

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 6, 2020 - 10:00 AM

Living Springs Lutheran Church

4224 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223

www.livingspringscolumbia.org

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.



Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus... (Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY MISSION MOMENT

*We give thee but thine own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from thee.*

Text: William W. How

We stand as able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

(Silence for reflection - we kneel as able)

Pastor: Loving and forgiving God,

People: **we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

Pastor: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

We focus on the cross as it enters the sanctuary.

GATHERING SONG

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus; Text: Charles Wesley; Music: SOUTHERN HARMONY, Walker W. Jefferson

APOSTOLIC GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

+ ADVENT CANDLE #2 – FORWARD IN LOVE +

All are invited to gather around the Advent Wreath in your home, whatever form it may be.

Pastor: As people called to prepare the way of the Lord in this world, we celebrate and live the truth that the Holy Spirit moves us forward in faith, God's love is never-ending, and Christ's light shines in our lives for others.

People: Come, Lord Jesus! In this Advent Season, move us Forward in Love!

Pastor: Let us pray:

People: We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

As the two Advent candles are lit in the sanctuary and in our homes, we sing:

Light two candles to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish darkness.

He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,

gently lead them homeward.

Pastor: The Spirit and the Church cry out:
Pastor: All who await Christ's appearance pray:
Pastor: The whole creation pleads:

People: Come, Lord Jesus!
People: Come, Lord Jesus!
People: Come, Lord Jesus!

We are seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Helen Doerpinghaus

Children, youth, and young at heart are invited for a special message. You may collect your coins or dollars at home for the bucket collection and bring them to in-person worship, to the Parking Lot Communion Distributions, or drop them off at the church office. Current collection is for the Disaster Response Fund.

For-ward in faith! (clap-clap-clap)

For-ward in faith! (clap-clap-clap)

With our eyes on Jesus

WE'RE RUNNIN' THE RACE!

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

"The King Shall Come"

JuBELLation

by Cathy Hoklebust

FIRST READING

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

Lector: A reading from Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. (Isaiah 40:1-11)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

Lector: You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

**People: You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**

Lector: I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

**People: Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

Lector: Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

**People: Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

Lector: The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

**People: Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

SECOND READING

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

Lector: A reading from 2 Peter.

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. (2 Peter 3:8-15a)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

We stand for the reading of the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia



Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' " John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:1-8)

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

We are seated

MESSAGE

Rev. Eric Fink

HYMN OF THE DAY

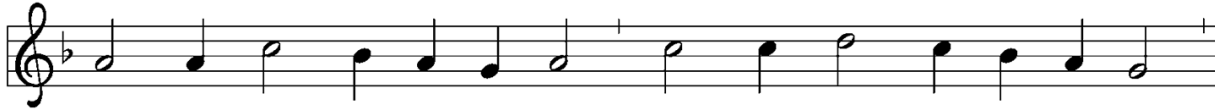
"Comfort, Comfort, Now My People"



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.

Comfort, Comfort, Now My People; Text: Johann G. Olearius, tr. Catherine Winkworth; Music: FREU DICH SEHR, Trente quatre psaumes de David

We stand as able

NICENE CREED

People: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Assist: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

+ A brief silence +

Assist: Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. We pray especially for: *Dolores Harmon; Rhea Pye; Wendy McKenzie; Will/Angelica/Eliana/Gabby Collins; Karl Schmidt; Elizabeth Maddox; Henrietta Kaiser; Debbie Smith; Ed Brennan; Margaret Blank; Charles Kauffman; Bunie Talbert; Holley Owens; Don McMillin; Bob Holmstrom; Kelly Koziol; Lila Bell; Wilma Bracey; Charles Levitt; the Williams family; and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud...* Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work, *especially Nicholas, Bishop of Myra*. Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: O God, as we face ongoing uncertainties around coronavirus, we continue to pray for ... Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

SHARING OF PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always.

People: And also with you.

We greet one another, with the words that the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples: "Peace be with you."



OFFERINGS ARE GIVEN

Offering may be dropped off at the office during the week or sent through the mail. For those who wish to give electronically, you may use the secure Givelify app.

Google Play



App Store



+ ANNUAL PRESENTATION OF GIVING INTENTS +

Pastor: O God, your unconditional love and grace is more abundant than we can ever comprehend.

People: Even when the world presents challenges, you continue to bless us, so that we can be a blessing for others.

Pastor: O God, we look at the manger and the cross, and recognize we could never outgive you!

People: And yet, we respond to your giving with lives of gratitude, that our generosity might grow to bear witness to Your great generosity for all the world.

Pastor: O God, receive the Intents of Giving we make this day, that in the months ahead, our commitments might place You at a deeper place in the center of our lives.

People: Receive these Intents and all our giving to make an impact on many lives with your love - and join us more deeply to the work of your Kingdom hope for the world!

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. As living lights of your hope for the world, move us forward in faith and forward in generosity. Bless all that we will offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering therefore his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out your Spirit of love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

People: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

People: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Pastor: Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here. Come, eat and drink.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

+ THE ELEMENTS ARE SYMBOLICALLY CARRIED OUT OF THE CHANCEL +

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*THIS WEEK: Our worship will continue with **distribution of Holy Communion on Sunday from 11:15 - 12:00 pm** in the Parking Lot. We will utilize sanitary-packaged individual communion elements, which have been consecrated during the worship service. There will be an "usher" in the parking lot to direct vehicles to the distribution altar, and the pastor will be there, wearing mask and gloves (he will change gloves after each vehicle). Everyone please remain in your vehicle throughout the process. Once it's your turn, drive up and put your vehicle in park. The pastor will come to your car window(s) to distribute Holy Communion. AFTER you have consumed the elements, the Pastor will offer a blessing – and then you can pull away. While in the parking lot, everyone should be in prayerful worship-mode, as you represent God's people gathered to continue the worship experience from the morning service. Think of this in the same way you would think about "coming up to the communion rail for distribution" in your vehicle during an ongoing worship service.*

COMMUNION REFLECTION

"Come to Us, Emmanuel"

by Peter La Grand

Come to us, Emmanuel

We wait for thee with bated breath

And hope filled hearts

And anxious minds

Longing to see your face

And worship at your feet

*Isaiah's vision didst unfold
When you descended into this world
to bring good news
and set the prisoners free
You set aside eternity
so that we might live*

*So come to us Emmanuel
we live in hope of your return
to bring new life
to this old world
to end all wars and to heal all hearts
and to reign forevermore
to reign forevermore*

The elements are symbolically carried back to the altar.

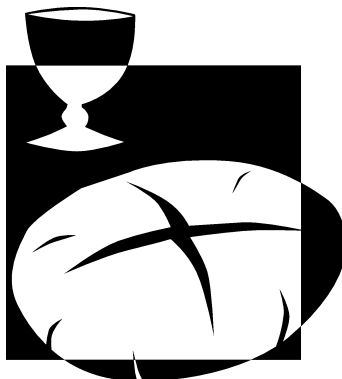
POST COMMUNION BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

People: **Amen**

Pastor: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, + now and forever.

People: **Amen**



SENDING SONG

"He Came Down"



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;

He Came Down; Text: Cameroon traditional; Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon Traditional

DISMISSAL

Assist: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

✝ COMMEMORATIONS FOR TODAY ✝

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

**Forward in Hope! Forward in Love!
Forward in Peace! Forward in Joy!**



God's Love Shared Through You ...



One Life Deeper in 2020!

Our prayerful goal is that God will work in every LS disciple to have an impact of faith and hope in the life of one person during 2020. **What shoes might they be wearing?** It may be someone you know already—at work, at home, at school, in the neighborhood, in your daily life. It may be a stranger whom God will bring to you this year. How will the Spirit work through you to bring someone deeper in 2020? **Deeper in Christ, Deeper in Grace, Deeper in Love!**

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: inviting, involving, mentoring, discipling relationships 1 person at a time!

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: for the work of God's kingdom in our community and world!

SHARING GOD'S LOVE: with those who are hurting, alone, marginalized, or feeling unloved!

SHARING GOD'S STORIES: so we do not remain silent about God's ongoing work in the world!

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

Pointing to Christ

Mark's gospel opens with fanfare: a herald announcing the good news that the Lord is on the way! It's time to prepare for the Savior! The role model for this process of preparation is an unusual character. He lives in the wild, wears animal skins, and eats insects. Because of his extreme lifestyle, John the Baptist is often portrayed as a madman living on the fringes of society.

Yet, the text makes clear that John was a respected faith leader. People from all over the region were coming to him to be baptized. In John's context, living in the desert and eating a foraged diet were signs of spiritual commitment, not lunacy. We might imagine John as a precursor to the Christian desert mothers and fathers who came after him, wise teachers who lived in voluntary isolation. People made a point to come hear what these teachers had to say.

John used his influence to point to Jesus. Although he had a popular ministry of his own, John understood that his call to prepare the way for Jesus involved humility and service. He told others he wasn't even worthy to untie Jesus' sandals, a sentiment that was meant to elevate Jesus, not to demean John. He wanted to communicate how transformative Jesus' ministry would be. "I have baptized with water," John proclaimed, "but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).

As we declare in our baptismal rite, that same Holy Spirit calls us into baptism and seals us with the mark of Christ forever. We, like John, are called to humble service for the sake of God's mission in the world, to use our unique gifts and vocations to point to Jesus. We become messengers proclaiming the good news: God has come to dwell with us.

December Book of the Month: Joel-Zechariah-Malachi

Forward in FAITH Forward in GENEROSITY



As we prepare to return our Statements of Intent in worship today, for our generosity to God and Christ's church next year, several of our fellow disciples have shared their excitement about our ministry moving forward.

- In my thirteen years as a member, six of them on council, I am always amazed at the giving at Living Springs! With a small congregation we are able to generously support the community and our ministries. ***Jeff T.***
- It has been more than 30 years since I have made a financial commitment to a church. God has brought me to Living Springs, and placed it on my heart to support this congregation and its ministries. The Living Springs church family truly embodies the love of Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit. ***Dawn W.***
- I give thanks to God for putting Pastor Eric in our lives, for Living Springs being involved in partnerships beyond SC, for the backpack ministry, for our support of Cristo Rey, for our willingness to be a host for a NA group, for our Meals on Wheels ministry, and for all of our ministries. ***Mike D.***
- The generosity of the people of Living Springs has always been great in responding to the needs of our congregation and community. Now, more than ever, our generosity, an outcome of our gratitude for God's everlasting love and grace, can make a difference in our lives and the lives of those in need around us. ***Dea J.***
- During this time of pandemic, I have witnessed the Grace and Love of God in the people of Living Springs who continue to give and share their gifts so that those in need will feel the Love of Christ. This truly shows me that our God Is very much present with us here and now. ***Adam W.***
- I am so thankful for God's grace, His forgiveness and the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. While I don't quite know every detail of God's plans for me and our congregation, I am excited about God's help & guidance for strengthening our faith and our ministry as we enter the New Year. Forward in faith... ***Bill F.***

Keeping our ministry strong will enable us to dream about an ever-growing ministry into the future, especially as we embrace the vision of calling our 2nd rostered leader. Take time this week to reflect on the ways in which connection to Christ's ministry has impacted you and/or those you know & love in the past year -- and start dreaming about what God may be up to here, moving forward in our ministry, forward in generosity, forward in faith!

Forward in FAITH Forward in GENEROSITY



DECIDING TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY

Little has ever been accomplished without sacrifice. This is true in our homes, our work, our church, our country. Sacrifice is a necessary component of successful living.

And so it is with the Christian life and faith. Our salvation cost God the cross. Bonhoeffer rightly said there is no cheap grace.

Much of church giving is only token giving, averaging about two percent of income. No wonder there is so little joy or satisfaction in it! Such giving requires no sacrifice! We have given only what we could “easily afford,” an amount we would not really miss.

Experience has shown that giving, to be meaningful and joyful, is sacrificial! Each will have to determine what amount or percentage is sacrificial for his or her circumstances. But experience again suggests that for most people sacrificial giving begins at five percent of income with proportions under five percent falling into the token giving category. Whatever level your giving, our challenge is for us all to GROW in our generosity this year, as a step forward in a more meaningful (& joyful!) commitment to God.

Societal studies have shown that church interest is often low, whenever one’s sense of investment is low. There is no sacrifice. It doesn’t really cost anything. Jesus said, *“Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.” (Luke 12:34)* Where is my treasure? That is where you will find your heart.

