

FAITH COVENANT

C H U R C H

Spreading A Love for God and His Glory

December 31, 2023

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,
open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial
and sincere.

James 3:17

*Our worship is
a response to
God's initiative.
The pattern of
our worship
reflects the
gospel.*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 89:1, 2, 5**

Leader: I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever.

All: **With my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.**

Leader: For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."

All: **Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!**

**Indicates
when to stand.
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***AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD - Hymn #226**

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious God, may we evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly cradle-bed,
There to bend the knee before him whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at that cradle rude and bare;
So may we with holy joy, pure, and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.

Holy Jesus, every day keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.

In that heav'nly country bright need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down;
There forever may we sing alleluias to our King.

***PRAYER OF PRAISE**

God Calls Us

The Lord summons his people to worship and we respond in obedience. The Lord's call is a call to action. We gather, praise, adore, give thanks. The Call to Worship is a joyful summons and a clear reminder that worship is our coming into God's presence by his command, and not our command that He come into our presence.

***KING OF KINGS**

In the darkness we were waiting, without hope without light
Till from Heaven You came running, there was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets, to a virgin came the Word
From a throne of endless glory, to a cradle in the dirt

(Chorus)

*Praise the Father, Praise the Son, Praise the Spirit three in one
God of Glory, Majesty, Praise forever to the King of Kings*

To reveal the kingdom coming and to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation, You did not despise the cross
For even in Your suffering You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation, Jesus for our sake You died

(Chorus)

And the morning that You rose all of heaven held its breath
Till that stone was moved for good for the Lamb had conquered death
And the dead rose from their tombs and the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come to the Father are restored

And the Church of Christ was born then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this Gospel truth of old shall not kneel shall not faint
By His blood and in His Name in His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ who has resurrected me

(Chorus)

Praise forever to the King of Kings

COMMON CONFESSION OF SIN

SCRIPTURE OF EXHORTATION: *Isaiah 58:13-14*

If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

All: Lord Jesus, I have sinned times without number, and been guilty of pride and unbelief, and of neglect to seek you in my daily life. My sins and shortcomings present me with a list of accusations, but I thank you that they will not stand against me, for all have been laid on Christ. Deliver me from every evil habit, every interest of former sins, everything that dims the brightness of your grace in me, everything that prevents me taking delight in you. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

DECLARATION OF GRACE: *Lamentations 3:22-23*

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

God Cleanses Us

The biblical response to God's call to be in his presence is confessing our sins. We humble ourselves when we approach our God. This is a corporate prayer of all God's people. It is a great privilege of the gospel that we can stand forgiven before the Lord of glory.

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostle's Creed is an ancient summary of what Christians believe. By confessing the Creed in worship, we are uniting with all of God's people in our common faith in Christ. We joyfully declare who we are while we remember what truly matters. The word "catholic" is a Greek word that simply means 'universal'. It speaks of all Christians everywhere.

*COMMON CONFESSION OF FAITH: 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, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
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,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*JESUS PAID IT ALL

I hear the Savior say, thy strength indeed is small
Child of weakness watch and pray, find in Me thine all in all

(Chorus)

*Jesus paid it all; all to Him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow*

Lord now indeed I find, thy power and thine alone
Can change the leper's spots, and melt the heart of stone
(Chorus)

And when before the throne, I stand in Him complete
Jesus died my soul to save, my lips shall still repeat
(Chorus)

*O praise the One who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead (3x)
(Chorus)*

OFFERTORY & RESPONSE

*Reminder: please sign and pass the Attendance Register down the pew.
Children ages 4-6 excused for Children's Church (downstairs Corner Classroom)*

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM - Hymn #201

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.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth;
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

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.

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.

Offering

We give back to
God a portion
of what he has
given us to use
to declare that
he is Lord of all.
(This is part of
our service as a
church family,
and visitors
should not feel
obligated to
participate.)

Sermon
Pastor John Sackett
Living Wisely in the New Year: James 3:14-18

¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

*Because true wisdom comes from God,
we are enabled to live with confident hope and peace.*

I. Wisdom from below

II. Wisdom from above

Questions for Further Reflection:

1. Aristotle referred to envy as a gnawing pain—"a certain sorrow"—that someone has something we do not. NT scholar Timothy Luke Johnson asks, "Why such sorrow?" And in answering, he explains that it "derives from the premise that being depends on having." How have you seen envy bringing sorrow into your life?
2. Why does "wisdom from below" often seem so attractive? Why does it often lead to escalation?
3. The connection between wisdom and peace is not new here; they are regularly associated together in the Proverbs, and elsewhere in the NT. Why is "Peace" such a prominent "Fruit" of wise living?
4. What are some of the references to the Beatitudes that are listed or inferred here? Do you recall any of those attributes from our time in Zephaniah? What does this repetition tell us?
5. Douglas Moo notes that James is speaking of "wisdom" in a specific context, that is "the fruit of wisdom that brings peace and order to the church." What are some ways you need to bear this fruit with your Faith Covenant family?

Children's Question

In our text this morning, what are all the differences (contrasts) between the wisdom from below (verses 15-17) and "wisdom from above" (verses 13, 17-18).

God

Consecrates Us

Consecrate means to make holy, to set apart. The Word of God does that for the lives of believers.

Through the sermon, confessions of faith, and the offering we are sanctified for service to our Lord to joyfully offer up our lives to him.

**God Communes
with Us**

The Lord
strengthens and
nourishes our
faith through a
sacramental
meal. Through
Jesus, commun-
ion with God
has been
reestablished.
The covenant
has been
renewed. The
Lord's Supper is
the gospel
made visible for
us and we share
in it as the full
community
of God's
people.

***LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

Light of the world, treasure of heaven
Brilliant like the stars in the wintery sky
Joy of the Father, reach through the darkness
Shine across the earth, send the shadows to flight

Light of the world, from the beginning
The tragedies of time were no match for your love
From great heights of glory, you saw my story
God, you entered in and became one of us

(Chorus)

*Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah
Sing hallelujah for the things he has done
Come and adore him, bow down before him
Sing hallelujah to the light of the world*

Light of the world, crown in a manger
Born for the cross to suffer, to save
High king of heaven, death is the poorer
We are the richer by the price that he paid
(Chorus)

Light of the world soon will be coming
With fire in his eyes he will ransom his own
Through clouds he will lead us straight into glory
And there he shall reign forever more
(Chorus)

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

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

PRAYER FOR THE CONGREGATION

*JOY TO THE WORLD - Hymn #195

Joy to the world the Lord is come, let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns, let men their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love

*BENEDICTION

If you are in need of personal prayer, an elder is available up front after the service.

God Commissions Us

Having been richly blessed by the Lord in our worship, we are sent forth as his ambassadors of reconciliation into the world. Our worship of God as his people now extends into our lives throughout the week. We are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to him in all areas of our lives.

Leaders & Staff

Senior Pastor Lloyd Pierson, Ph.D. — Associate Pastor John Sackett

Music Director/Assistant: Lisa Iddings/Laura Sackett

Director of Women's Ministries: Sarah Morrison Refuge Director: Sissy Hashley

Staff: Hanni Hanson, Carlynn Stahlberg, Kelly Brown, Jenny Mattern

Elders: Tim Anderson, Jason Davis, Sean Iddings, Tom Jentz,

Trent Neumann, Don Olmsted, Matt Riley, Micah Tinkham

Deacons: Wade Carroll, Terry Falk, Kyle Hanson, Jeff McGarvey,

Ryan Petersen, Mike Stahlberg, Mike Thompson, Bruce Tulloch

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LOCAL MINISTRY TO PRAY FOR: St. Peter Lutheran Church, Pastor Tim Christenson

MISSIONARIES TO PRAY FOR: Jamie & Alyssa Shattenberg, Madagascar

HOLIDAY SEASON SERVICE TIMES: Next week we will resume our regular schedule with services at 8:15 and 11am & Sunday school at 10am.

TAKING DOWN THE GREENS: Many hands make lighter work, so if you can pitch in to undecorate the church on Saturday, Jan. 6, at 10 a.m. it would be much appreciated!

YOUTH GROUP: The next youth group for grades 6-12 will be Wednesday, Jan. 10, from 6-7:30pm.

WINTER WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDIES: Begin Wednesday, Jan. 24, with a study of *The Drama of Scripture*. Sign up sheets are in the foyer for a 9:30am option (at the church) and a 12:45pm option (at Nikki Streeter's home).

SAVE THE DATE: The annual congregational meeting will be Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024. More details coming soon.

SERVING: December Deacon - Terry Falk

Today (1st service/2nd service)

Ushers: Mike & Carlynn Stahlberg / Lancasters

Children's Church: Hanni Hanson / Zach Falk

Nursery: Orndorff & Mattern

Fellowship Hosts: Amy Haymond & Patti Albert

Communion Prep/Cleanup: Gloria Tronstad / Chris Scrima

Next Sunday January 7

Ushers: Maylon & Judy Peters / Steve Haymond & Bud Salyer

Children's Church: Ann Ingram & Eliana Morin / Julie Thompson

Nursery: Gina Wright

Fellowship Hosts: Kristin Bay & Sue Richardson

Communion Prep/Cleanup: Traci Carroll / Rachel McManus

WEEKLY/MONTHLY

Sunday Worship Services

8:15 & 10:15am

Vespers

2nd Sunday @ 6:30 pm

Elder/Deacon Meeting

3rd Tuesdays 7 pm

Wednesdays

Men's Breakfast 6:30 am

Career Group 7 pm