

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Presbyterian Church in America or “The PCA” is a distinctly evangelical denomination in the Reformed tradition. The Bible as the Word of God is the primary standard for our faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, although subordinate to the Bible in their authority, set forth our understanding of biblical truth in a consistent, concise, and reliable form. In the Reformed tradition, there are five key tenets, among others, that we hold to: By Scripture Alone; By Christ Alone; By Grace Alone; By Faith Alone; and To God Alone be the Glory.

- We believe the Bible is the written word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and without error in the original manuscripts. The Bible is the revelation of God’s truth and is infallible and authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.
- We believe in the Holy Trinity. There is one God, who exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that all are sinners and totally unable to save themselves from God’s displeasure, except by His mercy.
- We believe that salvation is by God alone as He sovereignly chooses those He will save. We believe His choice is based on His grace, not on any human individual merit, or foreseen faith.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who through His perfect life and sacrificial death atoned for the sins of all who will trust in Him, alone, for salvation.
- We believe that God is gracious and faithful to His people not simply as individuals but as families in successive generations according to His Covenant promises.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells God’s people and gives them the strength and wisdom to trust Christ and follow Him.
- We believe that Jesus will return, bodily and visibly, to judge all mankind and to receive His people to Himself.
- We believe that all aspects of our lives are to be lived to the glory of God under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.



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Spreading A Love for God and His Glory

December 22, 2013



“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will rejoice over you with loud singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

His Calling and Our Praise

***CALL TO WORSHIP:** *Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 2:14, Rev. 19:5*

Leader: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

Leader: Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

Leader: Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.

*(*Indicates when to stand)*

We ask that you please turn off cell phones during the worship service. Thank you.

CALENDAR

TODAY

- 8:30 a.m. – WORSHIP SERVICE
- 9:45 a.m. – Coffee & Fellowship
- 11:00 a.m. – WORSHIP SERVICE

THIS WEEK

- Tuesday – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday – Merry Christmas!

LOOKING AHEAD

- Tuesdays – Music practice, 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays – Men's Prayer Breakfast, 6:45 a.m.
- Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups (Sept.-May)
- Sundays – Adult Small Groups (Sept.-May)
- 1st Sundays – Diaconal Offering
- 1st Tuesdays – Elder home visits
- 3rd Tuesdays – Elders/Deacons' meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays – Elizabeth Women, noon, at Jo Anne Ross' home, (Sept.-May)

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- Sunday, Jan. 5 – Sunday School resumes at 10:00 a.m.
 - Tuesday, Jan. 7 – Trustees Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at the church
 - Thursday, Jan. 9 – Feed the Flathead, 5:30 p.m. at Central Christian Church
 - Tuesday, Jan. 14 – Women's Ministry Committee Meeting, 4:00 p.m. at the church
 - Tuesday, Jan. 14 – Fellowship Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the church
 - Tuesday, Jan. 21 – Elder/Deacon Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the church
 - Wednesday, Jan. 22 – Annual Meeting & Soup Supper, 6:00 p.m. at the church

* **O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL** – Hymn #194 vs. 1,4,5

* **WHILE BY THE SHEEP WE WATCHED AT NIGHT** – Hymn #215

* **PRAYER OF PRAISE**

* **THE FIRST NOEL**

The first Noel the angel did say,
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

(Chorus)

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

(Chorus)

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent
and to follow the star wherever it went.

(Chorus)

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
who hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
and with his blood mankind has bought.

(Chorus)

LORD'S SUPPER OBSERVANCE

At Faith Covenant, the Lord's Supper is observed each Lord's Day as the climax of our worship service. We invite to the Lord's Table all those who are baptized disciples of Jesus Christ, under the authority of Christ and His body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup with us as a visitor, you are acknowledging to our church that you are in covenant with God. You also acknowledge that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. If you have any doubts about your participation, please speak to the pastor or one of the elders after the service. Wine and bread are the elements of the supper as instituted by Jesus Christ. We recommend the use of wine; however we offer both juice and wine in the tray to allow true liberty of conscience. The wine is located in the two outer rings and the juice is located in the center ring.

For Prayer Chain requests or to be added to the prayer chain, please contact the church office at 752-2400 or email to office@faithcov.com.

DECEMBER MINISTRIES

DEACON OF THE MONTH Micah Hill
 NURSERY M.O.M. (Mom of the Month) Sharon Riley
 NURSERY COORDINATOR..... Darcy Hearn
Direct Nursery questions, concerns, praises, etc., to Darcy at 270-8933.

TODAY

USHERS/GREETERS (8:30 AM)..... Nick & Hanni Hanson
 USHERS/GREETERS (11 AM) Tim & Kate Anderson
 CHILDREN'S CHURCH (11 AM service only)..... Sharon & Zane Salyer
 WORSHIP NURSERY (8:30 AM) Darcy Hearn
 WORSHIP NURSERY (11 AM infants)..... Turners
 WORSHIP NURSERY (11 AM toddlers thru 3yrs) Wendy Putzler
 FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS..... Carolyn Duncan & Alyssa Hobus
 COMMUNION PREP..... Terry & Judy Fosbery
 COMMUNION CLEAN-UP Donelle Holderbaum

NEXT SUNDAY – DECEMBER 29

USHERS/GREETERS (8:30 AM)..... Nick & Hanni Hanson
 USHERS/GREETERS (11 AM) Tim & Kate Anderson
 CHILDREN'S CHURCH (11 AM service only)..... Sharon & Zane Salyer
 WORSHIP NURSERY (11 AM infants)..... Andersons
 WORSHIP NURSERY (11 AM toddlers thru 3yrs) Uzzis
 FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS..... Laura Pierson & Amy Bennett
 COMMUNION PREP..... Christy Heath
 COMMUNION CLEAN-UP Theresa Paolini

His Renewal and Our Hope

COMMON CONFESSION OF SIN

SCRIPTURE OF EXHORTATION: *Psalm 34:11-16*

Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

All: Almighty God, through the coming of your Son, you shattered the power of sin and death. Yet we remain captive to doubt and fear, bound by the ways that lead to death. Our tongues often speak evil, and our lips deceit. We over-look the poor and the hungry; and we are deaf to the cries of the oppressed. We do not seek and pursue your call to peace. Father, help us to trust your power to change our lives, and make us new, that we may know the joy of abundant life and the peace of Christ ruling our hearts. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

DECLARATION OF GRACE: *Psalm 34:18-22*

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH*

– The Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Question 32

Minister: Why are you called a Christian?

All: Because by faith I am a member of Christ and so I share in his anointing. I am anointed to confess his name, to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks, to strive with a good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and afterward to reign with Christ over all creation for all eternity.

***WHO IS HE IN YONDER STALL**

Who is he in yonder stall
at whose feet the shepherds fall?
Who is he in deep distress
fasting in the wilderness?

(Chorus)
'Tis the Lord O wondrous story;
'tis the Lord the King of glory.
At his feet we humbly fall;
crown him, crown him Lord of all!

Who is he the people bless
for his words of gentleness?
Who is he to whom they bring
all the sick and sorrowing?

(Chorus)

Who is he that stands and weeps
at the grave where Laz'rus sleeps?
Who is he the gath'ring throng
greet with loud triumphant song?

(Chorus)

Who is he that from the grave
comes to heal and help and save?
Who is he that from his throne
rules thro' all the world alone?

(Chorus)

PRAYER, OFFERTORY & RESPONSE

*Reminder: please sign and pass the Attendance Register down the pew.
11:00 a.m. Service: Children ages 4-6 are excused for Children's Church
(held downstairs in the Fellowship Hall)*

INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY – Hymn #216

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LOCAL OR REGIONAL MINISTRY TO PRAY FOR: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Columbia Falls, Pastor Matthew Nelson

MISSION PROJECT OR MISSIONARIES TO PRAY FOR: Jim & Jill Hadlock with CRU Jesus Films

There will be **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL** classes TODAY Sunday, Dec. 22 or Sunday, Dec. 29. Classes will resume Jan. 5 at 10 a.m.

Our **CHRISTMAS EVE** Candlelight Service will be held this year at 7:00 p.m. Please join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: Each year the offering taken at our Christmas Eve service is given to families or individuals of Faith Covenant who have particular needs. Our Deacons determine need and distribute the entire offering to those in need of extra assistance.

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP will not meet December 25 or January 1. They will **resume meeting on Wednesday, January 8.**

COMMITTEE CHAIRS: Please remember to have your Annual Meeting reports turned into the church office by Wednesday, January 1, along with a list of members who will be staying on your committee and the number of openings available for 2014.

NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES: Two new classes will start for adults on January 5. Pastor Lloyd will be teaching on Leviticus, and Pastor Shane will teach Discovering Relational Wisdom. Sign up in the foyer!

LADIES BIBLE STUDY - SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: Ladies are invited to study the age-old spiritual disciplines practiced by Christians for hundreds of years such as prayer, fasting, silence and celebration. The study will meet monthly (January-May) with time to practice each selected discipline between meetings. Sign up in the foyer and contact Chany Ockert with questions (260-3221).

GENERAL OFFERING SUMMARY THRU NOVEMBER 30:
Targeted Budget = \$259,476.15; Offerings received = \$273,778.47

CHRISTMAS FOR FEED THE FLATHEAD: Each year the Community Kitchen - Feed the Flathead ministry serves Christmas dinner and provides gifts for about 100 guests including children. They are currently collecting gifts items for adults and toys for children from babies to age 12. If you would like to contribute, leave your gift in the box by the tree in the fellowship hall or contact Sharon Thompson or Joyce Schmautz to donate money to help with the costs of food and gifts.

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS CONCERT: A free annual community Christmas concert hosted by Crossroads Christian Fellowship and benefiting Neighbors in Need will be tonight, Dec. 22, and Dec. 23, at 6 p.m. at the Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why do we need to keep the message of judgement of the first two chapters in order to fully understand the grace of the last chapter?
2. How is it that the Lord will rejoice over his people? (Read Is 62:5, Luke 15:7). In what ways do you struggle with the thought of God rejoicing over you? Why do you think some struggle with the sheer grace of God's grace?
3. Consider: *"The people who will experience the fulfillment of the promises of 3:14-17 are the ones who obeyed the threefold call back in 2:3: "Seek the Lord, ... seek righteousness, seek humility." Therefore, humility which takes refuge in God (or as we should say today, humility which takes refuge in the death of Jesus Christ for our sins) is not only the way of escape from divine wrath, it is even more the way of entrance into divine joy."* – John Piper
4. Scripture speaks a great deal against violence and oppression. What role are we to have as God's people in standing up against violence and oppression?
5. How does the picture of the Lord's return that Zephaniah paints look different from the fearful one that many Christians portray of the end times? Consider this satirical beatitude: *"Blessed are the Preppers and Dooms-dayers, for they shall shoot their hungry neighbors in the head for wanting food."* What attitude toward our neighbors is Christ calling us to?
6. What unique challenges do we face as a prosperous and affluent nation when we are asked to live by faith and not by sight regarding the future Kingdom of God?
7. How has Zephaniah helped prepare you to live as Christ's ambassador between the Advents? Where do you struggle believing the reality of the gospel in your own life?

His Word and Our Response

Sermon: Pastor Lloyd Pierson

Sermon Series: Advent 2013

Sermon Title: *The Joy of God*

Sermon Text: Zephaniah 3:14-20

(See pages 6-8 for sermon outline and text)

**O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM* – Hymn #201

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Wine is located in the two outer rings; juice is located in the center ring.

(See FCC Observance on page 10)

PRAYER FOR THE CONGREGATION

**GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN* – Hymn #224

*BENEDICTION

CONTACT INFORMATION

"Serving One Another in Love" Galatians 5:13

CHURCH OFFICE: 752-2400 / office@faithcov.com

SENIOR PASTOR: Lloyd Pierson, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Shane Waldron

OFFICE STAFF: Kristin Bay, Shari Montague

BOOKKEEPER: Carlynn Stahlberg

CUSTODIAN: Kelly Brown

SR. HIGH YOUTH LEADER: Trent Neumann

ELDERS

Grady Bennett..... 314-4207 Don Olmsted..... 250-7915

Dave Hanson..... 249-8893 Matt Riley..... 756-8913

Tom Jentz..... 755-2029 Steve Thompson..... 857-3326

Duane Martin (sabbatical).. 756-6026 Jan Wassink..... 249-6590

DEACONS

Buford Bennett..... 261-7124 Micah Hill..... 890-2058

Doug Brown..... 890-0760 Mike Stahlberg..... 270-2509

Ike Eisentraut..... 257-2222 Bruce Tulloch..... 755-4550

Bill Gamble..... 249-0152

BUILDING TRUSTEES

Brian Bay..... 752-9087 Nick Hanson..... 253-4668

Donnie Burns..... 261-9830 Matt Vander Ark..... 871-0615

Russ Hadley (lead)..... 752-3661

SERMON OUTLINE

December 22, 2013

Sermon: Pastor Lloyd Pierson, Ph.D.

Sermon Series: Advent 2013

Sermon Title: *The Joy of God*

I. Gladness of God

II. Gathered by God

SERMON TEXT

Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will rejoice over you with loud singing.

¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD.