



RIVER CITY
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE LORD'S DAY
APRIL 26, AD 2020

"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

For Reflection

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 18, Questions 46, 47, and 49

46. How dost thou understand the words: He ascended into Heaven?

That Christ, in sight of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven; and in our behalf there continues, until He shall come again to judge the living and the dead.

47. Is not then Christ with us even unto the end of the world, as He has promised?

Christ is true Man and true God: according to His human nature, He is now not on earth; but according to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is at no time absent from us.

49. What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?

First, that He is our Advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven. Secondly, that we have our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge, that He, as the Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself. Thirdly, that He sends us His Spirit, as an earnest, by whose power we seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on the earth

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

Revelation 7:9-12

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

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

Revelation 7:15-17

Pastor: Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;

People: And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

Pastor: They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;

People: The sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

Pastor: For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,

People: And he will guide them to springs of living water,

Pastor: And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

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

Christ Our Hope in Life and Death

Words and Music by Keith Getty, Matt Boswell, Jordan Kauflin, Matt Merker, Matt Papa. CCL# 11359088

What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone.

What is our only confidence?

That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand?

What comes, apart from His command?

And what will keep us to the end?

The love of Christ, in which we stand.

O sing hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal;

O sing hallelujah! Now and ever we confess

Christ our hope in life and death.

What truth can calm the troubled soul?

God is good, God is good.

Where is His grace and goodness known?

In our great Redeemer's blood.

Who holds our faith when fears arise?

Who stands above the stormy trial?

Who sends the waves that bring us nigh

Unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

Unto the grave, what shall we sing?

"Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"

And what reward will heaven bring?

Everlasting life with Him.

There we will rise to meet the Lord,

Then sin and death will be destroyed,

And we will feast in endless joy,

When Christ is ours forevermore.

Call to Confession

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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

Hebrews 7:23-26

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but [Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

Confession of Faith

The 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".

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.

Pastor: He is the image of the invisible God,

People: The firstborn of all creation.

Pastor: For by him all things were created,

People: In heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,

Pastor: Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

People: And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Pastor: And he is the head of the body, the church.

People: He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Pastor: For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

People: And through him to reconcile to himself all things,

Pastor: Whether on earth or in heaven,

People: Making peace by the blood of his cross.

Pastor: And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,

People: In order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him

Songs of Praise

The Lord's My Shepherd (Psalm 23)

Words: Francis Rous, Music: William Havergal, Public Domain. CCL# 11359088

1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill,
For thou art with me; and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

4 My table thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me:
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling place shall be.

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 24:36-53, "The End of the Beginning"

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

Oh How Good It Is

Words & Music: KEITH GETTY, KRISTYN GETTY, ROSS HOLMES, AND STUART TOWNEND
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CCL# 11359088

Oh how good it is, when the family of God
Dwells together in spirit, in faith and unity.
Where the bonds of peace, of acceptance and love
Are the fruit of His presence, here among us.

CHORUS

So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord
And with one heart we'll live out His word
Till the whole earth sees
The Redeemer has come
For He dwells in the presence of His people.

Oh how good it is, in this journey we share
To rejoice with the happy, and weep with those who mourn.
For the weak find strength, the afflicted find grace
When we offer the blessing, of belonging. [CHORUS}

Oh how good it is, to embrace His command
To prefer one another, forgive as He forgives.
When we live as one, we all share in the love
Of the Son with the Father, and the Spirit. [CHORUS}

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 and Ladies' Bible Studies will NOT MEET in person until further notice in person. Our Session will be assessing the situation regarding the Coronavirus epidemic weekly and will be communicating via email, text, and social media to keep you updated on our response to the present crisis.
- Our Lord's Day worship will be moved to Facebook Live at 10:30 am until at least the end of April. At that time our Session will reassess and we will let you know how we will move forward.
- Supporting River City financially. Some of you have asked how you can give to support River City Reformed Church financially.
 - You can use the collection box on the resource table for tithes & offerings, or,
 - 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 156, Pottsville, AR 72858

CONTACT US

Our Elders

Mr. Leslie Oates 479-857-1840

Mr. Matt Wylie 479-979-2224

Mr. Richard Moore 901-592-9074

Mr. Milton Murphy 901-497-9203

Our Pastor Rev. Howard Wheeler 479-970-1384

On the web at www.rivercityarp.org

On Facebook @RiverCityARP

Or by Email at rivercityarp@gmail.com