



RIVER CITY
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE LORD'S DAY
DECEMBER 9, AD 2018

"Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."
Isaiah 43:19



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For Reflection

Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 15-18

15. What manner of mediator and redeemer then must we seek?

One who is a true and sinless man, and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is at the same time true God.

16. Why must He be a true and sinless man?

Because the justice of God requires, that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin; but no man, being himself a sinner, could satisfy for others.

17. Why must He be at the same time true God?

That by the power of His Godhead He might bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath and so obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life.

18. But who now is that Mediator, who is at the same time true God and a true, sinless man?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely given unto us for complete redemption and righteousness.

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 near The Commons. Follow the signs or ask anyone for directions.

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. 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

Hebrews 1:1-5

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?

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

Psalms 24:7-11

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O gates!

People: And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Pastor: Who is this King of glory?

People: The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O gates!

People: And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Pastor: Who is this King of glory?

People: The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!

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

O Worship the King.

Public Domain. Words: Robert Grant. Music: Johann Michael Haydn, CCL# 11359088

1. O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His power and His love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.
2. O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, Whose canopy space,
Whose chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.
3. Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.
4. Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

Songs of Praise

Jesus Shall Reign

Public Domain. Words: Isaac Watts. Music: John Hatton CCL# 11359088

1. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does His successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
'Til moons shall wax and wane no more.

2. For Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

3. People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

4. Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed.

5. Where He displays His healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more:
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

6. Let ev'ry creature rise and bring
His grateful honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen!

Songs of Praise

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Words: Charles Wesley,

Music: Sandra McCracken/Derek Webb, ©2000 Nippon Music (ASCAP) /Same Old Dress Music, Inc.
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.

2. Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the saints Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Chorus:

Come Thou long-awaited Emmanuel.

3. Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

4. By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.(Repeat chorus)

Call to Confession

Luke 15:7

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Confession of Sin

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

Galatians 4:4-7

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Confession of Faith

Nicene Creed

I believe in one 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 the 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 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 the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, 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 remission 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

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.

Scripture & Sermon Luke 1:57-79, "Making Preparations"

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.

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.

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.

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 summarizes 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Our Men's Bible Study will meet at Mug's Café, 515 Main Street, North Little Rock, this Friday, December 14 @ 7:00 am. We will be continuing our study of *Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney.
- On the Lord's Day, December 23, we will share together in a Service of Lessons and Carols. This service of scripture readings and singing traces the story of redemption through the Bible and celebrates the greatest gift God has ever given.
- Supporting River City financially. Some of you have asked how you can give to support River City Reformed Church financially. We have a collection box on the hospitality table for tithes and offerings. Or if you prefer you may:
 - Give online by going to rivercityarp.org and click on the "Give" link on the main menu, or
 - Send your gift to: River City Reformed c/o Mr. Matt Wylie, P. O. Box 164886, Little Rock, AR 72216

CONTACT US

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