

THE PORCH

December 11, 2022



About Our Liturgy

We are all creatures of habit. Habits and rhythms shape who we are. Our Sunday gatherings are designed to help us press the story of Jesus into our souls and change who we are by repeating that same story over and over again.

Every week we gather to remember and celebrate these same old gospel truths: that we are sinners but we have a great savior. That the death and resurrection of Jesus brought his kingdom here. That we have been adopted into the family of God. That he has called us to love each other and our city. That we were created for a perfect world, and that this world is not all there is.

So we invite you to participate with us as a group of imperfect people who tell the same story over and over again, the story of King Jesus.





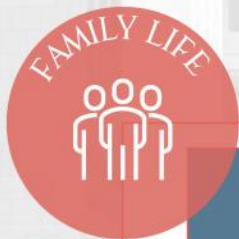
Call To Worship

Singing

* The American author David Foster Wallace wrote, "In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship." This is a powerful statement from a man who was not a follower of Jesus. He was 100% correct. We all have something at the center of our lives. Something that we believe will make us happy. Something that will fulfill us. Even those who follow Jesus often find that we are serving idols, something that ultimately won't fulfill us.

The gospel story tells us what will: Jesus Christ. Only he can fulfill us. Only he can redeem us. Only he can heal our deep spiritual wounds. Only he can give hope. Serving him as king is why we were created. This is why we open our gatherings with worship. Music touches our souls in a way that nothing else can. And so we use music as the people of God have done for thousands of years to remind ourselves that we serve an amazing King and that only he should be at the center of our lives.





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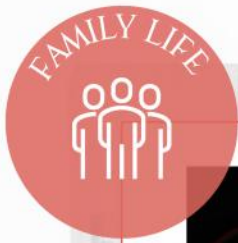
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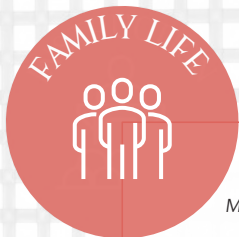


* One of the beautiful facets of the gospel is how it brings all kinds of people together (Galatians 3:28). We are God's people. We are called to live our lives together and to love one another. In this part of our gathering, we celebrate this truth. We pray for each other. We chat while getting coffee and tea. We talk about what's going on in the life of the family.









Prayer

Monthly Schedule

Week 1: We read a prayer from church history.

Week 2: We take requests and pray for each other.

Week 3: Congregational Prayer.

Week 4: Praying the Psalms.

Week 5: We take requests and pray for each other.

Coffee

This quick time of greeting isn't a break in the worship but rather a continuation of our worship. Take five minutes to grab a cup of coffee and say hello to someone you haven't met yet.





Advent Week 3: Joy

In the first week of Advent, we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of hope. We light it again as we remember our hope that Christ, who was born in a manger in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfill all of God's promises to us. This hope does not disappoint us, because God has given us his Holy Spirit, all that He is, poured into our very being.

Last week, we lit the candle of peace. Though the world is full of discord, brokenness, and injustice, because of our relationship with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we are promised a peace that passes understanding. Christ gave us peace when He first came to us, and He will bring everlasting peace when He comes again.

Today, we light the candle of Joy, also called the shepherds' candle. Even though we have walked in darkness, we rejoice because we have seen the great light of Christ. We rejoice that His light scatters the night and shows us the way to God. We rejoice that He lights our path even in the darkest times. And we rejoice that the darkness of the grave will be made powerless by the light of Jesus.

* 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." God's word is precious. This time is less about the words of the preacher and more about the words of God. So here at The Porch we usually go through an entire book of the Bible verse by verse. We want to soak up the truth. We want to see Jesus on every page. We want to know the gospel better than we did yesterday. When that happens, we will be more loving, more humble, more hopeful, more joyful, and more blown away by what we learn about our King.



Sermon: Joy

Nehemiah 8:9-12

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, spoke to all of the folks, along with Ezra the priest and scribe. "This is a holy day to your God, the I AM!" they said, "Don't mourn or cry!"

Because all the people cried when they heard the words of the Law.

10 "Go your way," he then said, "Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing prepared, because this is a holy day to the Lord! And don't be grieved! Because the joy of the I AM is your strength!"

11 So the Levites calmed all the people. "Hush now," they said, "because this is a holy day; don't be grieved!"

12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink and send portions and have intense joy together, because they understood the words revealed to them.





Singing

* In the sermon we listened to the gospel preached. Here, we respond with worship. We sing the praises of the God who has saved us and given us hope.



Confession & Lament Communion Singing

* The gospel is not the story of what we do to earn God's love. The gospel is the story of what God has done to bring us back to life. The problem is that we are forgetful and we all constantly slip into moralism where we think that we need to live a certain way to earn God's love. This is the time in our gathering where we intentionally confess our sin and take communion to remind us of the grace of God. We remember that we are not redeemed by doing anything. We are redeemed by the death of Jesus in our place.



Benediction

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

* We are not just followers of King Jesus for a few hours on Sunday morning. We are ambassadors of his kingdom everywhere we go. With our families. At work. With our friends and neighbors. So every week, we finish our gatherings by remembering that we represent him everywhere we go and that we are called to radically love people so that they see him in our lives.



THE PORCH

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

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