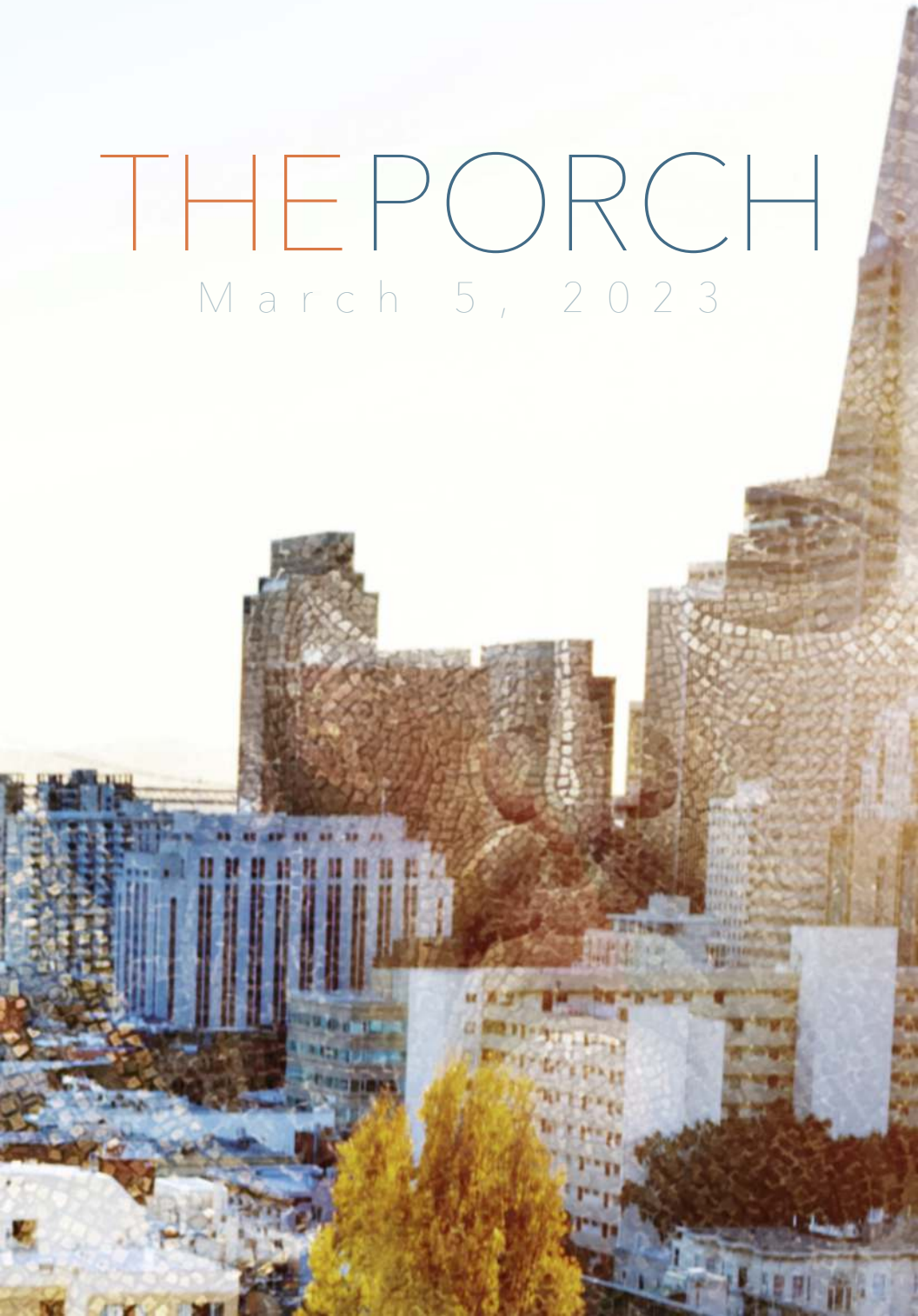


# THE PORCH

March 5, 2023



## 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.





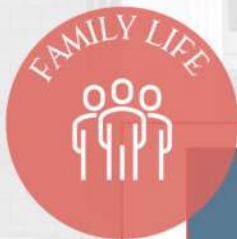
## Call To Worship

### 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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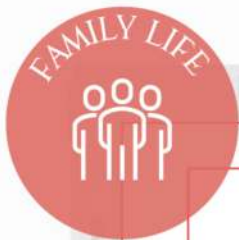
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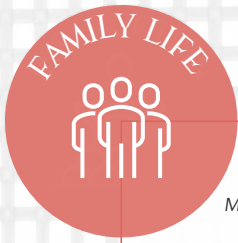


\* One of the beautiful facets of the gospel is how it brings all kinds of people together (Galatians 3:28). We are God's people. We are called to live our lives together and to love one another. In this part of our gathering, we celebrate this truth. We pray for each other. We chat while getting coffee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



Chapter 4 on Wednesday, March 8





## 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.





## New City Catechism

**Question 8:** What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?

**Answer:** You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below—you shall not bow down to them or worship them. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

### Scripture Reading *Psalm 95:1-7 (ESV)*

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;  
**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 the Lord is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
**In his hand are the depths of the earth;**  
the heights of the mountains are his also.  
**The sea is his, for he made it,**  
and his hands formed the dry land.

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
**let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!**  
For he is our God,  
**and we are the people of his pasture,**  
**and the sheep of his hand.**

\* 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.



## Ezekiel 2-3 | The Calling of Ezekiel

### Ezekiel 2-3 (CSB)

2:1 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak with you." 2 As he spoke to me, the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and I listened to the one who was speaking to me. 3 He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebellious pagans who have rebelled against me. The Israelites and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this day. 4 The descendants are obstinate and hardhearted. I am sending you to them, and you must say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says.' 5 Whether they listen or refuse to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

6 "But you, son of man, do not be afraid of them and do not be afraid of their words, even though briars and thorns are beside you and you live among scorpions. Don't be afraid of their words or discouraged by the look on their faces, for they are a rebellious house. 7 Speak my words to them whether they listen or refuse to listen, for they are rebellious.

8 "And you, son of man, listen to what I tell you: Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you." 9 So I looked and saw a hand reaching out to me, and there was a written scroll in it. 10 When he unrolled it before me, it was written on the front and back; words of lamentation, mourning, and woe were written on it.

3:1 He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find here. Eat this scroll, then go and speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. 3 "Son of man," he said to me, "feed your stomach and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving you." So I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth.





4 Then he said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. 5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or a difficult language but to the house of Israel—6 not to the many peoples of unintelligible speech or a difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. No doubt, if I sent you to them, they would listen to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not want to listen to you because they do not want to listen to me. For the whole house of Israel is hardheaded and hardhearted. 8 Look, I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. 9 I have made your forehead like a diamond, harder than flint. Don't be afraid of them or discouraged by the look on their faces, though they are a rebellious house." 10 Next he said to me, "Son of man, listen carefully to all my words that I speak to you and take them to heart. 11 Go to your people, the exiles, and speak to them. Tell them, 'This is what the Lord God says,' whether they listen or refuse to listen."

12 The Spirit then lifted me up, and I heard a loud rumbling sound behind me—bless the glory of the Lord in his place!—13 with the sound of the living creatures' wings brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels beside them, a loud rumbling sound. 14 The Spirit lifted me up and took me away. I left in bitterness and in an angry spirit, and the Lord's hand was on me powerfully. 15 I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were living by the Chebar Canal, and I sat there among them stunned for seven days.

16 Now at the end of seven days the word of the Lord came to me: 17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman over the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, give them a warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked person, 'You will surely die,' but you do not warn him—you don't speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life—that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood.



19 But if you warn a wicked person and he does not turn from his wickedness or his wicked way, he will die for his iniquity, but you will have rescued yourself. 20 Now if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and acts unjustly, and I put a stumbling block in front of him, he will die. If you did not warn him, he will die because of his sin, and the righteous acts he did will not be remembered. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 21 But if you warn the righteous person that he should not sin, and he does not sin, he will indeed live because he listened to your warning, and you will have rescued yourself.”

22 The hand of the Lord was on me there, and he said to me, “Get up, go out to the plain, and I will speak with you there.” 23 So I got up and went out to the plain. The Lord’s glory was present there, like the glory I had seen by the Chebar Canal, and I fell facedown. 24 The Spirit entered me and set me on my feet. He spoke with me and said, “Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and bind you with them so you cannot go out among them. 26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth, and you will be mute and unable to be a mediator for them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you will say to them, ‘This is what the Lord God says.’ Let the one who listens, listen, and let the one who refuses, refuse—for they are a rebellious house.

### Three Ideas

- #1 - The Pattern: Take the gospel in. Take the gospel out.
- #2 - This only happens in the power of the spirit.
- #3 - Success in missional living can’t simply be measured in numbers.



**Iain M. Duguid** The faithfulness of this man's ministry cannot be measured in numerical terms.

The primary goal of his ministry is not to see people converted but to bring glory to God by preaching (and modeling) the message he has been given. As John Calvin put it: "When God wishes to move us to obey him, he does not always promise us a happy outcome to our labor; but sometimes he wants to test our obedience to the point that he will have us be content with his command, even if people ridicule our efforts."

That is not to say that we should adopt a kind of reverse psychology, whereby we assert that we must certainly be faithful if no one is being reached by our message! We must labor to the utmost of our ability to remove any stumbling block that stands in the way of communicating the gospel, becoming "all things to all men so that by all possible means [we] might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Yet we do so recognizing that a work of the Holy Spirit is necessary in the hearts of men and women if they are to become Christians, a work that is the sovereign prerogative of God to impart. At times, God opens the hearts of men and women to himself through the most unlikely of messengers, such as Jonah's concise and not exactly heartfelt preaching to the Ninevites (Jonah 3:4), while at other times the eloquent pleading of God's messengers falls on deaf ears.

This truth should be both a comfort and a challenge to us in our evangelism. On the one hand, sharing the gospel is far easier than we think. God is not limited by the weakness of my efforts; he can, if he chooses, save in spite of my incompetence. As one person put it, passing on the good news is simply a matter of one beggar telling another where to find bread. That should motivate us to witness boldly for Christ wherever we go. On the other hand, however, sharing the gospel is far harder than we think. Even the most brilliant performance on my part may still fail to convince my hearers, not because they are dense but because they are still "dead in ... transgressions and sins" (Eph. 2:1). That should motivate us to pray far more passionately than we do for those around us—and around the world—who are not Christians.



## 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

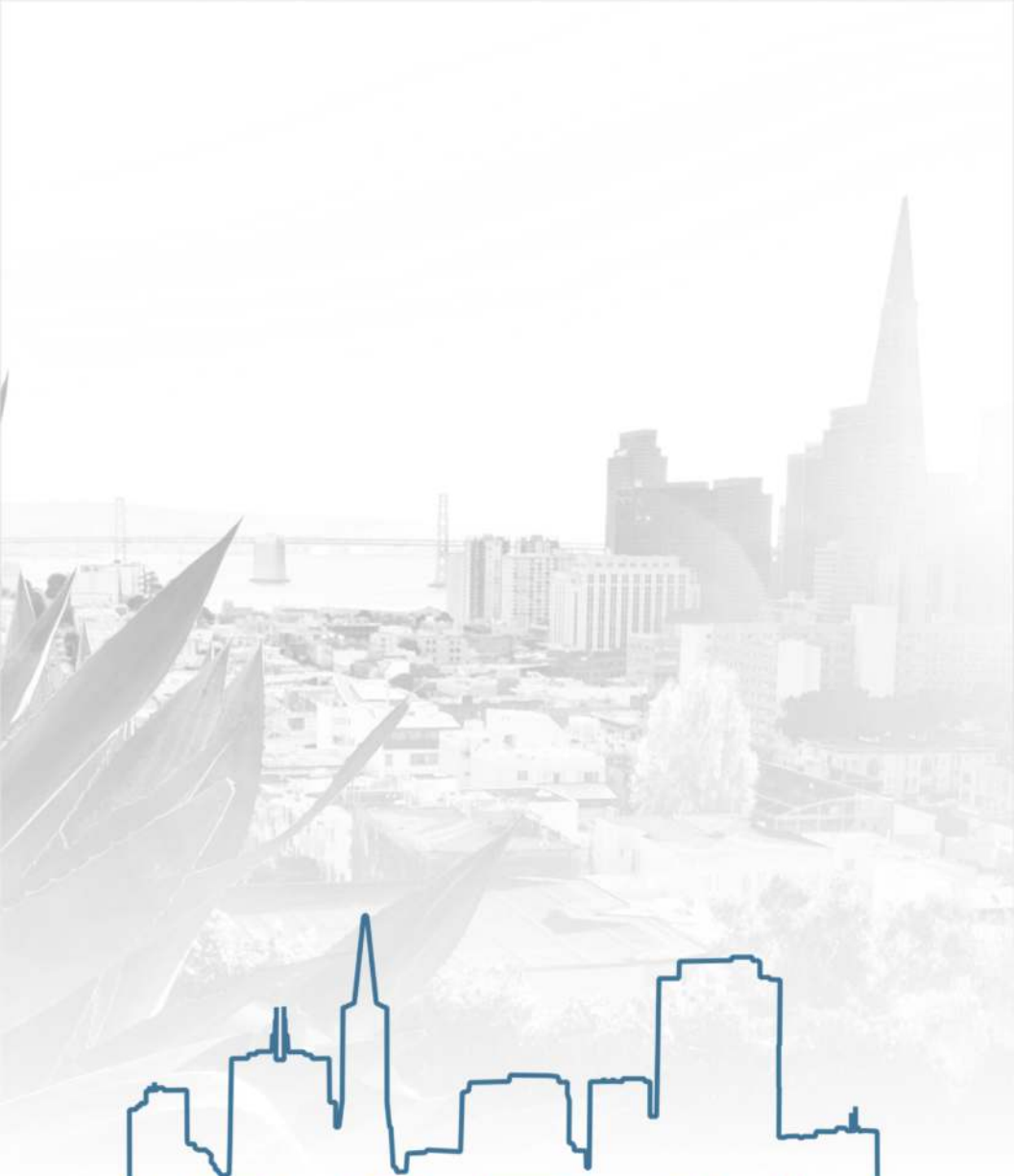
### Col 3:15-17

<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

\*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**

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