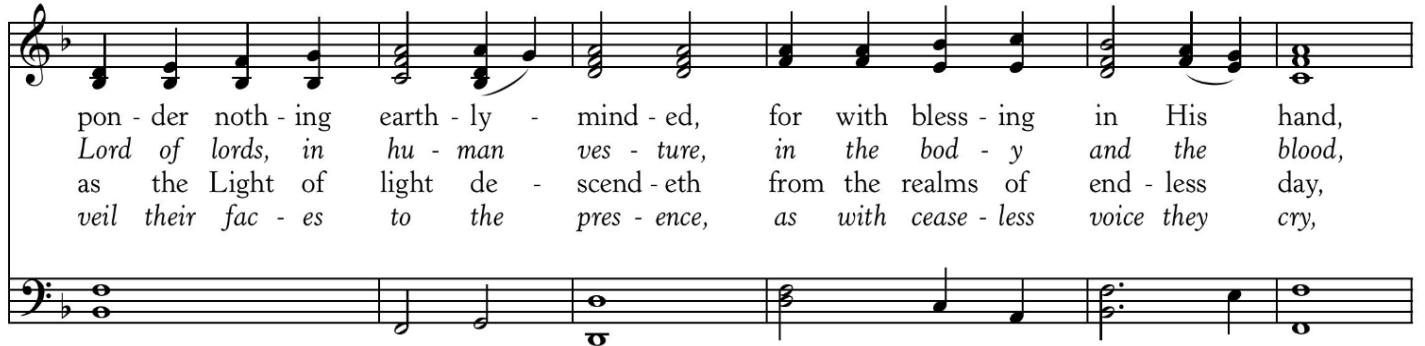


Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry, let Your mer - cy reign.

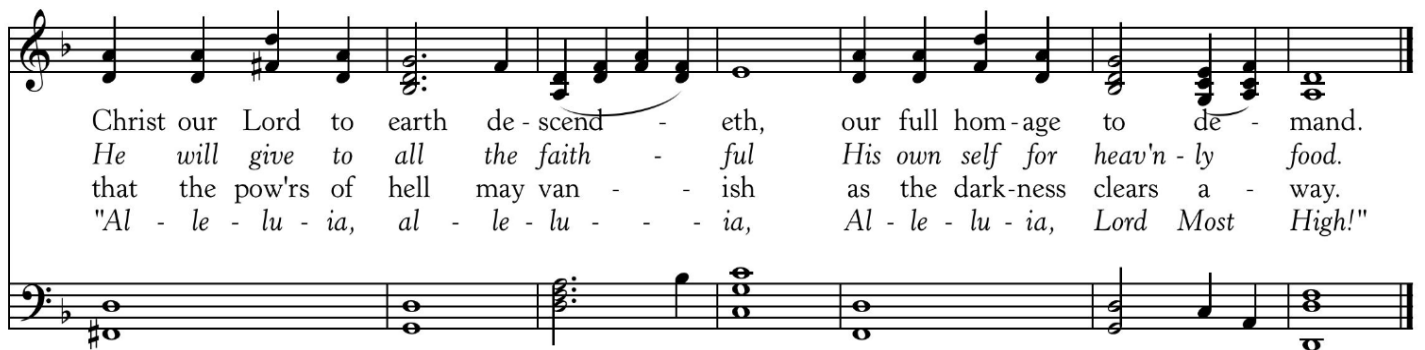
Hymn of Communion—Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



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*

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—Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let Earth re - ceive her King;
Joy to the Earth! The Sav - ior reigns: let men their songs em - ploy;
No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the ground;
He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions prove

Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him room,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
He comes to make his bless - ings flow
The glo - ries of His righ - teous - ness

And Heav'n and na - ture sing, and Heav'n and na - ture sing,
Re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing joy,
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
And won - ders of His love, and won - ders of His love,
And Heav'n and na - ture sing, and Heav'n and na -

And Heav'n, and Heav'n and na - ture sing.
Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
Far as, far as the curse is found.
And won - ders, won - ders of His love.
ture sing,

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

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 I:24-25

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, 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 7

The musical score is written for a piano accompaniment. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef and a bass clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are: "All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, Whose ad - vent has — our free - dom". The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "won, Whom with the Fa - ther we a - dore, And Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more." The score ends with a double bar line.

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

*Welcome to Cornerstone! If you are visiting with us today, we are glad you're here!
We invite you to fill out a visitor form by scanning this QR code so that we may welcome you personally.
Alternatively, visitor cards are available at either entrance to the chapel
and can be placed in one of the offering boxes as you leave.*



Focus on Church Ministry

Elder Election on December 31

As you may have heard during the Sunday School hour last week, Preston Brooks and Terry Cheney have been examined, sustained, and unanimously recommended to you, the congregation, for election as elders on Sunday, December 31. All communing members are eligible and encouraged to participate in this election. Please be in prayer for Mr. Brooks and Mr. Cheney and prepare to vote your conscience at the end of the month.

Year-End Giving

Gifts for tax credit for 2023 should be postmarked by December 31. Questions? Contact Robin in the church office at 615.618.4707 or office@cstonepres.org. Please note that the office will be open by appointment only from December 26-29.

Cornerstone Youth

Regular youth Sunday School and midweek activities will return on January 3. On Wednesday nights, we will begin a series on work and calling, seeking to understand God's purpose and design for our daily labors. On Sunday mornings, we will continue our series studying the Gospel of John.

Advent Devotional

As an aid to your spiritual preparations during this season, this devotional is available for you at either entrance to the Chapel. Let's put the devotional to good use as we look for the coming of the King.

Exploring Cornerstone—Save the Date!

Want to learn about the history, beliefs, vision, and ministries of Cornerstone, as well as meet key ministry leaders? The Exploring Cornerstone class is coming up in the new year. We will meet on Friday evening, February 2, and Saturday morning, February 3. Registration opens the first week of January.

Upcoming Sunday School Offerings

Christ, Culture, and the Kingdom of God

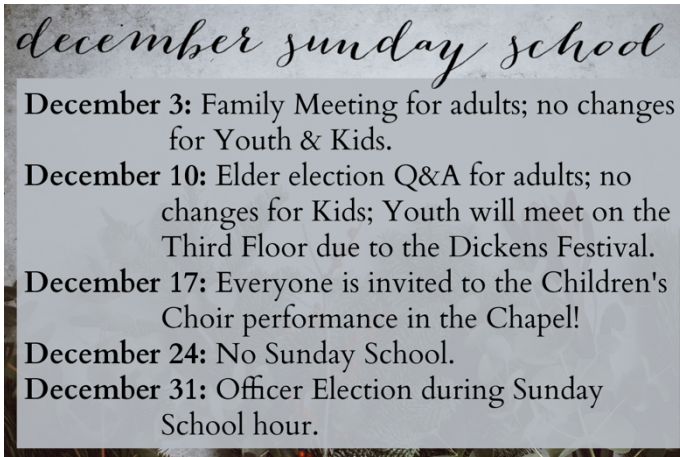
What does faithfulness look like in a world where Christianity has fallen out of favor? Leaning on the books of Esther and Daniel, this six-week class led by Mr. Nathan Johnson will explore Christian faithfulness in a strange world. Class begins Sunday, January 7 and will meet in the Chapel.

Reset and Refresh: Living a Grace-Paced Life in the Year Ahead

You probably recognize overwhelmed, exhausted, stressed, anxious, and joyless. Whatever happened to peaceful, joyful, content, rested, and refreshed? Based on the books *Reset* by David Murray and *Refresh* by Shona & David Murray, this six-week class led by Tony Giles will help you chart a grace-paced course for the year ahead. Class begins Sunday, January 7 and will meet on the Third Floor.

Sew for Hope—Save the Date

Cornerstone Women have been invited to go to Servant Group International to help the Sew for Hope ministry prepare sewing kits for their spring classes. We are scheduled to go on Wednesday morning, January 17. SGI will provide a Kurdish breakfast for us, and then we will spend the remainder of our time cutting fabric and fellowshiping. Be on the lookout for registration and carpooling information in the next few weeks.



Taking the Message Home

Today's message, "Jesus Christ, Son of God," is taken from Matthew 1:18-25. Please take time to discuss the questions below with your family, friends, or Home Fellowship Group (HFG).

- It has been said that Luke tells the birth of Jesus through Mary's eyes, while Matthew tells the birth of Jesus through Joseph's eyes. Go back and read Luke 2:1-20 and compare the two accounts. What differences do you see?
- How does the scandalous circumstance of Jesus's birth compare to scandalous genealogical history in vs. 1-17? What contrast do you see?
- Joseph and Mary are betrothed, but Joseph is also called Mary's "husband" (v. 19). Even stranger, Joseph must "divorce" Mary when he's not yet fully married to her (v. 19). What are we to make of this?
- Why must the Holy Spirit be "the father" of Jesus Christ?
- What from today's message will stick with you as we head into the final week of Advent?

CORNERSTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Presbyterian Church in America

Pastor: Nate Shurden (615-618-4707 Office) or nate@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: Robin Spychalski (615-618-4707) or office@cstonepres.org

Church Life Coordinator: Dan Fiedler (615-812-4032) or dan@cstonepres.org

Women's Ministry Director: Martha Brooks (615-591-1683) or women@cstonepres.org

Men's Ministry: men@cstonepres.org

Young Adult Ministry: Taylor Thompson (717-371-0848) or youngadults@cstonepres.org

Director of Youth and Families: Drew Abercrombie (407-489-1724) or drew@cstonepres.org

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

Nursery Coordinator: Christy Shurden or nursery@cstonepres.org

Administrative Assistant for Discipleship: Kelley Shell (662-231-9814) or kelley@cstonepres.org

Home Fellowship Information: HFG@cstonepres.org

Prayer Requests: prayer@cstonepres.org

Ruling Elders

Randy Allen (615-260-1884)

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

Joe Haworth (615-289-7543)

Will Kesler (423-313-7493)

John Millard (423-443-8852)

Ron Moffat (629-215-5135)

Jim Payne (615-497-0613)

Jim Smith (615-347-4188)

Deacons

Mark Elliott (615-477-1041)

Matt Faulk (714-801-7596)

Dan Fiedler (615-812-4032)

Mark Mitchell (630-835-7754)

Mike Payne (615-579-6453)

Wes Pittman (615-406-6209)

Brent Roberts (615-394-0662)

Jim Robinson (615-587-0442)

*Todd Russell (615-319-4803)

Matt Suits (706-218-2823)

Casey Taggart (662-813-3563)

Larry Thompson (901-734-1520)

Bob Vermilye (615-943-8139)

*On Sabbatical



136 Third Ave S, Franklin, Tennessee 37064
www.cornerstonepresfranklin.org (615) 618-4707

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