

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Eagles’ Bi-Weekly Bible Study • Wednesday

The bi-weekly Eagles Bible Study will meet this Wednesday, January 10th, at 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m in the lower level of the church. For more information, see Bob Sidor or Dominic Mattioni.

Eagles Gathering • January 19

Our Eagles ministry for seniors will gather on Friday, January 19, at 10:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Law enforcement officer Kevin Pierce returns to sing hymns, praise songs and oldies! Come enjoy a catered breakfast beforehand! We need a count, so please sign up in the narthex or contact Bob Sidor (bob.sidor@gmail.com). There will be a free will offering for Kevin.

Women’s Retreat 2024 • February 9-10

Do you ever feel driven and tossed about by the winds of this world? Or by the challenges you face day to day with relationships, health, work, or family concerns?

As Christians, we have a strong and sure anchor: Our Savior Jesus Christ. What does it mean to you that “the Lord takes thought of you” (Ps. 40:17)? Being found in Christ should be our greatest comfort and source of strength; but we can get distracted so easily, and drift from resting in the many promises and blessings God has given us.

If we are found in Christ as His children, we are safe and secure — even if we don’t always feel that way. No matter what storm we might be facing, we can be confident that God is in the storm with us, working His purposes for His glory and our good.

Women, join us for our women’s retreat *Courage in Christ | Facing the Trials and Confusion of Our Day in Faith* on February 9-10 at the Traber Center at Camp Sankanac | Spring City, PA. Register at proclamation.org/womensretreat. Registration closes January 28. Contact Lisa DiGiacomo at DiGiacomofamily5@gmail.com or 302-562-5645 with questions or more information.

Important Church Notifications

All emergency notifications from the church, such as the cancelation of morning or evening services due to inclement weather, are sent through the Proclamation App. To be sure that you do not miss these important announcements, download the app and make sure notifications are turned on. You may download the app on either your phone or tablet. To permit your notifications from the app: Open the app > tap the upper right button > scroll down to app settings > turn on notifications (“general” is the most important). If you have any questions, please speak with Henry Oestreich. *Note:* All users—due to an app refresh, you may need to refresh your notification permissions. If you’ve had the app for a while, even if you have permitted notifications, please make sure they are still permitted.

The diaconal Compassion Committee provides counseling as well as financial and material assistance to those in need, in the spirit of Christ’s compassion to his people and the world. Committee members are Chris Cooper (chair), Jeff Firges, Lauren Leisner, Tina Simon, Susan Wambua, and Virginia Spykerman. Their contact information is in the church directory. If you need help or know someone who does, contact any member of the committee. If you are interested in serving on the committee, contact Chris Cooper. Financial contributions to the Compassion Fund may be made as a designated gift; please designate “Compassion Fund” on your check or with your online donation.

CHRISTMAS HYMN DEVOTIONAL

Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

Words by Reginald Heber

If you ask the average reader about a book or poem’s literary theme, they might summarize events that transpired in the literature. For example, Heber’s *Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning* includes several events or topics, including light, angelic adoration, the infant Christ, and worshipful gift giving. However, a theme is not the summary of the literature’s content, but rather what the literature says *about* its content. So what is the theme of this hymn?

Notice how Heber uses extreme contrasts. Stanza 1 shows the brightness of a burning star and the darkness of night as well as the high position of the heavens and low position of the Redeemer’s bed. Stanza 2 notes the earthly position of dew and the high realm of angels, the carnality of beasts and the heavenliness of angels, and the relational gap between the Maker and all his creation.

But stanzas 3 and 4 help us understand the poem’s theme by not so readily suggesting an expected contrast. Heber describes luxurious commodities at length; yet he does not immediately suggest a contrasting “lowly” gift. Rather, at the words “vainly,” we see him redirect our attention to the purpose of the gift giving.

You see, the hymn’s theme is less about contrast as it is about distance and means of travel. Not only does Heber identify distant entities early in the hymn, he does it against the contextual backdrop of the Christmas star that brought the Magi to Jesus. Thus, Heber ultimately addresses the relational distance between us and God and how we might draw near to him.

That is why we are not suggested to offer a commodity more modest than gold, gems, and myrrh. Even a modest commodity is empty; there is no commodity that can earn God’s favor. Rather, our closeness to the Lord is most acutely felt when we recognize that we have nothing to offer. Christ values this humility and poorness of spirit (Ps. 51:17, Mt. 5:3-6). Though he was the one high and lifted up (Is. 57:15), he exalts those who turn to him in humility (Lk. 18:14; James 4:10).

With this in view, perhaps the most precious of lines in this hymn is this: “Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.” Prayer is a means of God’s grace by which we can “taste and see that the Lord is good.” (Ps. 34:8). He loves when we turn to him and confess our spiritual poverty. Not only does he abound with steadfast love (Joel 2:13), he *delights* in showing it (Mic. 7:18). Dear to God are your prayers. Draw near to him, and he will draw near to you (Jm. 4:8). — *Ryan Kelly*



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PROCLAMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

278 S. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010 | (610) 520-9500 | proclamation.org



PROCLAMATION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

Sunday, January 7th, 2024



MORNING WORSHIP

January 7th, 2024
10:30 a.m.

Rev. Ben Falconer, *preaching*
Rev. Ken Wendland, *assisting*

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*
— Lamentation 3:22-23

PRELUDE Luke Falconer and Joshua Falconer, *piano*
Selections from *Christmas Hymn Duets*
arr. Phillip Keveren

WELCOME Rev. Ben Falconer, *senior pastor*

CHORAL INTROIT Chancel Choir
Now to the Lord Sing Praises
John Rutter

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place, and with true love
and brotherhood each other now embrace; this holy tide of Christmas doth
bring redeeming grace, O tidings of comfort and joy.

CALL TO WORSHIP* Psalm 113:1-3

INVOCATION*

HYMN N° 214* Angels We Have Heard on High

* Please stand.

DECLARATION OF FAITH* Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by
the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The
third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is
seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will
come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life
everlasting. Amen. **Universal*

CONFESSION OF SIN 1 John 3:16-18

ASSURANCE OF PARDON Romans 10:12-13

*At this time we would encourage you to record your attendance with us in the blue attendance pads.
Visitors, please consider filling out our connect card on the church app.*

OFFERTORY Chancel Choir
Blessed Are the Pure in Heart
H. Walford Davies

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God: the secret of the
Lord is theirs, their soul is Christ’s abode. Still to the lowly soul he doth
himself impart, and for his cradle and his throne chooseth the pure in heart.
— *John Keble*

SCRIPTURE READING* Paul Wik, *elder*
Matthew 2:1-12, *pg. 807*

*We offer a Children’s Church curriculum designed for pre-readers ages 4-6 in Room 147.
Children are welcome to participate at this time in Room 147.*

HYMN N° 206* Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning

PASTORAL PRAYER

SERMON Rev. Ben Falconer, *senior pastor*
Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt...Again
Genesis 43, *pg. 36*

HYMN N° 213* What Child Is This

COMMUNION Caleb Cuzzo, *violin*
Joshua Cuzzo, *cello*

Amazing Grace
arr. Evelyn Larter

*Communion elements are distributed in nested cups.
A gluten-free wafer is in the cup beneath the juice.*

HYMN N° 226* As with Gladness Men of Old

BENEDICTION*

POSTLUDE Dr. Ryan Kelly, *organ*



*After the service, take a moment to greet those around you; especially those you may not know.
We want to welcome everyone with the love of Christ and the grace of the Spirit, in the name of the Lord.*

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Paul Wik will be available to pray with you
at the front right of the sanctuary.

Betsy Kotanchik and Carole Tolbert will be available to pray with women
at the front left of the sanctuary.

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Join us tonight at 5:00 p.m. for our Evening Worship Service
Regard Masters as Worthy of Honor
1 Timothy 6:1-2