

THE PORCH

July 30, 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.





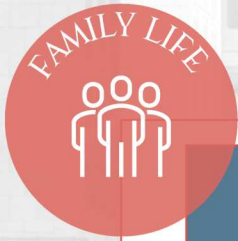
Call To Worship

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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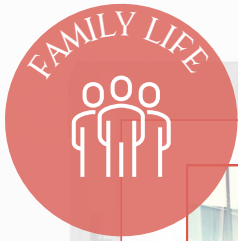
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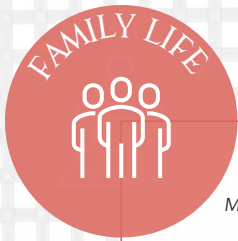


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* One of the beautiful facets of the gospel is how it brings all kinds of people together (Galatians 3:28). We are God's people. We are called to live our lives together and to love one another. In this part of our gathering, we celebrate this truth. 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.





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.





Ezekiel 34 | A Better Shepherd

To the Shepherds

Ezekiel 34:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy, and say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed their flock? 3 You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fattened animals, but you do not tend the flock. 4 You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty. 5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd; they became food for all the wild animals when they were scattered. 6 My flock went astray on all the mountains and every high hill. My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and there was no one searching or seeking for them.

7 " 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. 8 As I live—this is the declaration of the Lord God—because my flock, lacking a shepherd, has become prey and food for every wild animal, and because my shepherds do not search for my flock, and because the shepherds feed themselves rather than my flock, 9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord!

* 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.



10 " 'This is what the Lord God says: Look, I am against the shepherds. I will demand my flock from them and prevent them from shepherding the flock. The shepherds will no longer feed themselves, for I will rescue my flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them.

Fine, I'll Do It Myself

11 " 'For this is what the Lord God says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them. 12 As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for my flock.

Luke 15:1-7 All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." 3 So he told them this parable: 4 "What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, 6 and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' 7 I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance.

I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and total darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 I will tend them in good pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel's lofty mountains. There they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.



Psalm 23 *A psalm of David.*

1 The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.
2 He lets me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside quiet waters.
3 He renews my life;
he leads me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
4 Even when I go through the darkest valley,
I fear no danger,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
as long as I live.

15 I will tend my flock and let them lie down. This is the declaration of the Lord God. 16 I will seek the lost, bring back the strays,

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.

To the Flock
A New David

17 " 'As for you, my flock, the Lord God says this: Look, I am going to judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and goats. 18 Isn't it enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of the pasture with your feet?

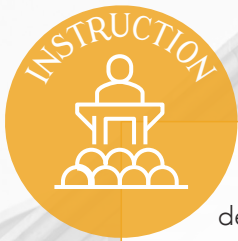


Or isn't it enough that you drink the clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? 19 Yet my flock has to feed on what your feet have trampled, and drink what your feet have muddied. 20 "Therefore, this is what the Lord God says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Since you have pushed with flank and shoulder and butted all the weak ones with your horns until you scattered them all over, 22 I will save my flock. They will no longer be prey, and I will judge between one sheep and another. 23 I will establish over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd. 24 I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among them. I, the Lord, have spoken.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

A Covenant of Peace

25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate dangerous creatures from the land, so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forest. 26 I will make them and the area around my hill a blessing: I will send down showers in their season; they will be showers of blessing. 27 The trees of the field will yield their fruit, and the land will yield its produce; my flock will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the power of those who enslave them. 28 They will no longer be prey for the nations, and the wild creatures of the earth will not consume them. They will live securely, and no one will frighten them. 29 I will establish for them a place renowned for its agriculture, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land. They will no longer endure the insults of the nations. 30 Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people. This is the declaration of the Lord God.



31 You are my flock, the human flock of my pasture, and I am your God. This is the declaration of the Lord God.' "

1. The Lord is our ultimate shepherd.
2. Being an assistant shepherd is a big responsibility.
3. Being the flock also comes with responsibility.

James 3:1 Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment.

1 Peter 5:1–5 I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: 2 Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.



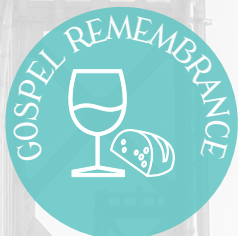


Singing

* 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 13:17-21

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. ¹⁸ Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹ I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. 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.



THE PORCH

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

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