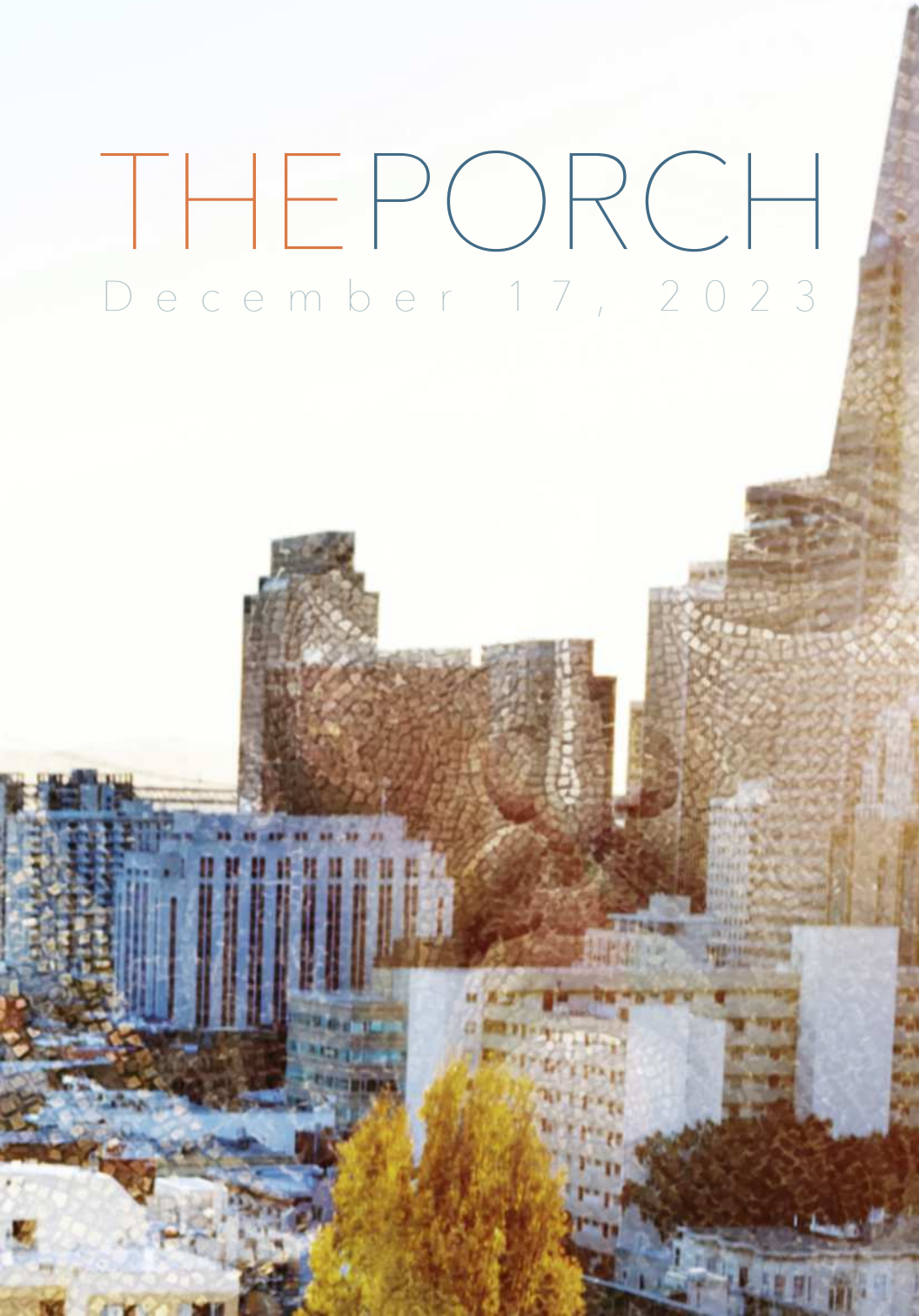


# THE PORCH

December 17, 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.





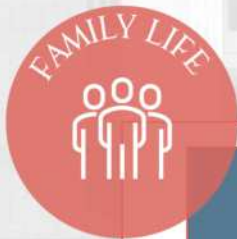
## Call To Worship

### 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.

FAMILY LIFE



**Stratum Foundation**  
Matching Grant



**2023 Advent Schedule**

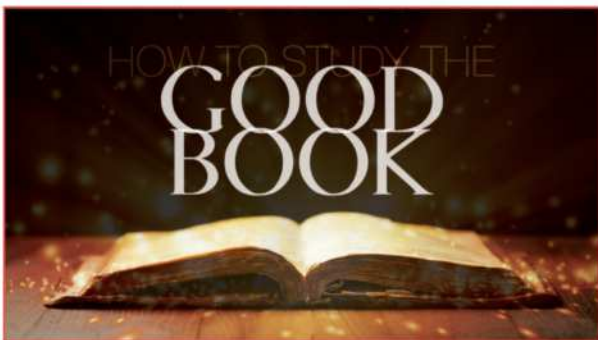
Lessons and Carols (12/15 @ 7 PM)

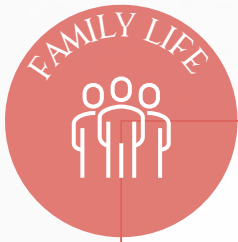
Christmas Party (12/9 @ 6 PM)

Joint Service with Trinity First (12/24 and 12/31 @ 10 AM)



HOW TO STUDY THE  
**GOOD BOOK**

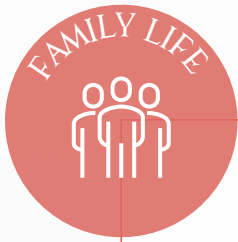




## Missional Family Dinner Schedule

Wednesday Nights | 6:00-8:15 PM

- ③ **December 20** | Brackett Home | Chef Melissa  
Homework: HTSTGB B2
  
- Ⓕ **December 27** | Downstairs SFEFC | BYOE Dinner  
Homework: HTSTGB B3
  
- ① **January 3** | *No Wednesday Night Dinner*
  
- ② **January 10** | Brackett Home | Guest Chef  
Homework: HTSTGB B4
  
- ③ **January 17** | Brackett Home | Chef Melissa  
Homework: HTSTGB C1
  
- ④ **January 24** | Brackett Home | Guest Chef  
Homework: HTSTGB C2
  
- Ⓕ **January 31** | Downstairs SFEFC | BYOE Dinner  
Homework: HTSTGB C3
  
- ① **February 7** | Brackett Home | Friends Night
  
- ② **February 14** | Brackett Home | Guest Chef  
Homework: HTSTGB C4



## 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.

## Stretch

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 water and a snack and say hello to someone you haven't met yet.





## Advent Week 2: Peace



[scottericksonart.com](http://scottericksonart.com)

\* 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.





## Acts 2:42 | The Blueprint

**Acts 2:42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

### Apostles Teaching

**1 Timothy 3:1-7** The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

**Titus 1:5-9** This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.



**Jeramie Rinne**, “The fact that God requires elders to teach his people shouldn’t surprise us. God rules his people by his Word, so the leaders of God’s people have always been entrusted with communicating God’s Word.”

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**Acts 20:20-21, 26-32** ...how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

**Michael Horton**, “The regular proclamation of Christ through the close exposition of Scripture is more relevant in creating a worshipping and serving community than political causes, moral crusades, or entertaining services.”



**2 Timothy 4:1-5** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus... 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

**Stephen Lawson**, "In many evangelical churches, however, the centrality of biblical exposition is being demoted to second-class status. At the heart of this alarming departure is a loss of confidence in God's Word to perform its sacred work. While evangelicals affirm the inerrancy of Scripture, many have apparently abandoned their belief in its sufficiency to save and to sanctify. Rather than expounding the Word with vigor, many pastors are turning to lesser strategies in an effort to resurrect dead ministries. But with each newly added novelty, the straightforward expounding of the Bible is being relegated to a secondary role, further crippling the church. Doing God's work God's way requires an unwavering commitment to the primacy of biblical preaching and teaching."

**John Calvin**, "God has chosen so to anoint the lips and tongues of his servants that, when they speak, the voice of Jesus yet resounds in them."

**Charles Spurgeon**, Preaching is... "To know truth as it should be known, to love it as it should be loved, and then to proclaim it in the right spirit, and in its proper proportions."



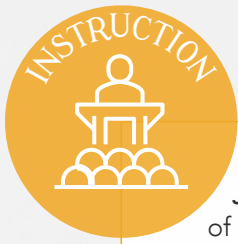
**John Stott**, "To preach is to open up the inspired text with such fruitfulness and sensitivity that God's voice is heard and God's people obey Him."

### **Fellowship**

**1 John 4:10–12** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

**Colossians 3:12–14** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

**George Whitfield**, "What a necessary thing it is to meet together in religious societies. We are surrounded with millions of foes without and infected with a legion of enemies within. We are commanded to shine as lights in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; we are traveling to a long eternity and need all imaginable helps to show and encourage us in our way thither. The primitive Christians were fully sensible of this, and therefore we find them continually keeping up communion with each other."



## **Breaking of Bread**

**John Calvin**, "A sacrament is God's witness to us of his favor towards us, by means of an outward sign. The sacraments are exercises which make us more certain of the trustworthiness of God's Word."

**EFCA**, "When Celebrated by the Church in Genuine Faith, the Ordinances Confirm and Nourish the Believer"

## **The Prayers**

**Acts 13:2–3** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

**Hebrews 10:24–25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near



## 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

### Eph 3:20-21

<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,  
<sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, 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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