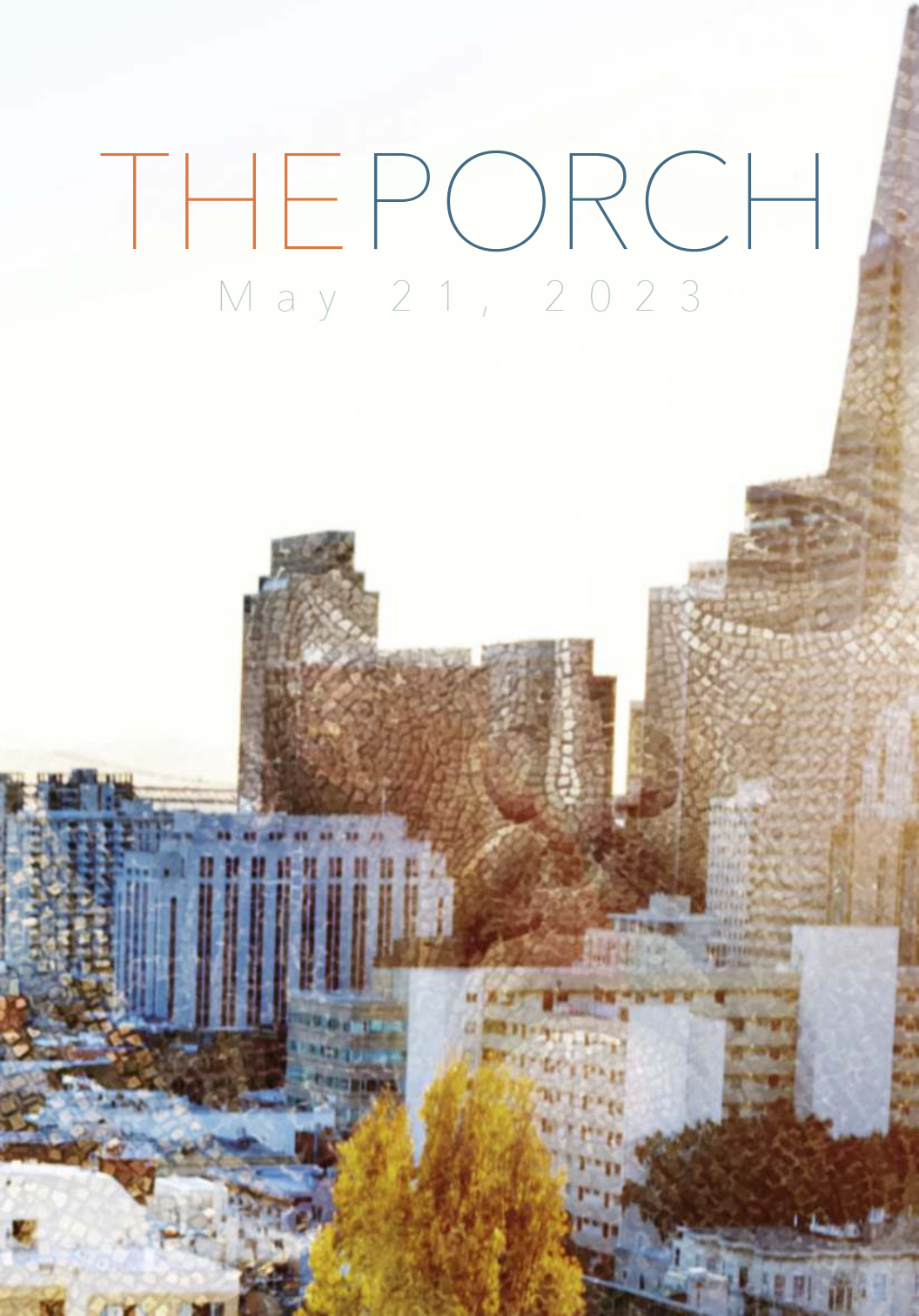


THE PORCH

May 21, 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.





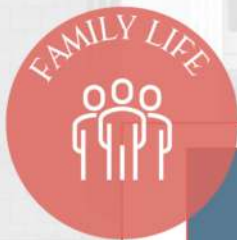
Call To Worship

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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* 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.

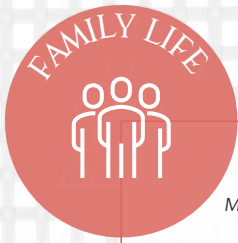


Chapter 6 & 7 on Wednesday, June 7



Ezekiel JOURNALS

NEW TEACHING SERIES STARTS FEBRUARY 5
GRAB YOUR JOURNAL ON THE BACK TABLE



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 24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

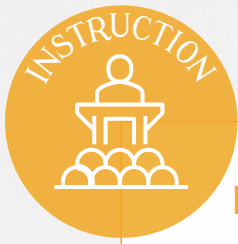
Answer: Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.

Scripture Reading *Ephesians 1:16-23 (CSB)*

I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, **would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.** I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened **so that you may know what is the hope of his calling,** what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe,** according to the mighty working of his strength.

He exercised this power in Christ **by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens** — far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, **not only in this age but also in the one to come.** And he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything **for the church, which is his body,** the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

* 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 17-19 | Eagle, Princes, and Sinners

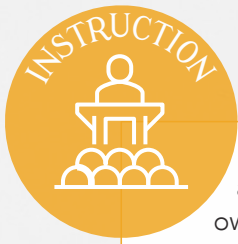
Ezekiel 18:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel:

‘The fathers eat sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

3 As I live”—this is the declaration of the Lord God—
“you will no longer use this proverb in Israel. 4 Look,
every life belongs to me. The life of the father is like the
life of the son—both belong to me. The person who sins
is the one who will die.

5 “Suppose a man is righteous and does what is just and
right: 6 He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look
to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his
neighbor’s wife or approach a woman during her
menstrual impurity. 7 He doesn’t oppress anyone but
returns his collateral to the debtor. He does not commit
robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the
naked with clothing. 8 He doesn’t lend at interest or for
profit but keeps his hand from injustice and carries out
true justice between men. 9 He follows my statutes and
keeps my ordinances, acting faithfully. Such a person is
righteous; he will certainly live.” This is the declaration of
the Lord God.

10 “But suppose the man has a violent son, who sheds
blood and does any of these things, 11 though the father
has done none of them. Indeed, when the son eats at the
mountain shrines and defiles his neighbor’s wife, 12 and
when he oppresses the poor and needy, commits
robbery, and does not return collateral, and when he
looks to the idols, commits detestable acts, 13 and lends
at interest or for profit, will he live? He will not live!



Since he has committed all these detestable acts, he will certainly die. His death will be his own fault.

14 "Now suppose he has a son who sees all the sins his father has committed, and though he sees them, he does not do likewise. 15 He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor's wife. 16 He doesn't oppress anyone, hold collateral, or commit robbery. He gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing. 17 He keeps his hand from harming the poor, not taking interest or profit on a loan. He practices my ordinances and follows my statutes. Such a person will not die for his father's iniquity. He will certainly live.

18 "As for his father, he will die for his own iniquity because he practiced fraud, robbed his brother, and did among his people what was not good. 19 But you may ask, 'Why doesn't the son suffer punishment for the father's iniquity?' Since the son has done what is just and right, carefully observing all my statutes, he will certainly live. 20 The person who sins is the one who will die. A son won't suffer punishment for the father's iniquity, and a father won't suffer punishment for the son's iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous person will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked person will be on him.

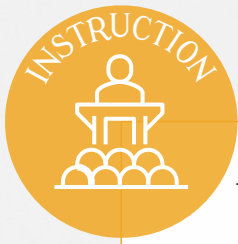
21 "But if the wicked person turns from all the sins he has committed, keeps all my statutes, and does what is just and right, he will certainly live; he will not die. 22 None of the transgressions he has committed will be held against him. He will live because of the righteousness he has practiced.



23 Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?" This is the declaration of the Lord God. "Instead, don't I take pleasure when he turns from his ways and lives? 24 But when a righteous person turns from his righteousness and acts unjustly, committing the same detestable acts that the wicked do, will he live? None of the righteous acts he did will be remembered. He will die because of the treachery he has engaged in and the sin he has committed.

25 "But you say, 'The Lord's way isn't fair.' Now listen, house of Israel: Is it my way that is unfair? Instead, isn't it your ways that are unfair? 26 When a righteous person turns from his righteousness and acts unjustly, he will die for this. He will die because of the injustice he has committed. 27 But if a wicked person turns from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will preserve his life. 28 He will certainly live because he thought it over and turned from all the transgressions he had committed; he will not die. 29 But the house of Israel says, 'The Lord's way isn't fair.' Is it my ways that are unfair, house of Israel? Instead, isn't it your ways that are unfair?

30 "Therefore, house of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to his ways." This is the declaration of the Lord God. "Repent and turn from all your rebellious acts, so they will not become a sinful stumbling block to you. 31 Throw off all the transgressions you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Why should you die, house of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in anyone's death." This is the declaration of the Lord God. "So repent and live!



Ezekiel 19:1 "As for you, take up a lament for the princes of Israel, 2 and say:

What was your mother? A lioness!
She lay down among the lions;
she reared her cubs among the young lions.

3 She brought up one of her cubs,
and he became a young lion.

After he learned to tear prey,
he devoured people.

4 When the nations heard about him,
he was caught in their pit.

Then they led him away with hooks
to the land of Egypt.

5 When she saw that she waited in vain,
that her hope was lost,

she took another of her cubs
and made him a young lion.

6 He prowled among the lions,
and he became a young lion.

After he learned to tear prey,
he devoured people.

7 He devastated their strongholds
and destroyed their cities.

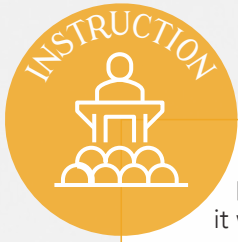
The land and everything in it shuddered
at the sound of his roaring.

8 Then the nations from the surrounding provinces
set out against him.

They spread their net over him;
he was caught in their pit.

9 They put a wooden yoke on him with hooks
and led him away to the king of Babylon.

They brought him into the fortresses
so his roar could no longer be heard
on the mountains of Israel.



10 Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard,
planted by the water;
it was fruitful and full of branches
because of abundant water.

11 It had strong branches, fit for the scepters of rulers;
its height towered among the clouds.
So it was conspicuous for its height
as well as its many branches.

12 But it was uprooted in fury,
thrown to the ground,
and the east wind dried up its fruit.
Its strong branches were torn off and dried up;
fire consumed them.

13 Now it is planted in the wilderness,
in a dry and thirsty land.

14 Fire has gone out from its main branch
and has devoured its fruit,
so that it no longer has a strong branch,
a scepter for ruling.

This is a lament and should be used as a lament.”

Ezekiel 17:1–24

1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, pose a riddle and speak a parable to the house of Israel. 3 You are to say, ‘This is what the Lord God says: A huge eagle with powerful wings, long feathers, and full plumage of many colors came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar. 4 He plucked off its topmost shoot, brought it to the land of merchants, and set it in a city of traders. 5 Then he took some of the land’s seed and put it in a fertile field; he set it like a willow, a plant by abundant water. 6 It sprouted and became a spreading vine, low in height with its branches turned toward him, yet its roots stayed under it. So it became a vine, produced branches, and sent out shoots.



7 " 'But there was another huge eagle with powerful wings and thick plumage. And this vine bent its roots toward him! It stretched out its branches to him from the plot where it was planted, so that he might water it. 8 It had been planted in a good field by abundant water in order to produce branches, bear fruit, and become a splendid vine.'

9 "You are to say, 'This is what the Lord God says: Will it flourish? Will he not tear out its roots and strip off its fruit so that it shrivels? All its fresh leaves will wither! Great strength and many people will not be needed to pull it from its roots. 10 Even though it is planted, will it flourish? Won't it wither completely when the east wind strikes it? It will wither on the plot where it sprouted.' "

11 The word of the Lord came to me: 12 "Now say to that rebellious house, 'Don't you know what these things mean?' Tell them, 'The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took its king and officials, and brought them back with him to Babylon. 13 He took one of the royal family and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath. Then he took away the leading men of the land, 14 so that the kingdom would be humble and not exalt itself but would keep his covenant in order to endure. 15 However, this king revolted against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt so they might give him horses and a large army. Will he flourish? Will the one who does such things escape? Can he break a covenant and still escape?

16 " 'As I live—this is the declaration of the Lord God—he will die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke. 17 Pharaoh with his mighty army and vast company will not help him in battle,



when ramps are built and siege walls constructed to destroy many lives. 18 He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. He did all these things even though he gave his hand in pledge. He will not escape!

19 "Therefore, this is what the Lord God says: As I live, I will bring down on his head my oath that he despised and my covenant that he broke. 20 I will spread my net over him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there for the treachery he committed against me. 21 All the fugitives among his troops will fall by the sword, and those who survive will be scattered to every direction of the wind. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken.

22 "This is what the Lord God says:

I will take a sprig
from the lofty top of the cedar and plant it.
I will pluck a tender sprig
from its topmost shoots,
and I will plant it
on a high towering mountain.

23 I will plant it on Israel's high mountain
so that it may bear branches, produce fruit,
and become a majestic cedar.

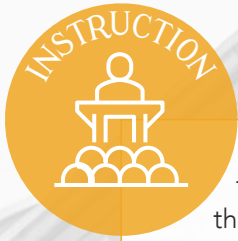
Birds of every kind will nest under it,
taking shelter in the shade of its branches.

24 Then all the trees of the field will know
that I am the Lord.

I bring down the tall tree,
and make the low tree tall.

I cause the green tree to wither
and make the withered tree thrive.

I, the Lord, have spoken
and I will do it."



2 Kings 25:27–30 On the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Judah’s King Jehoiachin, in the year Evil-merodach became king of Babylon, he pardoned King Jehoiachin of Judah and released him from prison. 28 He spoke kindly to him and set his throne over the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and he dined regularly in the presence of the king of Babylon for the rest of his life. 30 As for his allowance, a regular allowance was given to him by the king, a portion for each day, for the rest of his life.

New City Catechism Question 2: What is God?

Answer: God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

Romans 8:28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Acts 2:23 Though he was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him.

A. W. Tozer “God constantly encourages us to trust Him in the dark.”

Matt Redman “Trust is a beautiful and costly act of worship—an honoring response to the sovereignty of God and to His fatherly heart.”





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.



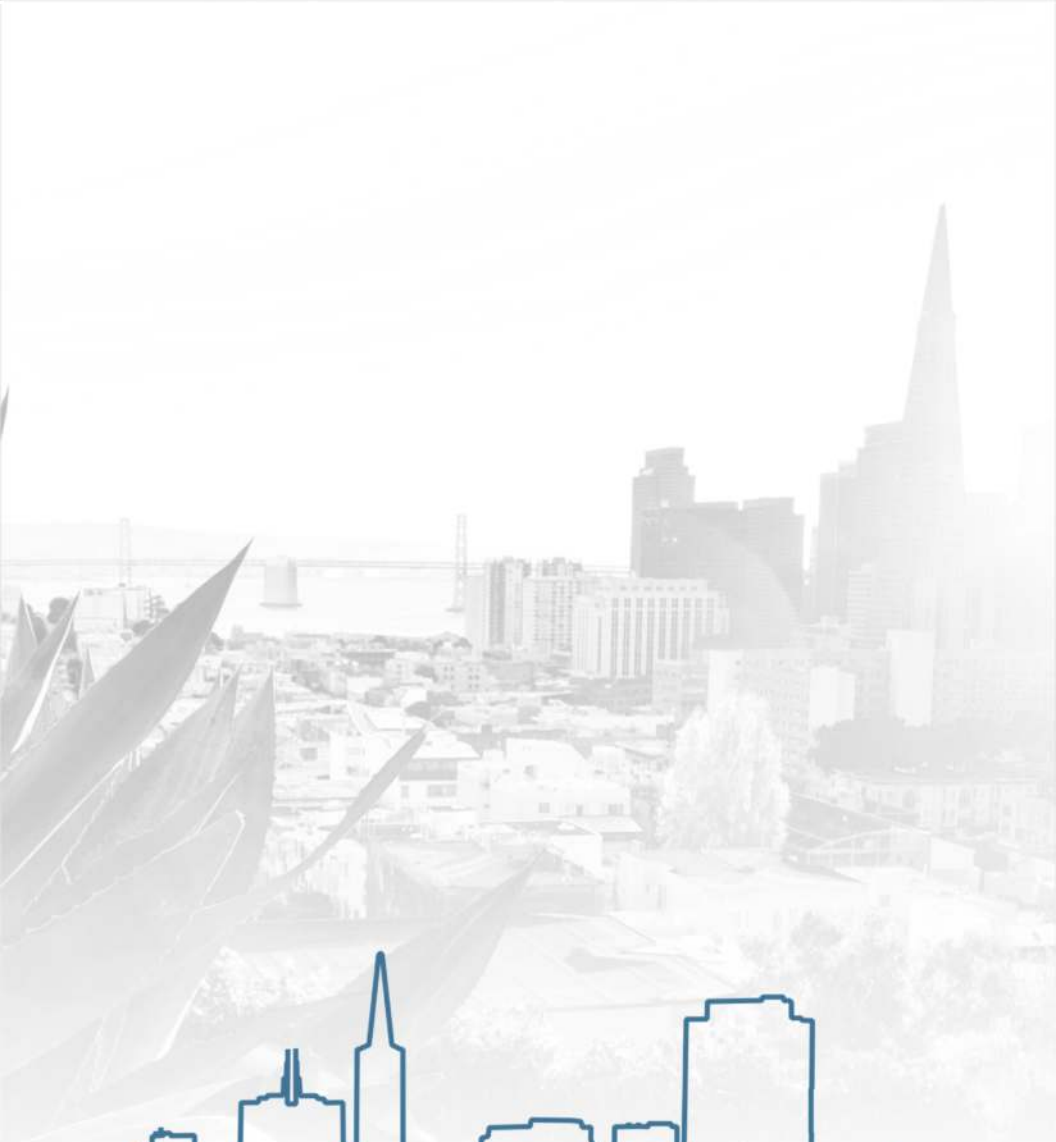
Benediction

Heb 13:20-21

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory 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.





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