

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Psalm 96:1-5*

## **A HYMN OF PRAISE**

*Hymn 300 – Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power*

## **PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

### **THE CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH**

*Westminster Shorter Catechism 19-21 Q&A*

*Minister:* What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

*Congregation:* All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

*Minister:* Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

*Congregation:* God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer.

*Minister:* Who is the redeemer of God's elect?

*Congregation:* The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

### **ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

*Hymn 295 – Crown Him with Many Crowns (Stanzas 1 & 2)*

### **RESPONSIVE READING**

*Psalm 2 Hymnal Pg. 785*

### **THE CONFESSION OF SIN**

Triune God, You are one God in three persons, a diverse unity in whom there is neither division nor contention. You call us also to be one body made up of many different members, with different gifts and abilities, as well as different needs and failings. We confess that we often take pride in our own gifts and look down on those who lack them, while thinking little about our need for the gifts of others in the body. We form cliques that support our own interests, desperately trying to attract the favor of those whom we think strong, while despising and shunning those whom we see as weak, unattractive, or broken. Father, forgive us. Jesus, thank you for your willingness to allow your physical body to be shattered and broken, to establish the unity of your spiritual body, the church. By your gracious attention, you gave honor to those who lacked it. As the only mediator between us and the Father, you unite all your people in yourself. Holy Spirit, help us to see and appreciate your work in other Christians, honoring them more highly than ourselves. Remove our stony, self-centered hearts and give us hearts of flesh that love our brothers and sisters in Christ and value them just as they are. Teach us to love them with all their weaknesses and sins, as beloved children of our own heavenly Father and servants of the same Master. Bind us firmly together into one new people, united by Christ's work on the cross and your continuing work in each of our hearts. Amen.

## **SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN**

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.  
*Isaiah 1:18*

### **RESPONSE OF THE CONGREGATION**

*Hymn 308 – Jesus Paid It All (Stanzas 1 & 4)*

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

John 17      Pew Bible Pg. 1149

### **THE PASTORAL PRAYER**

Followed by the Lord’s Prayer (“Debts”)

### **OFFERING and DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav’nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
*Old Hundredth L.M. (731)*

### **A HYMN OF PREPARATION**

*Hymn 456 – By Grace I’m Saved, Grace Free and Boundless*

### **THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD**

Philemon 10-12      *Pew Bible Pg. 1273*

*Paul’s Advocacy for Onesimus*

Pastor James A. La Belle

### **A HYMN OF RESPONSE**

*Hymn 472 – Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Wretched*

### **BENEDICTION**

Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone does wondrous works in glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity; the whole earth let his glory fill. Amen, so let it be. *McKee CM (11:1,2)*

## Philemon 10-12—Paul’s advocacy for Onesimus

### Paul’s lovingkindness with Philemon, v.10

- I. It’s difficult for us to fully appreciate how Paul’s request would’ve struck Philemon. In a sense, we’re desensitized to the shock factor in what Paul asks.
  - A. Yet, we’re not totally in the dark. We’ve seen how careful and purposed Paul’s been in approaching the matter; so we can tell he knows how hard this will be for Philemon.
  - B. This is why Paul structured v.10 as he did. It’s the most critical verse in the letter as Paul finally mentions “the offensive name.” Putting it *last* in the sentence (in the Greek), we can see how careful Paul is to prepare Philemon’s heart to hear it.
- II. Before introducing the name of the person for whom he’s advocating, Paul says 3 things about him—all meant to let Philemon know that this person is *very dear to Paul*.
  - A. He calls him his child.
    1. This alerts Philemon that Paul’s advocating, not for himself, but for another. This would’ve warmed his heart because it evidences a Christlike selflessness.
  - B. He calls himself his father.
    1. The word used actually means “whom I have begotten,” by which Paul is saying the person is a convert of his—just as Philemon was (cf. v.19).
  - C. He says he fathered him in his imprisonment.
    1. The person is a sweet fruit of his sufferings for Christ.
  - D. And then at last, he names him: *Onesimus*.
- III. This is a powerful lesson in the **welcome** we should give to those whom God’s pleased to bring into the family. The example of Christ and the gospel of Christ call us to wrap our arms around all those around whom Christ has wrapped His arms—regardless of their past.
  - A. If Christ loves them, if God the Father accepts them, and if the Spirit indwells them, then they’re our brethren and we should love and welcome them as well.

### The gospel’s transformation of Onesimus, v.11

- I. Paul admits the indictment Philemon has against Onesimus and makes no attempt to mitigate the condemnation due him for his past worthlessness and transgressions.
  - A. This showed Philemon that Paul hadn’t been fooled by a “tall tale” but that Onesimus had confessed to Paul the

whole truth of his sinful past. Paul knows what he did and how black his past was.

- B. But with a tactful play on Onesimus’ name (which means *profitable* or *useful*) he quickly assures Philemon that he’ll find the formerly inappropriate name to be most appropriate now.
  - C. Paul vouches for his repentance and conversion and says they’ll be borne out in practice—to Philemon’s benefit and joy.
- II. This is a great testimony to the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
    - A. Christianity knows nothing of hopeless cases and nothing of despair. It can elevate the lowest and transform the worst, 1Tim 1.15-16
    - B. Consider Onesimus’ story from Early Church History...
    - C. Never give up on anyone. As long as there is breath there is hope—hope for conversion of the lost and hope for sanctification of the redeemed.
  - III. This is also a testimony to the fact that only in Christ do we find ourselves. We finally become who we were created to be when God calls us His child. We were all Onesimuses; but when Christ called us and made us children of God, in Him we finally found our identity. Do you know who you are? Is your identity in Christ?

### Paul’s love for Onesimus, v.12

- I. Onesimus was a piece of Paul’s very heart. This good-for-nothing runaway slave had become so dear to Paul that to part with him was like parting with his own heart. —We can only imagine what a powerful plea these words would’ve been with one who loved Paul as much as Philemon did.
- II. Paul’s advocacy for Onesimus is a beautiful testimony to the advocacy of Jesus for us. We are all Christ’s Onesimuses and He pleads for us before the Father.
  - A. But unlike Philemon, whose heart grace had to turn towards Onesimus, the Father’s heart is already turned towards us (Jn 3.16). Therefore Christ’s advocacy for us is not only most welcome but also most effective (cf. Jn 17; 1Jn 2.1-2).
  - B. Is Christ interceding for you? Have you placed your hope in His representation and advocacy? If not, see that you do it today, Mt 11.28-29; 1Tim 2.5; Acts 4.12

We extend a **cordial welcome** to the visitors in our service today.

Please sign our guest register in the narthex.

**Christian Education classes** are available each Sunday at 8:50 am. All are welcome.

**Adult Sunday School Class** – Join us for a study, *Old Testament Survey: The Wisdom Books*, led by Pastor La Belle.

**Sunday Afternoon Study** – 4:30pm, Pastor La Belle will be leading the study entitled *Heartwork*. Join us for Lesson 9, “Governing the Heart, Part 4”.

**Marriage Book Study** – Tuesday, 7pm. Join us this Tuesday for our study on Pastor La Belle’s *Living in a Godly Marriage*. All are welcome to attend!

**Prayer Meeting** – Come pray with us Wednesday at 6:30pm. The prayer meeting will begin with a brief study led by an Elder followed by a time of intercessory prayer.

**Session Meeting** – Thursday, 6pm

**P.Y.M.** – Friday, 6-8pm

**PYM Field Trip** – This coming Saturday our youth group will be headed to the *Boston Museum of Science* for a field trip! Please pray for a fun and safe trip for all who will attend.

*A note from the Board of Trustees: Thank you all for your patience while we figure out the Livestream video service. A warm thank you to KT Wisack and Ann Walsh for the lovely new curtains in the ancillary rooms!*

**Upcoming Men’s Retreat – Registration Deadline 1/28!** Prayerfully consider registering for this year’s men’s retreat this February 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> at Camp Shiloh in Jefferson N.H. This promises to be a blessed time for us as we will be instructed in God’s word unto our sanctification along with enjoying Christian fellowship among the Brethren. Brochures are included with this week’s bulletin. Any questions, contact Joe Marcel. Please make every effort to attend!

The **Annual Meetings of the Congregation and the Corporation** will be held on *January 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM*. In preparation for these meetings, the annual reports should be emailed to Tara Furman at [pcccsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:pcccsecretary@gmail.com) no later than January 13<sup>th</sup> from the following persons/committees: *Pastor, Session, Clerk, Diaconate, Christian Education, Youth Ministry, Women’s Fellowship, & Trustees*. Thank you. Also, please check the Bulletin Board for upcoming nominations.

**The missionaries** for this month – Sam and Eun-soo Folta returning to China.

**Bulletin announcements** should be submitted to Tara Furman by 12 noon on Wednesdays. Please e-mail to [pcccsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:pcccsecretary@gmail.com) or call 774-208-8544.