

the

MARCH 2026

tapestry

Faith
CHURCH

A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY OF GRACE

Faith Church, a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

March is a time of transition as we move from hard Winter to beginnings of Spring. It is a great time of Chili Cookoffs and college basketball insanity, not to mention shamrocks and cerveza verde. To orient you to where we are and what we are doing in the Tapestry for the Pastor's Pondering, I'm recycling a series I did 17 years ago to address elements of worship.

August 2009

What are your highlights of worship? Every person has their favorite parts of the worship service. Some love the hymns, some are moved by the corporate confession of sin, some long to hear the word preached and there are those that love the benediction because that marks the end of the service. I'll share with you one of my favorite parts of the worship service. It is one of the shortest parts, but I hope by the end of this article you will understand it is also one of the most important parts. I'm speaking of the Assurance of Pardon. It comes right after the corporate and silent confessions. During the confessions of course we are confessing our sinfulness before a holy God, both as a people and as individuals. After having focused on our sinfulness the Assurance of Pardon is a proclamation of the gospel reminding us of God's response to our sin.

What is God's response to the sins of His people? Pay close attention to that question because I worded it in a particular way. Notice I did not ask, what is God's response to sin? God hates sin and will bring His wrath and curse against it. Exodus 34:7b says 'the Lord will not allow the guilty to go unpunished'. Those who sin against God will be held accountable. However, for those who are God's people, those who confess their sins and repent there is something else in store from the Lord. Look at what Psalm 130 says about those who belong to God.

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But with You there is forgiveness...

Psalm 130:4

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; 2 O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. 3 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared. 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. 6 My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. 7 O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. 8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

There are wonderful promises made in that psalm that tells us there is redemption for God's people, the forgiveness of sins. Elsewhere in the Psalms we are told that God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve. We are talking about grace here. The Assurance of Pardon is a reminder of that grace. This is all about the gospel. A holy God is reconciling to Himself a people to be His very own and redeeming them from the penalty of their sin.

Some of you very observant folks might have noticed that when we have communion the order of service is changed to move the corporate confession to be part of the introduction to the Lord's Supper. The confession moved but where is the assurance of pardon? We don't have a printed assurance of pardon during the Lord's Supper because the sacrament itself serves as the assurance of pardon. That is what it is all about.

So, what should be our response to the assurance of pardon? Having confessed our sin and having been assured of its forgiveness in Christ, there should be a response on our part. Your response to the assurance of pardon will say a lot about who you are in Christ. If you are truly receiving the assurance as your own, then you are free from sin and guilt. You are free from the things that would serve to hinder your worship of the living God. The assurance of pardon contains all that is necessary to drive our heart-felt thanks to the Lord for what He has done for us through the finished work of Jesus Christ. Our response should be one of deep joy and freedom. Are these things yours? Do you regularly experience these in worship? If not, ask yourself, why not? Next Sunday when you hear the assurance of pardon, soak it in and rejoice in the promise of right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Pastor's Pondering

March 2026

I'm a big fan of the movie "A Christmas Story." Now, you can judge me if you like, it is a movie with no redeeming value except that it is hilarious. I'm not recommending it, I'm just saying I enjoy the movie. The premise of the story is a little boy's desire for a BB gun for Christmas. The constant refrain throughout the movie when people find out that he wants a BB gun is to say, "You'll shoot your eye out kid." Now, why am I talking about such a thing in March? Well, I wanted to speak to something I've been reading in Table Talk in my devotions each morning. The focus is on James and if you're familiar with the book of James, then you know that he is relentless on our use of the tongue or misuse as it were. In fact, James says in James 3:8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. I hear that and I think you know I have a tongue and I can hear the voice of Santa saying to me like he said to Ralphie in A Christmas Story, "You'll shoot your mouth off kid!"

Have you ever shot your mouth off? Have you ever put your foot in your mouth? There are a bunch of euphemisms I could use for this one because it is so prevalent. Have you said something that you shouldn't have said? Just stop, you don't have to answer that, because I already know the answer. Of course you have said something that was unguarded, and that is the point, you're a human being and you have not tamed your tongue, you have not mastered it, you may have become mature in your use of it, but from time to time, it will still get away from you. That is the human condition according to James who, we must remember, was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.



We cannot escape our guilt on this one, each of us is guilty in one way or another. Read James 3, he simply will not let you escape the truth that tongue will not be fully mastered in this life. When we shoot our mouth off, when we say things we shouldn't say, it is damaging. We hurt other people's feelings, we lie, we exaggerate, we deceive, we embellish, we expose what should be kept hidden, and we sometimes hide what should be exposed. In all of it our tongue is involved. The unguarded tongue is a restless evil and it will cause us to have to learn lessons that have to be learned again and again, unfortunately. They are lessons that are hard for us to grasp and hold for very long. It is just so easy for us to say more than we intend or to share things that are better left unsaid when we begin letting our tongues run unchecked. If we are not guarded, if we just speak off the cuff without first thinking about what we are going to say and sticking to the approved script, we quickly get ourselves into trouble. So, what are we supposed to do with that? Well, read James 3 and then spend some time with the Lord in prayer. If we are going to have any success at taming our tongues, we must spend a lot of time with the Lord in prayer. Only the work of the Holy Spirit is going enable us to tame our tongues.



PERSECUTED

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN

Pakistan

Overview:

All Pakistani Christians face difficulties, discrimination and persecution because of their Christian identity. Some take great risks to witness to Muslims, baptize converts and gather them into churches, and many work tirelessly to equip, encourage and educate Christian youth. Some Christians boldly share the gospel and distribute God's Word in radicalized Muslim neighborhoods and cities, which in some cases are home to Islamic extremist groups like the Taliban. Most Christians are treated as second-class citizens and are forced to work long hours in labor-intensive jobs while being oppressed by schemes that keep them in bondage to their employers.

Major Religion:

Approximately 98 percent of Pakistanis are Sunni and Sufi Muslims. Pakistan underreports its Christian population, so accurate statistics are unavailable. However, there are roughly 4 million Pakistani Christians, which is nearly 2 percent of the nation's population.

Persecutor:

Both Christian converts from Islam and Pakistanis born into Christian families are persecuted by their communities, Islamic extremist groups and the government. Violence against Christians is on the increase.

What It Means To Follow Christ In Pakistan

Because of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, Christians are at constant risk of being falsely accused of blaspheming Islam, the Quran or Muhammad, and they receive harsh punishments when convicted. Street evangelism is legal under Pakistani law, and several bold evangelists take advantage of the opportunity to share the gospel publicly. Many Christians live together in closed neighborhoods known as colonies, which provide a measure of security amid the widespread oppression. Still, several large-scale attacks have occurred in these areas in recent years, including some during Christmas. Most Christians are trapped in a cycle of poor education and poverty. Often, the only jobs they can get amount to indentured servitude in brick kilns or as street sweepers or sewage workers. Christians have been imprisoned for years under the country's blasphemy laws, and many of those have been killed or forced to permanently flee the country upon release from prison.

Access To Bibles

Bibles can be legally printed and distributed in Pakistan. However, some Islamist groups oppose the Bible. Christians living in rural, tribal and mountainous areas have little access to God's Word, and translation efforts are ongoing.

Charlie Van Meter,
What are the ten best books or
authors you've ever read?

#9 A Case for Amillennialism

by Kim Riddlebarger

Kim is Senior Pastor at Christ Reformed Church in Anaheim, CA and is known for his works in Reformed Theology. He hosts a podcast, and for many years he co-hosted White Horse Inn Radio telecasts with Michael Horton. Kim graduated from Westminster Seminar and received his PhD from Fulton Thological Seminary. He is married and has two adult sons. He is a Yankees Fan!!

This book, I am reviewing is a definite keeper. It offers a clear, coherent, easy to understand volume of the various so-called end-time views. This study of the "end-end" times is called 'eschatology'.

Riddlebarger posits in his book that the end times have already begun, the so-called "already," as noted in Hebrews 1:2, but, the "not-yet" is still coming. The time interval between the 'already' and 'not-yet' is the so-called millennium. This is referred to as a 1,000 year period which is symbolic in nature, if the period of time is the entire interadvental age. This view is countered by Classic Dispensationalism, progressive dispensationalism, Historic premillennialism, post millennialism, preterism, and various views of the rapture. All these views have more to them than just their concept of what happens toward the end of the temporal history. A discussion of these views requires a more detailed explanation than I can offer here, however you can gain a lot of valuable information by reading this book. A lot of Scriptural defense is offered for A-mill, which is the predominant view of Reformed Churches.

We are living now in the Great Tribulation which will intensify. This book will help you understand Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, the Olivet Discourse and of course Romans 11, as well as everyone's favorite chapter, Revelation 20:1-10, 'a thousand years'.

Again, I can't recommend this book any higher. A great read! Enjoy!



Early Church FATHERS

Eastern Church-- Greek Speaking

IRENÆUS 130 - 212

Irenaeus was born in Asia Minor, he studied under Papias and Polycarp (bishop of Smyrna), who had been a disciple of the apostle John. He travelled widely as a missionary and became bishop of Lyons in 177, finally being martyred at the time of Emperor Setimius Severus. Against the teaching of gnosticism, he stressed the fundamental Christian doctrines and the historical roots of the faith. He helped to develop the doctrine of apostolic succession, where secrets are passed on from the apostles to the bishops who followed them. He urged conformity with the Church at Rome, where he said that the apostolic tradition had been faithfully preserved. His writings are the earliest we have which quotes from both the OT and NT as we know it.

www.julianspriggs.co.uk/Pages/ChurchFathers





INTERN'S INSIGHTS BY QUENTIN JOHNSTON

A Neglected History

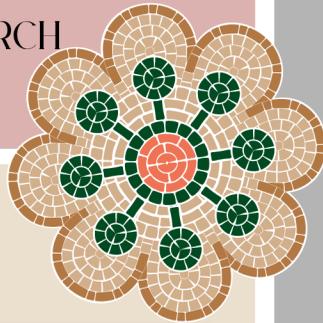
"I don't need church tradition, I just need Jesus!" Have you heard this statement before? There is nothing inherently wrong with this statement in terms of need. It is important to remember that it is not the Church that saves, but Jesus. We need Jesus above all else. All that the Lord has given in the Word is sufficient to bring us, by grace through faith, to salvation in Christ. However, the initial statement can lead people to assume wrong ideas. With doctrines such as Sola Scriptura, people assume that an individual can understand the Bible all on his own. This is a misunderstanding of the doctrine of Sola Scriptura. No Christian is meant to be an island. Our deceitful hearts can lead us to improper conclusions if our reference point is ourselves.

The Scripture is the final, absolute authority, but not the only authority. Thousands of years of devout believers have dedicated their lives to delving into the depths of Scripture and seeking to articulate with clarity the truth already revealed. It would be a great loss to the church if we completely neglected our history. We would be arrogant to assume that we've reached our clarity of Biblical knowledge all on our own. To address the specific issues of the times, believers throughout church history have had to learn how to approach all of life with a Biblically informed mind. We have this invaluable resource of history to help us understand how to address our issues by learning from how these devout men and women dealt with similar issues in their time. Valuing church tradition goes wrong when we give it equal authority with Scripture, as in the approach of the Catholic RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), which begins its teaching on revelation by treating Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition equally as the rule of faith. In Protestant Christianity, Scripture is the final and infallible authority, whereas church tradition has a derivative authority.

Catholics like to say that to study church history is to become Catholic, but Protestants can also claim these brothers and sisters of Christ in antiquity. Irenaeus – teaching robust theology on the bodily incarnation of Christ in opposition to the Gnostics. Tertullian -- his valuable insight to not assimilate pagan philosophy into Christianity, as well as deepening our understanding of the Trinity. Anselm of Canterbury and his teaching on the atonement. And not least to mention—Augustine of Hippo, the most quoted church father in John Calvin's Institutes. These are all men from before the Reformation, and I could mention many more who proclaimed Jesus and fought for Scriptural truths. Do not neglect these treasures of our past, of men and women who lived and died for Christ. These are stories and teachings of people who have dedicated their lives to studying the Scriptures. The Church Fathers do, in fact, err, which should drive us back to the source, but never forgetting that God has always preserved His true Church and will continue to preserve His Church to the end of the age.

Featured FACES

OF FAITH CHURCH



The Lockridge Family

Parents' Names: Ken and Heidi

Kids' Names: John (22) Joel (20), Ellijah (16), David (14)

How long have you been coming to Faith?

This July it will be 20 years!

What work do you do?

Ken just took a new job at a FEMA site near Berryville, VA after working for the National Reconnaissance Office for nearly 20 years. Heidi has been homeschooling longer than that and has been the church administrator for 2 ½ years.

Tell us a little about your family.

Heidi had a first marriage that produced the first four children, Josh (and Jessica Messinger), Abby (and Joel Kehr), Daniel (and Esther Messinger) and Andrew (and Callie Mckelvey-Messinger). Come June, there will be 12 grandchildren in all, and at least 10 of them are girls!

When we're not shuttling kids to debate meetings, choir, or swim practices, Ken and Heidi love to get away at historic bed and breakfasts, Ken likes to plant perennial food and tend his garden, and Heidi loves to write and to work on improving our 200 year old house in Charles Town, WV. The grandkids are a joy and traveling on short-term missions trips is also a family passion. In 2024, Heidi and the three youngest boys travelled the country, stopping in every one of the lower 48 states to pray for our nation. In May this year, Heidi, Elijah, and David are leading a group to Cape Town, South Africa to support ongoing mission work serving the desperately poor in that region.

The Frost Family

Hi church family, we are the Frost's; Donnie, Rebecca, Silas and Luke! As a family, we have been coming to Faith for about 6 years, however, I (Rebecca) have been here since birth! My parents are Bruce and Terri Brierly. Currently we both serve by making meals for DCF and the monthly fellowship meal. I also serve the church by being on the outreach committee.

Serving others with food is near and dear to our hearts, especially Donnie who is an Executive Chef! He's been cooking for 20 years, starting as a line cook at Red Horse. Grilling and smoking meats is by far his favorite to cook. I currently homeschool Silas (6) for kindergarten while also being your new admin here at Faith! And I can't tell you how blessed I feel to be able to serve Christ by serving His church and His body!

While Donnie and I have been married for only 10 years we've been together for 16! We met each other in recovery and by Gods grace have stayed strong for each other in our sobriety. It's not always easy, but it's absolutely worth it! As a family we love to cabin camp, visiting different KOA campgrounds in different states. In the colder months we love to get the extended family together and visit Great Wolf Lodge. Anytime we get all the family together is a great time! The Lord has blessed our family immensely throughout the years and we remain grateful for His never-ending grace and love.



YOUR NEW ADMIN

Rebecca Frost

Hi there church family! My name is Rebecca Frost and I feel very excited and honored to be your new office administrator! The Lord has brought me a long way in my walk with Him and I feel so blessed to be able to serve Him and His church and to be serving you!

From before birth, the Lord has had his arms wrapped around me. My birth mother was 15, a runaway and not living a life suitable for taking care of a child. The Lord graciously put it on her heart to put me up for adoption. Meanwhile, in a small church called FRPC, a group of individuals were praying fervently to find me! I think my (adopted) mom would say experiencing infertility is one of the most painful things a woman can face. But they trusted and had faith and God brought me to them. Bruce and Terri Brierly, my parents, have been coming here to Faith Church for over 40 years, which means I've been attending for 38! The Lord blessed me with loving, God-fearing parents and a caring church from day one. He knew that the beginning of my life wouldn't be the hardest but He had a plan for me and never left my side.



Despite being brought into the best home one could ever pray for, being adopted comes with a lot of identity issues. While I knew I was loved by my entire family and one of God's chosen, I fought it hard when I got into my early teen years. I chose to "treat my pain" with relationships and medication which eventually turned into addiction. When Jails, prisons and institutions entered the picture, and all seemed lost, God still had a wonderful plan for me. I met my husband Donnie in the recovery rooms, specifically AA. Most people in recovery will tell you that dating/marrying someone who is also in recovery is a recipe for disaster. And sometimes it has been, but the Lord pulled us through the most difficult challenges even when we didn't give Him the glory for it. In 2018 we cried out to God to bring us out of addiction and by His Grace, here we are almost 8 years later, sober and walking by faith in the Lord. About a year later, I saw a beautiful fall tree with its changing leaves and I was overtaken by the Holy Spirit. I finally knew that following Christ alone was the only way for me. I felt His love, His grace, and His mercy that He has given me my entire life and I was/am so grateful for it.

Donnie and I were told from the beginning of our marriage (2015) that having children would unlikely be in our future. But God had other plans! Almost immediately after sobriety we had our first son Silas! He had a hard start at life and was in the NICU for 11 days but now is a strong, happy and healthy boy! I currently homeschool him for kindergarten. He loves to create music with his dj pad and put on dance parties for the entire family. Although he's very against dancing himself! Luke came almost exactly 3 years later to complete our happy little family. He is my wild child and enjoys jumping off the highest ledge he can find! It's wonderful for my anxiety, ha! All three of my boys, Donnie, Silas and Luke were all baptised here at Faith about 2 years ago and it was one of the happiest days of my life!

When Luke turned one, I was diagnosed with an auto immune disorder that has drastically changed my life. It's affected my diet, my activity, and my mental and physical health. But the peace of Christ is very present in my life and I haven't had a day yet where I want to give up. You wonderful people here at Faith have helped me immensely through prayer and service and I am forever grateful to you! I pray that my life can be a witness of God's grace not only to you but to others. I will end with what my dad prayed to us every single night when we were kids. "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

March

- 1 Leah Paire
- 3 Chris Johnson
- 5 Rebecca Baker
- 7 George Johnson
- 9 Jared Custer
- 12 Micah Veldhuizen
- 13 Elma Boveroux
- 15 Jaclyn Messinger
- 16 Angie Custer
- 17 Charlotte Taylor
- 22 Natalie Ponath
- 26 Ezekiel Hale
- 28 Abigail Wright



“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

PRAYER FOR US

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I keep looking for the first signs of spring. I haven't seen a robin yet, or a crocus, but the days are longer and the snow melts resolutely. I know it's coming because it always has, right on time; and I also know it's coming because Your grace is like that, both completely dependable and utterly breathtaking.

As the world wakes from winter and sets up to burst into flower and warmth, I just want to thank You for my own waking from cold, spiritual death. All these riches are mine, unearned and undeserved, piled in enormous heaps of blessing all around me. You are most generous!

Spring is such a welcome sight, a breath renewed, a glimpse of the divine rebirth that only You can catalyze in the hardest of earths, and in the hardest of hearts. Amen.



WEEKLY

Sundays:

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:15am Fellowship
- 10:45am Worship
- 5:00pm Youth Group
- 5:30pm Evening Worship / Meal (1st Sundays only)

Mondays:

- 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

Every Other Tuesday: (3rd, 17th 31st)

- 12:00pm Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays:

- 12:00pm Men's Lunch Bunch
- 1:30pm Ladies' Bible Study (4th & 18th)
- 7:00pm Prayer meeting

Thursdays:

- 7:00pm ESL Ministry

Fridays:

- 10:30am Fiber Fellowship

Saturdays:

- 10:30am Downtown Christian Fellowship

MONTHLY

Third Saturdays, (21st)

- 8:30am Men's Breakfast
- 8:45am Women's Bible Study **

Third Sundays, (15th)

- 12:00pm Fellowship Meal

Coming Events

