

THE LORD'S DAY

December 29, 2024

10 O'clock A.M.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REFLECTION

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 95:1-7

**O come, let us sing to Yahweh!
Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.**

*Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!*

**For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King
Above all gods.**

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before Yahweh , our Maker!

*For He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.*

*HYMN OF ADORATION

#195

Joy to the World

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 12:12-14

¹²Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Sermon Notes

A Worthy Goal for 2025

Jesus Taught Us to Live a Righteous & Holy Life

Matthew 5:20 Jesus said, “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:44,48 Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... Your therefore must be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”

The Apostle Peter says same thing

1 Peter 1:14 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” [Leviticus 11:44]

The Apostle John too

1 John 3:9 “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in Him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.”

The Writer of Hebrews says Holiness is important too

Hebrews 12:14 “Strive for peace with everyone, and for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

The Apostle Paul

Romans 6:1ff. “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? Absolutely Not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”

Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh [sinful nature] you will die, but if by the [Holy] Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Philippians 2:11,12 [pastor’s translation] “you all must continue to work out the implications of your salvation... for God is at work in you...”

CONFESSION OF FAITH

A Westminster Creed

I believe in the one true and living God.

I believe there are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

I believe in God the Father who has foreordained all things.

I believe the Father made all things of nothing, by His powerful Word, in the space of six days, and all very good. The Father, by His providence, preserves and governs all His creatures and all their actions.

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer of God’s elect.

I believe that our Lord Jesus endured the miseries of this life, the wrath of God for us, the cursed death of the cross, and burial. He rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. He now sits at the right hand of God the Father and will come to judge the world on the last day.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who effectually applies the redemption of Christ to His elect.

I believe by the Holy Spirit’s sovereign grace we are effectually called, justified, and sanctified, and gathered into the visible church, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Almighty God, we acknowledge and confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed; we have not loved you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent through Jesus our Savior. Have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your Holy Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Psalm 32:1,2,10,11

**Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.**

*Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no
iniquity, and in whose spirit is no deceit*

Steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.

Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice O righteous!

PASTORAL PRAYER

*HYMN OF DEVOTION

#461

*Not What My Hands Have Done
Ushers come forward at this time.*

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Doxology

#731

*READING OF GOD'S WORD

Hebrews 12:12-14
Pew Bible Pg, 1196 & 1197

PREACHING OF THE WORD

More Godliness in 2025

*HYMN OF RESPONSE

#605

All the Way My Savior Leads Me

*BENEDICTION

*GLORIA PATRI

#735

**Stand if you are able*

“This is For You”

Forty Reflections on the Sacrament of Communion

“Our Need” Jimmy Hopper

“There are some who define in a word, that to eat the flesh of Christ and to drink His blood, is no other than to believe in Christ Himself. But I conceive that in that remarkable discourse in which Christ recommends us to feed upon His body, He intended to teach us something more striking and sublime; namely that we are quickened by a real participation of Him, which He designates by the terms eating and drinking, and no person might suppose the life which we receive from Him to consist in simple knowledge.”

—John Calvin, from The Institutes of Christian Religion

The Reformed Church has believed for centuries that Holy Communion is more than just a remembrance or some bit of sentimentality regarding the Lord and His love for His people. The Church believes that it is a means of grace and that we are very truly fed spiritually when we participate in the sacrament.

From the quotation above, Calvin goes on to say that simply seeing the bread, knowing it is there, does not give nourishment to the body. We must eat the bread before we are nourished. He speaks of knowledge and there is certainly knowledge of what the sign is, and what it signifies, but there is more. The Holy Spirit quickens believers who take Communion in faith in a very real way. Through this work of the Spirit, in a way filled with mystery, we are confirmed in the covenant and strengthened again by His grace. We feel no electrical surge in this, no physical or even emotional difference, but we are comforted, confirmed, and strengthened.

As we consider receiving this grace in Communion, we begin to long for it more and more. We may not wake up on Sunday morning thinking of this longing but when the hour comes, we are satisfied through the physical elements, the bread and the wine, taken in faith, and this satisfaction is spiritual—we have participated in the body and blood of Christ as He proclaimed that evening two thousand years ago when the Supper was instituted. Our spiritual satisfaction becomes deeper each time we partake, for we need grace. We need it ever more desperately, and the Lord has wonderfully made it available to us in worship and in a special way, through Holy Communion. We can never have enough.