

# Joy in Participation

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristchurchEastBay.org. Good morning. My name is Constance St. Clair and I'm a member of the Christchurch Youth Group.

Today's reading is from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 1, verses 1-11. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart, and whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

[ 1 : 31 ] God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Good morning, friends. It's okay, you can talk back, that's fine. If I could, I would love to open us up in a word of prayer.

And just to preface a little of how I like to pray on Sunday mornings, is I firmly believe that every church should be praying for the success of other congregations.

As we partner together in the kingdom for the sake of the gospel, surely the work that we are a part of is too big for any one church to accomplish. And it would be a work of grace. If at Moraga Valley Presbyterian, where I serve, the Lord poured out his spirit, and thousands of people came to a saving faith in Christ, surely all of you would rejoice.

In the same way, we pray for you on a regular basis. And so one of the things I love to do is to pray for other pastors and churches by name as kind of an opening to celebrate in what the Holy Spirit is doing across the Bay Area.

[ 2 : 53 ] So I'm encouraged, and hopefully you're encouraged as well. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Gracious Heavenly Father, we thank you for the good and many gifts that you've given us. Through the grace of your Son, our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

It is an endless measure of grace that he has poured out. And Lord, and we are recipients of that this morning, would you lift our hearts with joy and wonder and majesty as a result of the good work that we've received in his finished work.

Lord, it's my prayer today that you would pour through me the gift of preaching, that these words would be yours and not my own. God, I want to pray not only for the success of Christ Church.

I want to pray, Lord, that you would be Lord over all Berkeley, over all of the East Bay. Lord, that people would surrender. Lord, bow their knee to you as Lord and King.

Lord, we pray for brother and sister congregations. Lord, I want to pray for Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church this morning and our dear friend, Bart Garrett, as he proclaims the gospel this morning. Lord, I pray that every seat, Lord, squishing the people together would not be enough.

[ 4 : 03 ] Lord, for all of the people who are coming to hear the good news of the gospel, may you save many, many, many. Enrich us this morning. Come, Holy Spirit.

Lord, remind us of the finished work of Jesus and all God's people said. Amen. Hey, I bring greetings from Moroccco Valley Presbyterian. Amy and Jesse Ng, say hi. Yeah, so I'll let them know. You'll have to come tell me your name after the service and I'll tell them one by one. They all said hi. And happy Mother's Day. We literally wouldn't be here without you. So thank you for what you've done. All right. I would love to start our time together by turning to Paul's letter to the Philippians. If you don't have a copy of the scriptures, I would just encourage you to open up the Bible.

You know, as we look at the opening words of Philippians this morning, one of the things that we're going to see is we're going to see Paul's intent for Philippi to know the joy of partnering together, which is the joy that exists when we link arms with each other for the sake of the gospel.

[ 5 : 06 ] So this morning, I want to begin by looking at Paul's opening to the Philippians in verses one through two. And just as like a quick, helpful tool as you're growing as being a Bible-reading congregation, you're like, man, Paul's letters are so confusing.

Like, what order are they in? Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. A good way that I learned how to do this, and I understand this is generational, it's General Electric Power Company is how I learned it.

And then if you're teaching your kids, it's like Gary eats purple carrots, and that's like one of the ways that you can do it. And that's a free tip from Moraga Valley from us to you. Okay.

I want to begin by looking at Paul's opening to the Philippians, verses one through two. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, Paul is beginning this letter like we'd expect most letters to begin. He says who it's to and who it's from. We see that Paul and Timothy are identified as the authors of this letter.

[ 6 : 08 ] And he says an interesting phrase. He says, they are servants of Christ Jesus. And a better way to read this, if you're reading this in a different translation, might be to replace the word servant with the word slave.

It might read like this. Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. And this is going to be an important theme that we're going to develop in just a second. Verse one also tells us who this letter is to, though.

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the spiritual leaders of the church. And it's in verse two that Paul is issuing his own customary greeting.

He says, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, but as I reflect on the opening of this letter, I think of Paul's opening statements to this growing Roman colony as anything but customary.

These people have likely heard of Paul's situation. He's under house arrest. He's awaiting trial in Rome. And he's unsure of what the future holds for himself.

[ 7 : 12 ] And later on in the letter, Paul actually thanks them for their continued partnership in the gospel. Because many have given generously to support Paul's ministry. And they've decided to stick with him when others kind of jump ship for fear of their lives.

And so Paul uses what I would like to just call binding words. These are words that hold this introduction together. And he uses a unique combination of words.

He says, slaves of Christ Jesus and God's holy people. And I think these are very specific words regarding the tone of this letter. And as we look at Philippians, here's how I'd like for you to think about this.

This whole letter is framed around God, who is in control of not only Paul and his future-defining circumstances, but God is ultimately in control of this local community of believers in Philippi who have been made holy by the finished work of Jesus.

And so when Paul is referring to himself as a slave into this church as God's holy people, he's reminding his audience of the larger framework of God's redemptive narrative.

[ 8 : 20 ] He calls himself a slave because he knows that slaves are to be owned by a master. And Paul refers to them as God's holy people because he knows it was God who took them out of their enslavement to sin, who set them apart, which is what being holy is.

And he made them one with himself through Jesus Christ. And so I just think like one of the things we have to mention is like anytime we read and we interpret and we rest in these words of

scriptures in Philippians, like Philippians carries with it its own degree of difficulty, especially in how we interpret the opening of this letter.

You know, when Paul calls himself a slave of Christ, there's a natural tendency to make that slightly uncomfortable, which is understandable. We've got some pretty awful connotations around the idea of slavery.

But Paul's usage of the word slave is critical in how we're going to understand his own understanding of the gospel and how that develops in our own hearts and lives.

I want you to take Romans 6.22, for example. But now that you've been set free from sin, have become slaves of God. This is what Paul writes elsewhere. The benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

[ 9 : 36 ] And so when Paul says slave, he's talking about a complete change of ownership. And so what he's doing is he's comparing a life controlled by sin to a life controlled by Jesus.

And at that point that Paul is making in relationship to Jesus is that we've been rescued from a former way of life. Formerly we were held, we're bound in chains by the nature of sin, but we've been freed by the person and work of Jesus.

Jesus has purchased us from the malevolent master of sin, and he's now transferred our ownership into the family of God in which we've received a new identity. Scholar Grant Osborne, he put it like this.

He says, This is the framework of our identity.

This is the redemptive narrative that God is playing out in the life of the church and in the life of the world. There are others who do not know Christ, who are held in slavery by sin, and Christ Jesus is freeing them for the sake of himself in the message of the gospel.

[ 10 : 49 ] And there is true freedom to be found in tying ourselves and our futures and our lives, binding ourselves to the finished work of Jesus. So what Paul is doing is he's just giving us language for the thing that we've actually experienced in light of the gospel.

And so what he does at the beginning in verse 2, he uses two words in the extension of his greeting that gives credence to what it is that we have experienced through Christ.

In verse 2, Paul uses the word grace and peace. Now these are like super like Christian words that you're all familiar with. These words though should be treated as gifts as we're reading through Philippians that we've received something in the gospel as a result of a change of ownership.

Anybody in like tech or business? You have jobs? Okay. Alright. So like this is mergers and acquisition. You are under new management because of what Jesus has done.

I figured I'd get somebody with the job thing there. That's fine. You know, Paul, he's using grace and peace to help anchor the rest of the tone of this letter.

[ 11 : 56 ] You know, Jonathan said it earlier this morning. You know, talking about the definition of the word grace. You know, typically what we know is more of a clinical or theological definition of the word.

You know, we know grace is God's divine unmerited favor. But I'm a little more street than that. I like to have a little more street credibility. I just think it's like we just didn't get what we deserved. Is that a fair framework? Okay. There's a contemporary hymn. I don't know if you all sing it here. It's called His Mercy is More. Do you all sing that here? There's this beautiful like sentence in the song that we stood neath a debt we could never afford.

Our sins, they are many. And then this beautiful robust sentence. But His mercy is more. Like we have received the gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ.

We did not get what we deserved. Now, whereas peace in this opening part of the letter is a very different word. Peace is a word that defines our status with God.

[ 12 : 58 ] Because sin not only kept us as enslaved, like our natural, we're bucking against the system here. We are enemies with God. We are effectively at war with Him under the rule and reign of sin.

But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says this sentence. He says, blessed are the peacemakers. I don't know what like picture you should get in your mind when you read this. But typically the idea of a peacemaker is someone who stands with their arms raised between two warring parties, willing to absorb the full degree of conflict on both ends as a result of separating two parties at war with each other.

And this is what Jesus has done. Paul writes in Romans 5.1, he says, therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has stood in the gap from what sin had created. In opposition to what God wanted to put the world back to rights through Himself. And Christ Jesus Himself has made a way.

He has made peace where there was no other peace to be made. And so Paul's introductory framework for Philippians places us in the middle of the story of God's redemption.

[ 14 : 13 ] That all that we have become in the gospel is because Jesus has made a way back to God and we could not have earned it even if we wanted to. So these are some simple, like, core truths that the Holy Spirit is using to unite believers together as God's holy people.

And, like, this is, like, just a base layer for your Christian life. Like, this is right at the core of who we are. Like, the Holy Spirit is reminding us. One of the things that you've learned recently in the last couple weeks is the prayer of come Holy Spirit.

And one of the things that the Holy Spirit exists to do is to remind us of the finished work of Jesus effectively at work in our lives. Not that the Holy Spirit is coming from a different place, but to say, Yes, as believers we have received the sign and the seal of what God has done.

And He has rested it on the life of the believer. And the Holy Spirit is calling that to attention in our hearts and in our minds. So we are united together in these truths this morning.

And so all of this is being done throughout the life of the church over the last 2,000 years for what Paul has called this phrase. It's coming up here in just a second. But he calls it a good work. This is a purpose that is much larger than ourselves.

[ 15 : 36 ] You know, I think there are two primary, like, angles that we look about our Christian lives. Sometimes I'll use a... Do you all remember when you all went in your church retreat a couple years ago, Bob Wrongly and showed up?

Bob is, like, one of the greatest Bible teachers ever. That was a good poll, man. Yeah, you guys should pat Jonathan on the back of that. Weird side story. Bob Wrongly changed my life in, like, 2018.

We were in this couch. We were on this couch, like, in this house in the middle of Denver, Colorado. And he grabbed my shoulders and said something so prophetic. And it has quite literally changed my life.

But one of the things that I was really helpful in learning from Bob Wrongly is that we have both a vertical relationship with God. Like, we pray. Does that make sense? We read the Bible.

We have a vertical relationship. Can some of you nod your head so I know you're awake? Okay. All right. Just draw on breath. That's all I want to make sure. Well check. And then we also have a horizontal relationship.

[ 16 : 36 ] One of the things that we've confessed this morning is that we are to love the Lord our God and to love our neighbor as ourself. So one of the things I think is hard for people to wrap their arms around is the nature and the degree of the horizontal relationship of the gospel.

We tend to see the gospel only in relationship to its vertical direction. You know, like, we're just good with the man upstairs. And we're good with the man upstairs because of what Jesus has done.

But the gospel always has a horizontal aspect to it. It's far reaching out beyond ourselves. And this means, and this could be a negative or a positive, depending on how you look about it, but it means that it involves other people.

And one of the things that I love about the church is I love it for the sake of Jesus, and it would be so much better if there weren't any people involved than all God's people said.

Amen. But this is like one of the mysteries of the gospel that, like, he uses a bunch, like, look. In no other place in the world is there a setting quite unique as this. We're a giant hot mess together this morning, and God is finishing his work in us and through us.

[ 17 : 48 ] And we get to live and testify to that. And then we're supposed to go outside these doors and share that with the world around us. Like, this is God's plan A? It's slightly terrifying. Okay. And I think, like, in respect to this, maybe we have been a part of a generation, and there's been a lot that's been said about this theologically, is that we've over-individualized the gospel in much of our life within the Christian community.

You know, we maybe came to a saving faith in Christ in response to Jesus being our personal Lord and Savior. Maybe that's how some of you responded to the gospel.

But I think very uniquely is that the Lord has set apart for himself a community, like, emerging in their faith and in their trust and in their obedience to him, called the church, the bride of Christ, that is not a set of individuals, but is a collective sum of God's grace at work in the world.

So it always involves other people. And so Paul's idea of a good work is that the gospel is the primary reminder that you are not in this thing alone.

Let me just remind you that again. You are not in this alone. And many of you, you're living your lives completely isolated, completely away from the protection.

[ 19 : 08 ] And I don't mean protection of, like, people are going to come and run to your aid, but just people to remind you of the truth of what Christ is doing in your life, that whatever circumstance you're facing, this isn't the end.

This isn't the defining moment. I want you to take a look at... A little speaking in tongues here. Philippians 1, 3 through 6.

There we go. Paul says, I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work, that's where that good work comes in, in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. You know, in verse 5, Paul is praying. He is effectively thanking God because of the partnership that they all have together, that horizontal nature. In the gospel. And Paul, he's able to pray, and what the text says, in a spirit of joy, in which there's not a lot for Paul to be joyful of.

[ 20 : 11 ] He's facing a trial that could cost him his life. And honestly, one of the biggest reasons that he's able to face that with joy is because he looks at his friends in the gospel, in Philippi, and he knows that he's not in this alone.

This is one of the most beautiful things of what happens when the church gathers together, is that we get to arm, step and step, stride and stride, arm and arm, because of what Christ has done, and he's called us to together through his own completed work.

So like, there's a depth of relationship that we're given in the gospel because of what we've experienced in Jesus. It was C.S. Lewis who said that friendships are born the moment one person says to another, they're like, what?

You too? I thought I was the only one. Like, this is one of the sweetest gifts of the local church.

Meanwhile, like, we're out here, we feel so alone.

We feel like we're raising kids in a world that changes every 30 days due to artificial intelligence.

You know, we are living in one of the most isolated, I think it's an epidemic, of like adult loneliness.

[ 21 : 19 ] Witness? Some of you all know exactly what I mean by this. You mean really well to cultivate deep, abiding relationships in your life, and you keep reminding yourself in six weeks, I'll be less busy.

Can I get like a witness or something? Like, your calendars say otherwise. And you say, oh, man, we tried to get together last year with that couple.

And it's been a year later and you still don't have plans to do it, probably a year from that moment on. And yet, and yet, here we are.

We are to be living examples that God is putting the world to rights through his son. And what Paul is saying is, he says, what he's doing in each of us, in each of us collectively, like, that's what makes it manageable in the difficulties that we face.

That's not only what makes it manageable, it's not only what makes it bearable, but Paul says, this is what makes it enjoyable. that I've got brothers and sisters who know exactly what it is that I'm going through.

[ 22 : 26 ] And God is working out this beautiful story of redemption in a multi-generational, multi-ethnic reality that is the church. And he is able to finish the work that he started.

I want you to look with me in verse six. Paul says, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

You know, one of the most amazing things that stands out to me in verse six is that Paul's source of confidence comes from the fact that he knows God does not have a plan of abandoning not a single one of them.

because, because he said that he would be faithful to complete the work that he started. You know, our shared life and experience within the context of the Christian community are constant encouragement, like a constant encouragement that God is doing what he said he would do

through Jesus.

So when we link arms with each other because of the gospel, for the sake of the gospel, when we choose to be in relationship, to hold one another accountable, to share in fellowship, in communion, when we are cooperating with God and turning the world to rights through his son, the church is at its very best.

[ 23 : 46 ] Like, the world, the devil, the forces of darkness, they're under no threat by a divided and isolated Christian community whose only hope is to hold themselves together by their own bootstraps.

Like, darkness is not shaken in their boots there. Just wanted to say the honest truth. But where we are a force of prayer and truth and power together in the Holy Spirit is when we do see that God has united this beautiful multi-ethnic, multi-national, multi-generational family of faith together in the finished work of Jesus.

This is Paul's affection that he reveals in verses 7 through 8. He said, it is right for me to feel this way about all of you. I love this. This is like a love letter, man. Since I have you in my heart. He says, whether I'm in chains or I'm defending and confirming the gospel, he says, all of you share in God's grace with me and God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Man, I think we should take that into our normal relationships. Like, you should send a text to your friend today. You should say, man, I really long for you with the affection of Jesus. And you'll probably have a friend who goes, who stole your phone?

[ 25 : 05 ] Who is this? Why are you doing this? But man, we need to be reminded that you're not in this alone. Like, being in relationship with one another, united by Jesus, is one of the most priceless commodities in the life of the Christian community.

There is no other place or group that have this same identity. You all are people who have been marked by the sufferings and the victory of Jesus. What he has finished has the final word over you individually and you corporately.

You know, this has been one of the things that fundamentally changed my life. Jonathan mentioned it briefly. Several years ago, I got the chance to take 20 pastors on retreat in Wyoming.

Like, out in the middle of nowhere, there was like a rock that had cell signal, which is a little weird to me. And, um, uh, Jonathan was, he was so gracious to join us. Like, I think about that trip all the time.

And these are all guys that I love absolutely dearly. But, you know, I showed up, um, in the middle of nowhere in Wyoming, uh, struggling. I had some things that I was trying to work out as a leader, both, and not just as a leader, but as a husband and a father and a follower of Jesus.

[ 26 : 17 ] Some things that, just some heavy things I felt like I was trying to go through. And, you know, it's like, you're all familiar with Proverbs 3, 5 through 6, trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding.

But yet, like, our Christian response is like, I'm just trying to figure my life out. You know what I mean? And it's like, well, I was living in kind of direct opposition to this invitational life of abiding in Christ.

And here I am, like, out in the middle of nowhere. I'm sitting, I literally sat on the front porch of this lodge in a rocking chair all day, every day. And here I am just trying to figure it out. But when all of these men would get together every evening for dinner, what I learned is like, I'm not the only one going through some of these things.

I'm not the only one carrying around these wounds and these burdens and these confusions and these hurts. And like, what I learned is that I've got some brothers who are going through the exact same things, who are being sustained by the exact same Savior.

And actually, what it did is it like, it took me out of my funk and it encouraged my heart that what God was doing in the Bay Area was worth linking arms with these brothers. And so we could keep each other encouraged for the task ahead of bringing the gospel to all of Northern California so that all might know that Jesus Christ is Lord.

[ 27 : 31 ] And so when believers are partnered together through the gospel, it changes the way not only that they interact, but it changes the way that they think and they pray for one another. Our prayers are no longer self-seeking.

They are outward facing. The gospel must go through the life and community of the local church. And so Paul prays in verse 9, he says, this is my prayer.

And the prayer that Paul prays for these people is that their love would grow. Paul's prayer is, I think, one of the sweetest prayers among gospel friends. He prays that their love would grow and grow and grow until Jesus is finally done with the work that he started.

And I think this is one of the most sobering prayers in all of scripture. And it's not sobering because it's scary or hard or anything like that. It's sobering because I don't find this anywhere else in all of like the world and the culture that we live in.

There is no other institution in the world like the bride of Christ who's been made holy by Jesus, held together by his finished work and is being held together until he finishes that work when he comes again.

[ 28 : 37 ] And I think like there's an invitation for us to rest in this this morning and maybe this is actually kind of how we end. It's like I don't want you to leave this morning after hearing Philippians 1, 1 through 11 and I don't want you to go home and try to do five things a little bit better.

You know, try to fix your lives and your relationships. relationships. I think the opening of Philippians is an invitation for Christchurch to enter something new together.

Paul is not handing them a plan for building this kind of life together. He first invites them to pray for it. I pray that your love would grow and grow and grow.

I think maybe one of the most faithful things that Christchurch can do this morning is to simply take up that same posture and you would ask God to grow in us what you cannot produce on your own. You know, and as we pray for it, we also have this opportunity to join in on what God is providing in the life of this community. I don't know what your summer programming is. This is a very different community than the one that I lead.

[ 29 : 49 ] But I did see that your all-church retreat is coming up soon. And look, I know it's your great grandmother's 109th birthday. She'll live to be 110. I want you to go to the Mount Hermon all-church retreat.

And I want you to take very seriously the gift and the invitation and the joy that is to be discovered when you are sharing lives with these people that you are united together in by the grace and the peace of Jesus.

That he who began a good work in you is going to see a completion. To completion until the day that Christ Jesus comes. And so like one of the things that you get to do is when you share meals and practice friendship and you encourage one another and you're sleeping together in Mount Hermon and your kids are all crazy and all over the place.

Like that's a one way in which God reveals his beauty and majesty and his depth of affection in the life of this community is when you engage in all of this.

And here's what I would say. If you're on the fringes of this this is one of the easiest ways to step in and to receive the gift of God's grace in your life. It is to be fully known and loved by Jesus but it is also to be fully known and loved by these people who care for you.

[ 31 : 08 ] So I would just encourage you that either formally or informally through the ministry of this church that God has a joyful spirit awaiting you. if you'll go and meet him in what he is doing there.

And I can't think of any other place in our life and within kind of the opportunities that we have that offer the same thing. Have you all heard of CrossFit? There's no joy there.

There's no joy. Running clubs? No thanks. Would you all agree? You ever see someone running and they don't look joyful? Like don't do it.

Yoga, Pilates, it's not for you. It's just not. Like I just I know that it's not. It's not. It's God's will. Starting a podcast. No. No. Don't do that either.

But what we should be doing is to be. I think this is really so simple. Is you have a. You have an incredible gift waiting to be discovered.

[ 32 : 11 ] If you'll join in the gift that God has given you in the context of context of this local community. You will not find it anywhere else. It does not exist in an alternative community.

You do not have the opportunity. Like this is one of the most scary things about being in relationship with Jesus. Everything about me is laid bare before. Before him. He knows.

He knows where all the bodies are buried. He knows where all of the skeletons in the closet are. He knows the deepest things that I would not tell anyone. Never a day in my life.

And yet desires me in relationship anyway. And where like the true application and the test of that is as you share and open your life.

You get to bear your burdens with one another and doing so you fulfill the law of Christ. And you confess your sins to one another so that you may be healed. And you experience the full measure of God's grace in the life of the church in the same way that you've been experiencing it one to one with Jesus.

[ 33 : 12 ] Jesus. So my gift to you as someone who lives in a different town a little bit away is to say do not miss out on the joy that is waiting when you link arms together for the sake of the gospel.

Let me pray for you. Gracious Heavenly Father thank you for the gift of what you've revealed in scripture. Thank you for the beautiful community that you are forming and shaping here at Christ Church.

Lord to the individual in the room who is just not really sure that they're able to take a step of faith and maybe join a community group or Lord to invite someone over to their home for a meal or just the invitation to go out to coffee together.

Lord I pray that you'll just give them 15 seconds of courage. 15 seconds of boldness. 15 seconds of just denying themselves for the opportunity to take up what it is that you have for them.

Lord I pray that when this church does gather together I pray Lord that laughter and joy and inside jokes become the fruit of real discipleship and life change.

[ 34 : 28 ] Lord as we've experienced your grace and peace. grace and Lord for every enticing lie that an alternative community would try to provide.

Lord with the shallowness of what they offer in relationship Lord both in its vertical and horizontal components would it be exposed? Would it be brought to light?

And Lord with the bride of Christ to be shown to be beautiful and faithful and without fault and a beautiful invitation to step into together.

Lord I pray that you would continue to unite your church through the power of the Holy Spirit around the finished work of Jesus. Lord with Christ church be a sign and symbol to the world.

That Jesus is not done yet he's just getting started. We pray this in your holy and precious name.

Amen. Friends this table is set for us with bread and wine and it's called many names but one of the names of this meal is called communion and it's to nurture us in our communion our vertical communion with God but it's also meant to nurture our horizontal communion and love that we share in Christ with one another and so I want to invite you to this feast.

[ 36 : 05 ] We're going to stand right now and confess our faith so let's stand together and confess our faith together from the Nicene Creed Christ Church. What do we believe? We believe in one God the Father the Almighty maker of heaven and earth of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ the only Son of God eternally begotten of the Father God from God light from light true God from true God begotten not made of one being with the Father through him all things were made for us and for our salvation he came down from heaven was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit the Lord the giver of life who proceeds from the Father and the Son who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

[ 37 : 42 ] Amen. The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right oh Lord and it's our duty and it's our joy always and everywhere to give thanks to you Father Almighty creator of heaven and earth. Therefore we praise you joining our voices with angels and archangels and all the company of the saints in heaven who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

Holy Holy Holy Lord God of power and might heaven and earth are full of your glory Hosanna in the highest blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest.

Holy and gracious Father in your infinite love you made us for yourself and when we had sinned against you and become subject to evil and death you in your great mercy sent your son your only son Jesus Christ into the world for our salvation by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary he became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth and in obedience to your will he stretched out his arms upon the cross and offered himself once for all that by his suffering and death we might be saved and by his resurrection he broke the bonds of death and he won the victory for us trampling over hell and Satan under his feet and as our great high priest he ascended to your right hand in glory that we might come with confidence before the throne of grace hallelujah amen you may be seated friends our Lord Jesus on the night in which he was to be handed over he set at table with his disciples and after that Passover feast he took a loaf of bread he gave thanks for it and he broke it and he said this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way after that supper

Jesus took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant shed in my blood for the forgiveness of your sins and the sins of many do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me because the Apostle Paul tells us whenever we eat this bread and we drink this cup we're proclaiming the Lord's saving death until he comes again therefore we now proclaim the mystery of our faith Christ Christ is died Christ is risen Christ will come again Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us gracious God we pray that your Holy Spirit would come now during this time and we pray that Holy Spirit you would bring more of your grace into our lives we pray that by your grace we would know the power of your love for us and we pray that by your grace your love might increase and overflow each for the other here that we would long for each other with the same affection that you have for us Lord Jesus we pray that as we come to this table that this bread we break in this cup that we bless would be for us a communion in the body and blood of Christ we pray that you would nourish us and strengthen us in faith and hope and love and we pray that we would be able to go out of here enjoying the unity of the Spirit enjoying the holiness that the Spirit's creating in our lives enjoying the power that we've been given by the Spirit to witness to Christ Lord we pray that you would keep us as your precious people until that great day when we'll enter into the joy of your kingdom and we'll sit with you and we'll feast at your table and we'll see you face to face

[ 41 : 59 ] Lord until that day we're bold to pray as Jesus taught us saying together our Father in heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as in heaven give us today our daily bread forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us save us from the time of trial deliver us from evil for the kingdom the power and the glory are yours now and forever amen and just a moment we'll come row by row to the front down to down the center aisle to the front you'll find service with bread on my right and left and in these silver trays there's red wine in the center and white grape juice on the outer rim and we just encourage you to come eat the bread as you're ready to remember that Christ died with joy for you and hold on to the cup take it back to your seat and we'll drink it together in a moment to celebrate the unity that Christ has created for us by shedding his blood to make us his people if you're here today and you're beginning a process of exploring the story of the gospel and the claims of Christ who he is and what he came to do for you we're so glad that you're doing that and we encourage you to lean in keep praying asking your questions and we would just ask that until you're ready to come to these waters of baptism to publicly identify yourself by the name of God as a follower of Jesus that instead of taking this bread and wine feel free to come and just cross your hands over your shoulders and receive a blessing feel free to stay in your seat to sing and to pray and we hope that this meal will be a witness to you of the great love that God has for you that God demonstrated his love for us in this that he sent Christ to be a sacrifice for sin for us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us friends these are now are the gifts of God for the people of God thanks be to God thank you for the cross thank you for the cross you paid there in all my sin and shame in love you came and gave amazing grace thank you for this love thank you for the nail pierced hands wash me in your cleansing flow now all I know your forgiveness grace and embrace worthy is the lamb seated on the throne we crown you now with many crowns you reign victorious you reign victorious high and lifted up

Jesus son of God worthy is the lamb worthy is the lamb thank you for the cross thank you for the cross thank you for the cross thank you for the cross Lord thank you for the price you paid who the cross who the cross Bearing all my sin and shame In love you came And gave amazing grace Thank you for this love, Lord

Thank you for the nail pierced hands Watch me in your cleansing flow That will I know Your forgiveness and embrace Sing, worthy Worthy is the Lamb Seated on the throne We crown you now With many crowns You reign victorious You are high and lifted up Jesus, Son of God The darling of heaven Crucified Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Seat together Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Seated on the throne We crown you now With many crowns You reign victorious You are high and lifted up I am lifted up Jesus, Son of God The darling of heaven The darling of heaven Crucified Seat together Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Brothers and sisters, this is the cup of our salvation. Let's drink together and rejoice.

[ 50 : 01 ] Rejoice We are going to take some time to lift up the prayers of God's people to his throne of grace. We come to the table of the king, not only to feast and to have our own needs met, but we come to ask for the needs of the people around us in our lives.

To ask for the needs of our city and the church and the world. And I want to just encourage us today that God hears our prayers and he answers prayer. And I'll tell you a story this week. We, one of the precious children in our church had a bike accident recently, Samantha. And she was riding her bike, got hit by a truck and it shattered her elbow. She was scheduled to have surgery on Thursday at Oakland Children's Hospital.

We've been praying for her and she went in for surgery Thursday and they said, we do not need to operate because everything's kind of working together for healing. And we just need to continue to go to God for the needs that we have, you know, like we did for Samantha. And maybe there's broken things in your life, broken people, broken relationships, broken situations. Let's ask God to come and heal those things, okay?

So let's go to him. And when I say, Lord, in your mercy, you can say, hear our prayers. Oh, Lord, we pray for the peace of the whole world.

And we pray also for the well-being and the unity of the church and the people of God. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Lord, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world.

[ 52 : 00 ] We pray for those who are seeking to share the gospel and word and deed. People who are seeking to teach and disciple others and the next generation.

We pray for those who, in sharing their faith, are pressured and persecuted for their faith. Lord, we're praying for your precious and beloved people today.

Here and everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Lord, we pray for our nation. We pray for those who've been given authority and responsibility.

We pray for all those in public service and public office at every level. Lord, we pray that you'd make them a people of wisdom. People of justice.

A people who are seeking the common good. A people who love peace. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

[ 52 : 59 ] Lord, we want to think now about all the people in our lives whose faces come to our mind. Lord, whose names spring to our hearts and our lips.

Lord, we pray for those who are in trouble. Lord, we pray for those who are in sorrow. We pray for those who are experiencing need and sickness and other adversities.

Lord, we just take time to name them silently before you. And Lord, we say together, Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we ask that you give us the grace this week to pray for one another. To pray the prayer of Philippians 1. Lord, to pray that your love would abound more and more in our lives.

Lord, in our relationship with you, in our relationship with each other, we pray that the affection of Jesus Christ would grow among us. And Lord, we ask all these things, Lord, for your sake and for our good.

[ 54 : 07 ] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I want to invite you to stand with me. When we come to this table, we experience God's total offering of himself for our salvation.

And the only appropriate response to that is to totally offer our lives to him, our time, talent, our treasures, our family, our work, our relationships, everything we're going to be about this week.

And so let's offer our thanks to God and ourselves to his service. Almighty God, we marvel at the gift of your son, Jesus. We're astonished at your power and raising him from the dead.

We are amazed at your love and exalting him to your right hand. We pray that you receive our gifts now as symbols of our love, of our participation and salvation through your son, and of our

readiness to commit these resources to your work in the world.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the risen Christ, your son and our Lord. Amen. Let's sing his glory in my good. Amen. I've seen my father's glory revealed in Jesus Christ.

[ 55 : 44 ] And the more that I behold him, the more he satisfies. When I gaze upon his beauty, when I see him as I should.

Then my eyes are lifted upward for His glory and my good. There is hope.

There is hope in every trial. For I can trust the Lord. He will turn my heart towards Him.

Help me bear the thorn. So in faith I follow Jesus. On the road not understood. For I know that He is working.

For His glory and my good. To our God be the glory.

[ 56 : 53 ] To our God be praise. He alone. The name above all name. I will boast ever only.

The Lord my God. For I know. His glory is mine. See the open arms.

See the open arms of Jesus. Upon the cross that day. What they understood as weakness.

Deserves my every praise. For the charge that was against me. It was nailed into the wood. Yes, I know that He has saved me.

For His glory and my good. To our God. To our God. Be our glory. To the Lord. Be praise.

[ 58 : 04 ] Be alone. The name above all names. I will boast ever only. In the Lord my God.

For I know. His glory is mine. Would I gladly.

Would I gladly be made nothing. That Christ would be made more. Would I seek the only kingdom.

That far outweighs them all. I will stand before my Father. Where the faithful saints have stood. And with joy my heart shall praise Him.

For His glory and my good. And with joy my heart shall praise Him. For His glory and my good.

[ 59 : 24 ] To our God. To our God. Be the glory. To our God. Be praise. Be alone.

The name above all names. I will boast ever only. In the Lord my God.

For I know. His glory is my good. To our God. Be the glory. To our God.

Be praise. Be alone. The name above all names. I will boast ever only.

In the Lord my God. For I know. His glory is my good. Yes I know.

[ 60 : 22 ] His glory is my good. Amen.

You may be seated. Just for a moment. I want to invite Josh Lynn up. If Josh is here. But I also want to say a few words. About what's going on in life.

Our church. You can see here on the back of your worship handout. We have some new small groups. That are just starting up. This past week. And so. There's time for you to get involved.

A small group on exploring Christianity. And reading the gospel of Mark. And the reason for God.

Another book. Or another group called. The Essentials of Faith. What is a Christian? These are wonderful opportunities.

Kind of short term opportunities. For you to get engaged. As we head into the summer time. Also. I want you to know. That next Sunday. Immediately following our worship service. We have our.

[ 61 : 27 ] Twice a year. Congregational meeting. Just a chance for us. To update you. On what's going on. In the life of our church. And give you a little deeper insight. Into our mission. And how we're living that out. And.

Also. If you're a young adult. We would encourage you. To come to our. Pizza dinner. On Wednesday. March the 20th. Where we're going to be. Welcoming Dylan. Our new. Groups and formation director.

As well as his wife. Victoria. And again. If you. If you can fill out. One of these connect cards. We'll make sure. That you get the information. That you need. For stuff like that. Coming up. After this service. There's going to be coffee.

In our community hall. Would love for you to join us. For some refreshments. And coffee. There'll be deacons over here. Ray and Barbara. To pray for you. And care for you. Should you need that. And Josh. Could you come.

Just say a quick word. About the boiler room. And so you know. Our other pastor. Andrew. Is on a four month sabbatical. And it's a great opportunity. These sabbaticals.

[ 62 : 22 ] For just the church. To kind of lean in. And to pray. And to seek God's favor. So Josh. Tell us about the boiler room. Yeah.

So. My name is Josh. And I'm a deacon here. And I've been coming. To Christ Church. Since 2017. And obviously. I'm here to talk about.

Prayer. So. You know. I think. We usually. Ask people. To teach us. The very thing.

Or skill. That most amazes us. About that person. Right. So. Maybe I look at Walter. I'm like. Hey. Walter. Teach me how to play basketball. Right.

Or Grace Alita. Teach me how to fly a plane. All right. Or Jesus. Teach me how. To make Mexican food. Food. That side of the congregation. Is also talented. But just.

[ 63 : 17 ] You know. And. We see in the gospels. That. The disciples. They. They asked Jesus. To teach them. How to pray.

The Lord. Teach us. How to pray. And what fascinates me. Is that. They. They never asked him. To. Lord. Teach us.

How. To walk on water. Or Lord. Teach us. How. To heal the sick. Or. Lord. Teach us. How. To turn. Water. Into wine. But they asked him.

Lord. Teach us. How to pray. Which. Which makes me think. That Jesus prayer life. That the disciples. Witnessed.

With their eyes. And with their ears. Was probably. The greatest miracle. That they saw. And. As we know. Jesus was a man of prayer.

[ 64 : 12 ] And he often rose early in the morning. While it was still dark. To go to a desolate place to pray. Even while everyone. With their needs. Wanted him to. To come help them.

Um. But he always set aside time to pray. He always set aside time. To be. With his father in heaven. And. Prayer.

It's. It's communion with God. It's. It's a desire. To be. With God. It's. Um. But. But beyond that.

Uh. Jesus knew that. Prayer. Is ultimately. What empowers his ministry. Um. And I think the disciples. Knew that as well. That. It's all rooted in prayer.

You know. Um. In John 15. Jesus says. Basically that. If. If we're not abiding in him. We can do nothing. Right. There's. There's this sense of. We can see so many things happening.

[ 65 : 09 ] Um. With our eyes. And. In ministry. That are all good things. But. Sometimes I wonder if. We're doing those things in vain. You know. Um. Like. We all really need to pray.

Is what I'm saying. And. And. Um. And we also see in Mark 9. Um. Jesus. He. Um. The disciples. They couldn't cast out. This unclean spirit.

Out of this. Uh. Boy who was mute. Deaf. And convulsing. And they asked Jesus. Basically. Hey. Like. What's. What's going on? How come. How come nothing's happening?

Um. Um. And Jesus tells them. This kind. Cannot be driven out. By anything. Except by prayer. And fasting. Right.

So this kind. We all have this kind. Of challenges in our lives. Right. This kind of person. In our lives. That. Um. Whether it's family. Or a co-worker. Who. Who. It's just so far from God.

[ 66 : 05 ] Or maybe even opposes Christianity. That. We think it's. The power of the gospel. Will never break through. Into their lives. Right. This kind. Of. Of problems. This kind.

And. I think. Paul. He. He knew that as well. Um. In the explosive growth. Of the early church. Um. I'm sure he. He often saw. This kind of persecution.

This kind of setbacks. This kind. Of challenges. So. This kind. Cannot be driven out. By anything. Except by prayer.

And fasting. And. Which is why. Both Jesus and Paul. Um. Paul and his letters. To the churches. He's. He's always getting. Um. He's always praying for them. As. Brandon so.

Um. Beautifully preached today. And. Um. Because he knows. That. There is power in prayer. Right. So. Um. I'm saying all this.

[ 67 : 00 ] To invite you. To. To come pray with us. In the boiler room. I don't know. If we have slides today. Not sure. But. But. Um. It's. It's my fault.

If. If. If. If we. Definitely. My fault. Um. But. It's. It's. It's every Sunday. 9.30 a.m. To. 10.20. And. Um. And. I'll be honest. It's. It's. It's hard. Um. Being a new dad. To come early. But. Um. I would love for. All of you. To. To come join us.

It's. Um. Sometimes. I honestly. Just like. Kind of sleep in there. You know. And. It's cool. You know. Um. And. And. Uh. I. I. I. I. I don't know if you guys know where the boiler room is.

But. It's just right out there. And. Um. To the left. As you go out here. And. Yeah. It's. Um. It's also. Just a great time. To. To be. In fellowship.

[ 67 : 54 ] In community. And. And. Um. Honestly. I think I've been going for. Maybe three. Four years. And. It's really taught me how to pray. Like. Just being around Jonathan.

Jonathan doesn't have time to disciple all of you. Like. Super deeply. Believe it or not. But. He's always there. In the boiler room. So. If you want to be disciplined in prayer. Know how to pray scripture. That's a great place to be.

Um. And. It's just grown me so much. Just even hearing other people pray. And. It's encouraged me a lot as well. Um. So. Yeah. I think. The more we pray.

The. The greater manifestations of the Holy Spirit. We'll. We'll see. So. Yeah. Um. And. Uh. Feel free to drop in any time. Um. Really.

Even if it's just five minutes. No one's. No one's judging you. I mean. I'm sleeping like half the time. So. So. It's. It's. It's fine. You know. Like. Um. Just go in and. Yeah.

[ 68 : 51 ] Just draw near to the presence of God together. Um. I think. That's all I have. Thank you Josh. Yeah. Thank you. Thanks. Thanks. Come talk to Josh.

If you want to learn more about the prayer room. Let's stand and. Uh. Let's receive God's blessing as we go. May the grace of almighty God. The father son and holy spirit.

Be with you. The grace of our lord Jesus. And the love of God the father. And the fellowship. Of the holy spirit. Go with you. To all those people.

He's sending you to bless. Let's now go in his grace. And his peace. To love and to serve this world. Thanks be to God. Thank you.

Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns. All music but its own. Awake my soul and sing.

[ 70 : 21 ] Of him who died for thee. And hail him as the matchless king.

Throughout eternity. Crown him the Lord of life.

Who triumphed o'er the grave. And rose victorious in the strife. For those he came to save.

His glory is now we sing. Who died and rose on high. Who died eternal life to break.

And lives that death may die. My god who died and rose on high. My god