

First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia, Arkansas
Morning Worship Service- January 7th, 2018

The liturgist will take his seat on the Chancel a couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am.

The pastor will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements....The preacher will then ask..., “Are there any other concerns of the church that need to be made known at this time?..... Thank you.”

The preacher will take a seat.

PRELUDE

"Prelude in E Flat Major" - J.S. Bach

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the Prelude, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say...

“Would you join me in reading responsively our call to worship, adapted from Psalm 111 and printed in our bulletins.”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 111)

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful & just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Wise Father, you have promised that if we draw near to you, you will draw near to us. In this time, prepare our hearts and minds, that we might receive your wisdom and understanding. Relieve our bodies and souls from all the desires and cravings shaped by this world, that we might be filled with your peace. Pour out your Spirit upon us, granting us grace to hear, wisdom to understand and courage to apply what we hear to our joy and the glory of Christ. Amen.

*“Would all of you who are able, please stand and join in singing “As With Gladness Men of Old”, #63 in *The Hymnal*.*

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

The Hymnal #63

After the hymn, the liturgist will step into the lectern and say...

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(In Unison)

God of all wisdom, we confess that our paltry works betray the poverty of our wisdom. We continue to seek more diversions and offer less service to others; to ask less guidance in keeping our promises, and for more resources with which to pursue our pleasures. God who watches us and loves us deeply, open our deepest selves to something new, something deeper than our want, more eternal than our pleasure. Grant us gentleness born of your wisdom from above, so that our works might be filled with your peace and mercy, and reveal your love and glory to all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***SILENT CONFESSION** *(pause for about 30 seconds of silence)*

***THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

...Friends believe the Good News!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

***GLORIA PATRI**

The Hymnal #579

Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.

After a few moments, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

“Please be seated. At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a message prepared just for them by Pastor Mike.”

The liturgist will take a seat.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

(All Singing)

***Jesus friend so kind and gentle, little ones we bring to thee;
Grant to them thy dearest blessing. Let thine arms around them be;
Now enfold them in thy goodness, from all danger keep them free.***

As the children leave the front, the Liturgist will step to the lectern & say,

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has gathered us from the North and South, from the East and West, and brought us together as his family. It is now our time, to bring our best as tribute to his power and his grace, as an offering of Thanksgiving. Let us bring the first fruits of our labors and the best of our talents as an offering of thanksgiving, as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings. Let us continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings....

Take your seat for the offertory.

THE OFFERTORY

"God's Love Shine on You" - J.S. Bach

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

***DOXOLOGY**

(In Unison)

The Hymnal #592

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray... O God, You have blessed our lives by revealing Your love for us in Jesus - Your beloved Son. We offer these gifts as tangible expressions of our joy and gratitude, and pray that through them and our witness and service - others may come to recognize and experience Your presence in the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

Let us remain standing and reaffirm our Christian faith using the traditional words of the Apostles' Creed printed in our bulletins. Let us say what we believe...

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

“The Apostles’ Creed”

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick & the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, & the life everlasting. Amen.

The liturgist will invite the congregation to... “Be seated,”

and then take his seat.

THE ANTHEM

"Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring" - J.S. Bach

Dalene Baer, Violin Soloist

As the soloist leaves the lectern, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say...

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from Paul’s First Letter to the church at Ephesus, the Third Chapter, beginning at the 13th verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 1055 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false

to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

The liturgist will return to his seat in the congregation.

When the liturgist finishes, the preacher will step into the pulpit & say...

Our sermon text this morning is taken from the Book of First Kings, the third chapter, beginning at the fourth verse. If you would like to follow along, the passage may be found on page 293 in your pew bibles. Listen once more for the Word of God...

And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings upon that altar.

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; & God said, "Ask what I shall give you."

And Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great and steadfast love to thy servant David my father, because he walked before thee in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward thee; and thou hast kept for him this great and steadfast love, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people whom thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to govern this thy great people?"

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

THE SERMON

"The King Who Had It All"

Maybe you heard about the guy who showed up at work with his ears bandaged. A co-worker asked him, "Man, what happened to you?"

"I was in the middle of ironing a shirt for church and the phone rang, and without thinking I picked up the iron and answered it instead."

"OK. That explains one ear. What happened to the other one?"

"Would you believe that idiot called me back!"

There is a name for this: sophomore. It comes from two Greek words: sophos, from which we get the word "sophist," meaning wise, and moros from which we get the word "moron," meaning fool. In other words, a sophomore is a "a wise fool". A sophomore is a person who has just enough knowledge to be dangerous. They don't have enough education to realize how much they don't know. Solomon was a wise fool. He was the wisest man on earth, but failed to realize he did not know it all. How does a foolish man get to be so wise?..... And more importantly, how does a wise man become so foolish?

Solomon was David's son by Bathsheba, chosen by God to succeed his father to the throne after David's death. Solomon had once been so far down in the line of succession, that no one, including Solomon, ever considered that he would one day be king. Nothing had been done to prepare him to fill his father's shoes-- no military service, no graduate courses in diplomacy, financial management, tax policy, human resources.

Is it any wonder then, that when Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet came and anointed him as the once and future king of Israel, he doubtless felt overwhelmed at the prospect. So in Chapter 3 he did

what any wise and sane young man would do--- he sought help and counsel from a power greater than himself, God.

The Lord was pleased with his display of humility and love, and told Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted most-- riches, power, long life, the quenching of any thirst for justice and vengeance. And Solomon asked for wisdom-- a discerning mind to know what is good and what is evil so that he might truly glorify God in his actions and serve his people well.

And so pleased was God that he gave Solomon everything that he asked for and all of the things he might have asked for and didn't. And he became the wisest and best king Israel had ever had. He brought peace, made his country strong, built the temple, and glorified God in all his ways.

We have 6 good people who will be installed as officers of this congregation. Their job is lead us all in ministry. Like the wise men who came to Bethlehem to offer the best that they had to give as they bowed low before the newborn king, so these officers elect come here today to offer themselves with all their strengths and their weaknesses asking God to accept them, and to make them leaders worthy of His people. How do they tap into that same source of wisdom, courage, and strength that Solomon accessed with such success? By asking the Giver of Every Good and Perfect Gift for all that they need to be a good leader, a faithful servant.

This brand of wisdom is something **you must ask for** from God. It is not automatic. Solomon asked for it and God gave it to him.

The same invitation is open to us.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” *James 1:5*

This is not just advice for deacons and elders. This is good advice for all of us.

As we begin a new year, why not start this one out on the right foot? Ask God for his wisdom to make decisions this year.

Keep in mind there is a condition. God told Solomon this would all work out as long as he walked in it. And he did for the first part of his reign. But he got off track and lost it.

If we skip forward 8 chapters in First Kings to Chapter 11, we find that Solomon has broken God's heart. And for that, God will punish Solomon.

First, he kept adding wives to his harem. We are told he had 700 wives and 300 concubines (which are essentially legal mistresses). That is like 999 too many. But that is not the real problem. From a human or worldly perspective this seemed wise because Solomon was forming political alliances with other nations. You marry another king's daughter and you can secure some great favors, right? Right! However, these foreign woman worshiped other gods and eventually talked Solomon into building temples for them and allowing them to worship them. Solomon even went so far as to offer sacrifices to these foreign idols. This is a violation of the first commandment – “you shall have no other gods before me.” Solomon had stopped thinking above the neck and had commenced to doing his thinking from below the waste. And the once great king, the wisest man in all the world became a fool, and a joke upon the throne of Israel.

Right thinking, the correct application of wisdom to daily living, requires us to ask for it daily. Wisdom is part of the bread we ask for **daily**.

To show up every week at church to hear a sermon, and join in the congregation's or Pastor's prayers for what we need to be good disciples and servants, makes about as much sense as brushing your teeth once a week, or eating once a week.

If the life of Solomon tells us anything, it is that ignoring God is the road to foolishness and despair. Listen to the difference in how Jesus grew: “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). Solomon grew in wisdom, but he did not grow in favor with God. You ought to be better today than you were a year ago. You ought to know God better, love him more, and be more faithful in living for him.

Jesus said, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). It is my experience that if Jesus Christ does not have first place in your life, he has no place. If he has slipped to second place in your life it will not be long until he is third place — and even-

tually no place.

We need to reawaken to the fact that the Christian life is an all-or-nothing affair. Christianity is not a trivial pursuit. It is not a ritual to be performed, it is a life to be lived. It is an exclusive relationship of love.

The problem in America today is not the immorality of the media, it is not the unethical behavior of our leaders, it is not our courtrooms or our schools; the problem in America is the church. We have failed to be salt and light to the world. We have failed to depend on God's wisdom and are leaning on the wisdom of the world. We have been worshiping the gods of this world and failed to keep our love for the One True and Living God undivided and unspoiled. We are not so much doing bad things as we are doing other things. When the church starts being the church then the world will be changed by its witness and Spirit filled presence.

But only when we disciples begin living as disciples, can the church be the church. And in faithfulness may we remember to seek God's gifts not just today, but every day.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gracious God, you are the fountain of all wisdom, the life source from whom we learn all that is good, pure, merciful and compassionate. Thank you for the example of your Son who in all things modeled peace-making, love for others and the wisdom that comes from walking rightly with you. Just as people were drawn to him, we draw near to you, wanting to know you, to experience your presence and to be changed by it.

Give us a measure of true religion and thereby set us free from vain and disappointing hopes; from lawless and exorbitant appetites; from momentary and empty joys; from anxious, self-devouring cares; from poisonous envy and swelling pride; and from needlessly rigid severity of spirit, so that we may possess that peace which passeth all understanding.

Do your holy work in us, healing us, correcting us, comforting us and encouraging us, and may we, as a result, possess and en flesh the wisdom you sought to give us through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray saying...

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

At this time I would ask our new officers-elect to come forward and to face you, the congregation.

THE ORDINATION & INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Within our common ministry, some members are chosen for particular work as ministers of the Word, as elders, or as deacons. In ordination, we recognize these special ministries, remembering that our Lord Jesus said: Whoever among you wants to be great must first become the servant of all, and if he wants to be first among you, he must be the slave of all people-- just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life to set others free.

The minister and shall ask those preparing to be ordained or installed to stand before the congregation and to answer the following questions:

At this time, I would ask for our officers-elect to come forward...

God has called you by the voice of the people of the church to serve Jesus Christ in a special way. You know who we are and what we believe, and you understand, generally, the work for which you have been called.

- a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through Him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?
- c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- d. Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, & be continually guided by our confessions?
- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend

among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- i. Will you be faithful elders, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service?
Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
- j. Renee and Chad, will you be faithful deacons, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

The elders-elect having answered in the affirmative, an elder shall stand with them before the congregation and shall ask the congregation to answer the following questions:

- a. Do we, the members of the church, accept these men and women as elders and as deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?
- b. Do we agree to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?

The Laying on of Hands

Would you who have not been ordained for the office to which you have been elected please kneel?
Invite any elders or ministers to come forward for the laying on of hands.

Let us pray... Gracious God, as your word has ever been sent to call your chosen, so the hour strikes again when you summon a few of your children to serve your church as elders and deacons.

Accept now, we pray, the offering of those who have answered your call in this holy place. You know how they long to serve you unburdened by their sins and weaknesses. You know how they share with all of us the need of your forgiveness, the need of your love, the need of your power. Therefore we beg you to do for them what we can never do: to separate their talents from their inadequacies, and to lead them to that point of labor where their strength guided by you can meet the the greatest of challenges set before them.

We pray for your church, that she may accept with gratitude your gift of them who will equip her for her ministry. Grant that she may fail them neither by demanding of them too much nor by expecting of them too little. Taught by them as they are taught by you, may your church discover in her heritage both the cause to be humble and the warrant to be brave.

Hear this our prayer through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns throughout eternity. Amen.

The moderator shall then say to those ordained and/or installed:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, & by the authority committed to me in His church, I hereby declare that you are now elders in the Church of Jesus Christ and for this congregation. I now charge you in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in His name, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Amen.

I also charge you, the members of this congregation, to be faithful to these officers, whom you have chosen to rule over you in the Lord; and that you render them all due obedience, cooperation, and support, and follow them so far as ye see them follow Christ. And let God's people say, "Amen".

Then the members of the session, and others as may be appropriate, shall welcome the newly ordained and installed elders into their fellowship in ministry.

We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us.

The minister will then turn to the congregation and say:

I would invite all of you, following the service, to welcome your new officers, to greet them with love, and to pledge your personal support to them as they seek to serve this church and our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Invitation

This is not a Presbyterian table. This is not the table of this congregation. This is the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, who invites us to rise above the things of earth and taste of the eternal.

Come, if you are fearful, to be made new in love.

Come, if you are doubtful, to be made strong in faith.

Come, if you are broken, and be made whole.

Come, old and young, male and female-- all who believe-- for there is room for all.

We are invited to come together around this table as those who belong to the household of Christ, brothers and sisters who in our baptized lives live out the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are the family of the reborn and the reconciled, made one in the waters of baptism.

The Words of Institution

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took bread, and after he had give thanks, he broke it & gave it to his disciples saying: "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In like fashion after they had eaten, he took the cup. After he had given thanks he gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, drink ye all of it."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again in final victory.

The Distribution of the Elements

The Prayer After Receiving

Let us pray... Life giving God, may we who share Christ's body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and all creation live to praise your name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I invite you all to stand with me and sing the first, fourth and fifth verses of our closing hymn, "Dear Lord, and Father of Mankind", Number 345 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Dear Lord, and Father of Mankind"

The Hymnal #345

*THE BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face to shine upon you and give you his peace, in your going out and in your coming in; in your lying down and in your rising up; in your labor and in your leisure; in your laughter and in your tears; until you come to stand before Jesus on that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning. Amen.

*THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Sanctuary"

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, Pure and holy, tried and true;

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for You.

*POSTLUDE