

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, December 15, 2019

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:15-17

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Greeting and Blessing*

Responsive Reading*

Psalm 8 (p. 786)

Hymn of Preparation*

Hymn 196

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

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.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear Desire of every nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Joy to those who long to see thee, Dayspring from on high, appear;
Come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of thy birth we long to hear!
O'er the hills the angels singing news, glad tidings of a birth:
"Go to him, your praises bringing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."

Come to earth to taste our sadness, he whose glories knew no end;
By his life he brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall;
This the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne. Amen.

* Congregation is requested to stand, if able.

Congregational Confession of Sin

Leader: Lord God, you are holy, holy, holy. The whole earth is full of your glory. As we think about your holiness, we realize how we fall short of all that you require of us.

All: We have failed to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Instead of being lights in this world to lead others toward you, we have so often chosen to walk in darkness.

Leader: Forgive us, we pray, and renew our wills. We desire to be conformed more and more to the likeness of Christ; grant us grace and work in us by your Holy Spirit to that end.

All: We ask all this through the merit and mediation of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

Private Confession of Our Sins

Assurance of Forgiveness

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

First Reading*

Ezekiel 36:22-38

Congregational Response

Hymn 230

Thou Who Wast Rich Beyond All Splendor

Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor,
All for love's sake becamest poor;
Thrones for a manger didst surrender,
Sapphire-paved courts for stable floor.
Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor,
All for love's sake becamest poor.

Thou who art God beyond all praising,
All for love's sake becamest man;
Stooping so low, but sinners raising,
heav'nward by thine eternal plan.
Thou who art God beyond all praising,
All for love's sake becamest man.

Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Savior and King, we worship thee.
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,
Make us what thou wouldst have us be.
Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Savior and King, we worship thee. Amen.

Confession of Faith

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 96. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, in which by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's direction, his death is shown forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Q. 97. *What is required to be worthy of receiving the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is required of those who would receive the Lord's Supper worthily that they examine themselves, as to their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, as to their faith to feed on him, and as to their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Stewardship

Tithes and Offerings

Gloria Patri*

Hymn 735

Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen, amen.

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.

THE WORD AND SACRAMENT

Second Reading*

Ephesians 2

Congregational Response

(also printed on p. 12 of the bulletin)

Song of Zechariah

Blest be God, the Lord of Israel;
He has come to set us free!
And a horn of full salvation
He has raised from David's seed.
God has visited his people
To redeem them as foretold
In the promise he had spoken
Thro' his prophets from of old.

God has come in might to save us
From the hatred of our foes.
From their cruel hand he frees us,
And his tender mercy shows
Mercy promised in his cov'nant
To our fathers whom he chose.
He will keep his oath to Abr'am
To release us from our woes.

God has sworn to grant deliv'rance
And restore us to our place:
Serving boldly in his presence,
Just and holy all our days.
You, my child, will be his Prophet,
Called and sent by God Most High.
You must go before the Lord now
To prepare his ways aright.

Bring the knowledge of salvation
To God's people in their sin.
Preach that God is tenderhearted,
And by him are sins forgiv'n.
His great mercy, like the sunrise,
Brightly shines in deepest night,
Guiding those who sit in darkness
To the way of peace and light. Amen.

Reception of New Members

Pastoral Prayer (based on Psalm 36:5-7)

Sermon

“You Must Be Born Again”
John 3:1-15

Pastor Ben Muresan

GOD'S BLESSING ON HIS PEOPLE

Hymn of Thanksgiving*

Hymn 208

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of angels;
*O Come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

God of God, Light of Light;
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb:
Very God, begotten, not created;
*O Come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels;
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest;
*O Come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning:
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Late in flesh appearing;
*O Come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord. Amen.*

LORD'S DAY DEVOTION AND QUESTIONS

How much did you contribute to your physical birth? Nothing. Each of us was completely passive in that. How much did you contribute to your spiritual rebirth? The Bible teaches us that we were passive in that as well—we had as much to do with our spiritual rebirth as we did with our physical birth. John Calvin points out that the phrase “born again” used by Jesus in John 3:7 reveals that we need God to do more than improve just a small part of us; we need our entire being to be renewed. Calvin writes: “Therefore it follows that there is nothing in us that is not defective; for if reformation is necessary in the whole and in each part, corruption must be spread everywhere.... Thus in the whole of our nature there remains not a speck of uprightness. And so it is plain that we must be formed for the Kingdom of God by a second birth.”

1. For review, read John 2:13-25. Why did Jesus clear the temple in Jerusalem? What is one point of application for your life that you learn from this account?
2. Review our first reading from Ezekiel 36:22-38. What do you learn from this passage about regeneration?
3. Read John 3:1-3. Who were the Pharisees? Why do you think Nicodemus visited Jesus? When you compare verse 3 with Luke 18:18, what question do you think Jesus perceived was behind Nicodemus' visit?
4. What is Jesus describing in John 3:8?
5. Read Numbers 21:4-9. How does Jesus connect his death in John 3:13-15 to this incident from Israel's history?
6. What do you learn about evangelism from John 3:1-15?
7. In preparation for our next study through this gospel, read John 3:16-21. How do these verses shed greater light on the meaning of verses 1-15?

SONG OF ZECHARIAH

1. Blest be God, the Lord of Is - rael; he has come to set us free!
 2. God has come in might to save us from the ha - tred of our foes.
 3. God has sworn to grant de - liv -'rance and re - store us to our place:
 4. Bring the knowl - edge of sal - va - tion to God's peo - ple in their sin.

And a horn of full sal - va - tion he has raised from Da - vid's seed.
 From their cru - el hand he frees us, and his ten - der mer - cy shows
 serv - ing bold - ly in his pres - ence, just and ho - ly all our days.
 Preach that God is ten - der - heart - ed, and by him are sins for - giv'n.

God has vis - it - ed his peo - ple to re - deem them as fore - told
 mer - cy prom - ised in his cov - 'nant to our fa - thers whom he chose.
 You, my child, will be his Pro - phet, called and sent by God Most High.
 His great mer - cy, like the sun - rise, bright - ly shines in deep - est night,

in the prom - ise he had spo - ken thro' his pro - phets from of old.
 He will keep his oath to A - br'am to re - lease us from our woes.
 You must go be - fore the Lord now to pre - pare his ways a - right.
 guid - ing those who sit in dark - ness to the way of peace and light.