

REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church



<https://www.rpccerie.org>

Sunday Morning Worship Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany *Presentation of Jesus at the Temple*

February 2, 2025

Worship Theme: *"When we worship with joy and sincerity, the Triune God receives the glory He is due from His human images. Thoughtful biblical worship also instructs and sanctifies us, and proclaims the good news about Jesus to those who don't yet believe."*

At Redeemer, we follow the Liturgical Year. Each Sunday sequentially measures from the beginning of the Church Year—the First Sunday of Advent, usually the first Sunday in December. In addition, certain Sundays have significance to celebrate certain occasions in the life of the Church, such as this Sunday which celebrates the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple.

The Worship Theme is chosen by the person preaching to represent the main theme of his or her sermon. The Minister of Music and Worship uses this Worship Theme to choose the other Elements of the Worship Service, such as the Call to Worship and the Hymns. The Accompanist uses the Worship Theme to choose the music for the Prelude, Hymn of Reflection, Offertory, and Postlude.

We welcome children of all ages in our Worship Service. At the Information Center in the rear of the Sanctuary, we offer children a "Book Bucket" with books and activities for their use. Parents, please do not be concerned if your young child cries. We believe that the cries of young children signal that the church is alive, well, and destined to continue for generations to come.

**Welcome, Announcements, and
Introduction to Worship** Thomas Brooks

Prelude: *O God, Beyond All Praising* arr. Larkin

O God, beyond all praising, we worship you today
And sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
For we can only wonder at every gift you send,
At blessings without number and mercies without end:
We lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word,
We honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.

The accompanist chooses a Prelude that will support the Worship Theme and provides the text of the piece, so that the congregation can meditate on that text while the music is played. The actual Worship Service begins at the Prelude.

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated.

Call to Worship: *(responsively)* Thomas Brooks

Liturgist: Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my
inmost being, praise his holy name.

The Call to Worship is selected by the Minister of Music and Worship to relate to the Worship Theme and to encourage the congregation to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all believers present, as they prepare to direct their acknowledgement and praise to God. God summons us to worship, and we respond with praise and with singing.

**Congregation: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget
not all his benefits—**

Liturgist: who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

Congregation: who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Liturgist: who satisfies your desires with good things

Congregation: so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

—Psalm 103:1-5

Note: The Congregation should please stand, if able to do so.

***Hymn No. 598:**

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah CWM RHONDDA

Note: The Congregation may please be seated and remain seated for the reading of the Scripture.

Old Testament Reading: 1 Chronicles 25:1-8 Mark Kmecik

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

Note: We will have A Moment for Children only if two or more children are present in the Worship Service.

A Moment for Children Rev. Giffone

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated for the following Hymn.

Hymn of Reflection: *Come, Holy Spirit*..... Gaither

Come, Holy Spirit, we need you,
Come, sweet Spirit we pray;
Come in your strength and your power,
Come in your own gentle way.

Come as a rest to the weary,
Come as a balm for the sore,
Come as a dew to our dryness:
Fill us with joy evermore.

Come, Holy Spirit, we need you,
Come, sweet Spirit we pray;
Come in your strength and your power,
Come in your own gentle way.

The first Hymn is chosen as a response to the Call to Worship and specifically offers praise to God for who He is: the Creator and Sustainer of all things and the One who has given us salvation from our sins through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.

The first Scripture Reading is chosen by the person preaching to support the Worship Theme embodied in the Sermon. As with all reading of Scripture, the congregation acknowledges what they have heard by the response following the reading.

The Moment for Children communicates to the children that they are an important part of the congregation.

The Hymn of Reflection is chosen by the accompanist as a preparation for prayer and confession. This song allows the congregation to sing a song with which they are quite familiar.

Prayers of Confession..... Thomas Brooks

We will begin by praying a unison prayer of corporate confession.
Then, we will join in silently, confessing our personal sins.

Almighty God, You know our hearts. You know that we struggle to be faithful to You. From moment to moment and from decision to decision, we are inconsistent and fickle.

Please forgive us for our unfaithfulness and for our sins. Please forgive us even more when we justify our unfaithfulness and our sins with formulas for our lives that serve us and not You. We pray in the name of your Son—our Redeemer and King—Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Note: The Congregation should please silently confess their sins.

Assurance of Pardon (*responsively*)..... Thomas Brooks

Liturgist: The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

Congregation: If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

—Romans 10: 8-10

Note: The Congregation should please stand for the Hymn, if able to do so.

***Response Hymn: Gloria Patri**..... *GREATOREX*

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
World without end, Amen, Amen!

Note: If able, the Congregation should please remain standing following the Hymn

The Prayers of Confession give believers the opportunity to confess: first their corporate sins and then (silently) their personal sins. While personal confession is a normal part of a believers daily time with God, on Sundays, the believers join together to recognize the importance of keeping a clean slate with God through confession.

Having confessed both our corporate and personal sins, the Assurance of Pardon reminds us that Jesus has paid the penalty for our sins and we remain chosen by God and forgiven because of the birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Liturgist is not a “priest” and thus does not “pronounce absolution” of sins, but points to the assurance given to all believers (the Liturgist included) in God’s written Word.

In response to our hearing the Assurance of Pardon, we join our voices in singing praise to God for the forgiveness that He has given us through His Son. The Response Hymn varies based on the season. This one, the Gloria Patri (“Glory to the Father”), is one of the ancient Christian doxologies.

***Passing of the Peace**..... Thomas Brooks

*Note: The Congregation will please turn to each other and speak these words of greeting: "May the peace of Christ be with you."
And the answer of response: "And, also with you."*

Note: The Congregation may please be seated.

**Pastoral Prayer, Prayers of the People, and
The Lord's Prayer** (*debts/debtors*) Amy Stearns

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated for the reading of Scripture.

Note: If able, the Congregation should please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

Epistle Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21 Mark Kmecik

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: **Thanks be to God!**

Note: The Congregation may please be seated.

Sermon: "You Will Be Sons of the Most High" Rev. Giffone

Sermon Text: Luke 6:17-49

The Sacrament of Holy Communion
Remembrance · Communion · Hope

Invitation to the Lord's Table..... Rev. Giffone

Offering: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*..... arr: Carter

Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God;
Will you pray with all your power, while we try to preach the Word?
All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down;
Brethren, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.

Note: We welcome the families with children sitting in the rear of the sanctuary to come forward and find seating in the front of the church, so that the children may observe the Celebration of Holy Communion.

Note: If able, the Congregation should please stand for the Offertory Hymn.

***Offertory Hymn:** *Doxology* *OLD HUNDRETH*

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Recognizing that the Lord Jesus Christ has made peace between us and God through his redeeming work, we each declare that peace to one another, and the peace among us as redeemed people. This celebrates the community we have through our faith in God.

During this time of Prayer, we bring the needs of the world, our church, and the members and friends of our congregation to God in prayer. The congregation is encouraged to share their prayers both aloud and silently. Typically an Elder, as one of the shepherds of the congregation, leads the prayer. The Lord's Prayer is how Jesus commanded his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:9-13). It unites all Christian churches, though the precise wording varies somewhat for historical reasons.

The second Scripture Reading likewise supports the Worship Theme and the sermon. Typically the three readings are chosen from different portions of the canon of Scripture (Psalm, Gospel, other Old Testament, other New Testament), to ensure we are fed a "balanced diet" of God's written Word.

During this time in the Worship Service, the person preaching shares what God has laid on his or her heart with the congregation. The Worship Theme comes alive during this time of preaching from God's written Word, the Bible.

Each week (or whenever possible) we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion in response to the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a time of reflection on the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord, and a time of recommitment to living lives dedicated to serving Him and His Kingdom.

The ordained minister celebrating Holy Communion invites all who have received Jesus as Savior to join in celebrating this Sacrament.

The offertory, the tithes and offerings, and the doxology are all included in the celebration of Holy Communion. This is not "compensating" God or the church for the sermon or the sacrament. Instead, we dedicate a portion of the fruit of our labors, for holy use. This dignifies the work that do during the week, and points our hearts to God the Creator and Sustainer.

In the Old Testament, people brought various kinds of oil, grain, wine and meat to share with God, the priests, and the poor. In the early church, the sacrament was a meal, food and other in-kind gifts were brought to the communion table for the sacrament, and then deacons distributed the rest to the poor.

As the usher brings the Offering plate to the Communion Table, the congregation sings this song of praise to God, acknowledging our privilege of sharing with Him our tithes, offerings, and love gifts.

Note: The Congregation should please remain standing, if able to do so.

***Offertory Prayer** Rev. Giffone

This Prayer dedicates the tithes, offerings, and love gifts to the service of Christ and His Kingdom and reminds us of the joy we should feel in giving back to God a portion of what He has given to us.

Note: The Congregation may please be seated.

Communion Opening Prayer and Words of Institution Rev. Giffone

The ordained minister celebrating the Sacrament offers a prayer of thanksgiving and shares from God’s written Word a passage that reminds the congregation of the importance of this act of remembrance.

Distribution of the Bread: *The body of Christ, broken for you.*

As you pass the bread, please say to the next person:
“**The body of Christ, broken for you.**”

Upon receipt of the bread, please hold it until all have been served, so that we can partake of the bread together, as a sign of our oneness in Christ and membership in His corporate body—the Christian Church.

The Elements of the Sacrament of Holy Communion consist of the gluten-free wafers of unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice. These common substances represent the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. By partaking of these Elements, we remember the sacrifice of God’s Son on the cross of Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus paid the price in our behalf. Unlike some fellow Christians, we do not believe that the Elements are transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ. By passing the Elements from congregation member to congregation member, and by saying the appropriate phrase as the Elements are passed, we recognize our oneness as brothers and sisters in Christ and after receiving each Element, we partake of that Element together.

Distribution of the Cup: *The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

As you pass the cup, please say to the next person:
“**The blood of Christ, shed for you.**”

Upon receipt of the cup, please hold it until all have been served, so that we can partake of the cup together, as a sign of our oneness in Christ and membership in His corporate body—the Christian Church.

Note: This is not a distinctly Reformed practice, nor is it the only practice of communion in Reformed churches. Other common practices include: processing forward to receive from elders; common cup; intinction (dipping bread in wine/juice).

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Please use the baskets we have provided in alternate rows for disposal of the used communion cups

Prayer following Communion Rev. Giffone

The ordained minister celebrating the Sacrament offers a prayer of thanksgiving, usually pointing to the intended effect of the Sacrament in the life of each believer: sanctification, and mission.

Note: If able, the Congregation should please remain standing for the Hymn.

***Hymn No. 7:**

From All That Dwells below the Skies DUKE STREET

The final Hymn reminds us of what we have learned throughout the entirety of the Worship Service regarding the Worship Theme and how it relates to our lives. This Hymn often contains words of commitment that will encourage us throughout the week ahead.

Note: The Congregation should please remain standing, if able to do so.

***Benediction** Rev. Giffone

The Benediction is a pronouncement of peace from God’s written Word for the congregation and a reminder that, in each day that lies ahead, we rely on God to lead us and guide us as we seek to be obedient to Him. After the benediction, the pastor typically recesses (walks down the aisle) to lead the congregation symbolically forth into the world (and to greet people as they leave the sanctuary, especially visitors).

Note: At the conclusion of the Benediction, the Congregation is dismissed.

Postlude: *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above* arr. Hopson

* Congregation should please stand, if you are able to do so

The Worship Service concludes with a Postlude, to serve as a joyful encouragement as the congregation goes out for the week ahead.



After the Worship Service

We invite you to join us for a time of fellowship with coffee and cookies after the Worship Service in the rear of the sanctuary.

If you have any special needs in your life and you wish to have a time of personal prayer, please speak to Pastor Benj or to one of our Ruling Elders— Robert LeSuer, James Stahl, or Amy Stearns—and he or she will arrange for someone to meet with you today and pray with you.

The fellowship of the saints is one of the four means of grace, along with prayer/singing, Scripture, and the Sacraments.

Monthly Prayer Focus

During February, the Prayer Focus will be on the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) and the three staffers that Redeemer supported during 2024. CCO is on 86 campuses across the country, sharing the Gospel with college students. They teach a vision for serving Jesus Christ in all of life: in their studies, jobs, communities, and families. Please pray:

- For a successful Jubilee conference, scheduled for February 21-23, 2025. This is an annual gathering in Pittsburgh of students from across the country. They will attend worship services and listen to inspirational speeches and fellowship with other students during the weekend.
- For Sandy Starr Everhart and her ministry at Penn West University-Edinboro, particularly her relationship with the women’s basketball team.
- For Sam Van Eman and his leadership. Sam’s primary work involves creating and facilitating transformative opportunities for college students.
- For Ray Wiesen and his ministry at Penn State Abington campus. Ray was in the group of students from Edinboro, who worshipped with us while we rented space at St. Matthews Lutheran Church.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

The Session has issued a call for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation immediately following the 11:15 a.m. regular Worship Service on **Sunday, February 16, 2025**, for the purpose of conducting such business as required by the ByLaws of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (EPC), including the election of a Ruling Elder, election of the Members-at-Large of the Nominating Committee, and a presentation of the Session-approved 2025 Budget.

Nominations for Office

At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, scheduled for Sunday, February 16, 2025, the Nominating Committee will present the following Session-approved nominees for office:

Ruling Elder (Class of 2028): Zachary Harvey

Nominating Committee Members-at-Large (Class of 2026):

Jennifer Pontzer, Joshua Stearns, and Matthew Steinkirchner

“Souper Bowl of Caring”



On **Sunday, February 9, 2025**, we will collect monetary donations to benefit the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania.

The money collected will provide food to those in need within the eleven counties of northwest Pennsylvania.

Sermon Notes

Pastor:Rev. Benjamin D. Giffone, PhD
Minister of Music and Worship: Thomas Brooks
Accompanist:Shirley Wilson

To contact the church, please send an email to the following address:
info@rpcerie.org

To contact Pastor Benj, please send him an email at: **pastor@rpcerie.org**
Or, please call or text him at: **724-221-2595**