

December 29, 2019 - Order of Worship

TIME OF REFLECTION

“The irony of the gospel is that the only way to be worthy of it is to admit you are completely unworthy of it.”

~Tim Keller, pastor and author

“When we in our foolishness thought we were wise,
He played the fool and He opened our eyes.
When we in our weakness believed we were strong,
He became helpless to show we were wrong.”

~Michael Card, singer-songwriter

“You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.”

~William Faulkner (1897-1962), writer and Nobel Prize laureate

“This non-event, this thing that nobody noticed except his friends and family turned out to have the power to transform the entire Roman Empire and the course of human history more profoundly than any other single event over the past 2,000 years.”

~Henry Louis Gates Jr., author, filmmaker and Harvard professor,
speaking of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

“In the world it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair...the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die.”

~Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), English writer and poet

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Irony, Surprise and Laughter of Christmas” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Genesis 17 & 18 (ESV)*

Genesis 17

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, ² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” ³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ⁴ “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you....

¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” ¹⁹ God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him....

²² When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

Genesis 18

¹ And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth...

⁹ They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” ¹⁰ The Lord said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sarah denied it, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”