

**Welcome to
Crestholme Presbyterian Church
6th Sunday after the Epiphany
February 13, 2022**

At the *, please stand, if you are able.
Large Print Hymnals, Bibles, and Hearing Assist Devices are available upon request.

Gather for Worship

PRELUDE **"Praise Be to God in the Highest Throne"** **E. Pepping**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjxjwBoI2Go>

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP **"Thank You Lord"** **Choir**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nsURDc9x3I>

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

All: The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star!

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done

All: The peoples who live in the shadows see a glorious light!

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

All: The Christ who embodies the Word unveils the hidden plan, making us joint heirs of the promise of salvation through the gospel!

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord.

All: For God has done wondrous things!

OPENING PRAYER

Light of Christ, awaken us this hour to the glory of your presence in our midst. Shine among us in such a way that the darkness without and within may be pushed back, such that we might truly see what is really real. Help us to recognize our sin for what it is. Enable us to behold the world as you created it to be, as you created us to be. Empower us to move from darkness to light, from sin to new life. May your light within us shine through into worship this day, as all days. This we pray in the name of the Word made flesh, the light which is the light of all people. Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*** OPENING HYMN** **"We Praise Thee, O God, Our Redeemer"** **Red Hymnal #68**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXHmt85mbcQ>

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, when we trust in you, we are like trees planted by water, sending out our roots into the streams. But when we fail to trust in you, we are like shrubs in the desert, parched and fragile. Forgive us for the moments when we've trusted everything but you and your steadfast mercy. Gift us with the courage to follow you and trust in your providence. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

As the man with leprosy, considered unclean by society, was made clean by a touch and a word from Jesus, so we are cleansed from all unrighteousness through belief in him. Friends, believe and live the good news: In Jesus Christ we are loved, we are cleansed, we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

*** GLORIA PATRI**

Blue Hymnal #579

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUBxpypSblw>

*** SHARE THE PEACE OF CHRIST (From your seats, please)**

Leader: Peace be with you!

All: And also with you!

Leader: As God's forgiven people, share the peace of Christ with each other.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Blessing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tRGOs8m7oc>

Hear the Word of God

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Come, Gracious Spirit, and gift us with your wisdom that we might be guided to those places God is calling us to be. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 17: 5-10

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2017%3A5-10&version=NIV>

SECOND READING

Psalms 1

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+1&version=NIV>

CHORAL ANTHEM

"Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All"

Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FAF4kLKivk>

The anthem sung today was the first anthem sung under Robin's direction 45 years ago! "Congratulations Robin, and Thank You for sharing your talents with us."

NEW TESTAMENT READING

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2015%3A12-20&version=NIV>

GOSPEL READING

Luke 5: 17-26

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+5%3A+17-26&version=NIV>

SERMON

"Wisdom and Understanding"
Written by Michael Toy

Fred Archer

There's a piece of folk wisdom passed down each generation from violin teachers to violin students that when a string instrument is played well, the instrument itself improves. This bit of lore extends not just to violins, but to all string instruments, including the cello, upright bass, and viola. Luthiers, those who make stringed instruments, when pressed, will admit that there is no conclusive double-blind experiment evidence to support this theory. Part of the problem in gathering this evidence is the difficulty in creating an experiment that is truly double-blind. Thus, while there is no real evidence in the affirmative, there is also no real evidence that this folk wisdom is not true. And so with this paucity of proof in either direction, the myth persists. What the musicians and luthiers have identified is the truth that there is more to reality than can be measured or quantified. Just because these phenomena are unmeasurable does not mean they are unobservable or any less real in shaping our physical, material reality. So it is with our faith, as we see in the readings for today.

We have forayed almost two full months into the new year, journeying on in the wake of the feast of Epiphany—that day Christians celebrate the revelation of the Divine made manifest among humanity in Jesus Christ. And in today's readings, we are reminded that there are things beyond what we can understand in this world.

The prophet Jeremiah speaks forcibly, "Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord." To rely on human strength, the efforts of us mere mortals, is not only foolish but accursed, according to the weeping prophet. The author continues by extolling those who trust in God, yet the passage reaches its full crescendo with condemnation of the human heart. "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it?" Human intentions, human efforts, human doings can only lead us so far. Indeed, even the human heart—human compassion, human empathy—is bound by limits at best and susceptible to artifice at worst. Faith demands we reach out beyond what we can feel, perceive, or even know. Faith demands we reach out to God.

The epistle reading for the day leads us further down this road of trust in something beyond what we can comprehend. Paul, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, writes of the absolute necessity of the Resurrection. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." These words are meant as words of comfort to the first-century Christian community, but to many readers today, a belief in the physical and bodily resurrection can present itself as a stumbling block. What does this mean? Does this mean that we must believe in the exact cosmology and metaphysical system of the first-century Christians? Does this mean we cannot be Christians if we do not hold onto this cosmology? How can that possibly be relevant to our lives in the 21st century?

When we ask questions about the relevance of Scripture to our own lives, we are often asking: what is the relevance of a transcendent divinity to our own human lives? How are these ancient words written millennia ago applicable to my situation today? Our reverence for humanism and scientific progress can cloud our ability to lean into these words about a God beyond our understanding. That human actions can only lead us so far seems like a beautiful saying. But what does this mean in actuality? How does a Christian today live this out?

Similarly, the belief in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is something that we affirm regularly in the creed, but what does this belief mean for our daily lives? While most contemporary Christian theologians have moved through and beyond the miracle-denying cosmologies of the likes of Schleiermacher, Strauss, and Schweitzer, our theologies around the resurrection have remained relatively muted.

Andrew Root, contemporary theologian and author, writes that Christianity in a secular age moves from seeing faith as relevant to something that is resonant. For Root, relevance is about transferring content. Resonance, on the other hand, is about a feeling or experience. While certainly there is much to be learned *about* God from Scripture, the beauty of the Christian faith is that it's not just about intellectual stimulation—indeed, although some would feel safer if that were the case!

The mystery of our faith is not just that the words of the Scriptures apply today to our situation here, across vast centuries of time and thousands of miles of space. Among the mysteries of faith is that, through these words, we can still encounter the divine. Consider our analogy from the world of music.

Why do musicians insist that playing an instrument well improves the instrument? It could be that the instruments that already sound good get played more, and any noted improvement is just the natural improvement any well-crafted instrument would develop with age. Or similarly, it could be a survival-of-the-fittest situation, in which only the good-sounding instruments survive to be played much at all. Or, perhaps, it could indeed be that there is something about the resonance, the echoes, and the harmonics that improve a physical instrument's tone and sound quality. In other words, it could be that the encounter between musician and instrument creates a resonance that enriches the material of the instrument itself.

The mystery of our Christian faith is at times much like the mystery of the well-played violin. When we read Scripture, we certainly do look for things that are relevant to our lives. But we also bask in the encounter with the divine, having faith that God meets us in the reading of the holy words. It is this encounter with the divine that gave life to the faith of the mystics like Hildegard, Julian, and Teresa. The readings then become less about mining for nuggets of applicable wisdom, and more about looking and listening for resonance with the beauty we find in our lives, in the world, and in each other.

Let us turn now to that great sermon from the gospel text for the day. The Beatitudes, as these statements are known, are the subject of a long theological debate. On the one hand are those who argue that the sayings are descriptive—they are meant to affirm that those who are of lowly station in life now will be exalted in the Kingdom of God. On the other hand are those who claim that they are prescriptive. This view maintains that Jesus is saying that all his followers should be poor, sacrificing to the point of hunger, and weeping over the mournful events occurring in one's community and around the world.

Certainly, these are important theological debates to consider. But when we read for resonance, rather than relevance, new questions, thoughts, and ideas arise from the passage. Instead of, "How does this passage apply to me?" or "Are these or aren't these relevant to me?" the question becomes, "How does this passage resonate with my encounters with God?"

In this hermeneutic, Paul's words about the centrality of resurrection guide us to consider where we see Jesus' resurrection echo and harmonize with our experiences, our histories, and

* **HYMN FOR OUR NATION**

"Heal Our Land"

Red Hymnal #800

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-r0_zVDdTjU

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us gather together in prayer firm in the knowledge and with faith that wherever we are gathered in Christ's name God will hear and respond to our prayers.

Thankful for the diversity and magnificence of what we see, hear and touch each day within our world we pray for peace particularly in the Middle East where conflict is ongoing and difficult to resolve. We pray for Christians living and working in these areas often away from their families as they with love provide practical, pastoral and spiritual support whilst engaging in dialogue to encourage peaceful solutions.

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Let us pray for all leaders in politics, business, education, social services and health that they may as a new year begins lead with honesty, integrity and compassion and be given the courage to stand up for justice. We pray for all church leaders that they may be able to be involved and supportive of others who lead within our communities.

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Let us pray for strength wisdom and commitment in discerning the will of God in our lives. May we be prepared to follow wherever we may be required to go and do on our Christian journey. We pray that God will always be central in all our decisions here at Crestholme.

We pray for understanding and acceptance amongst all Christians. May we be encouraged to build bridges and overcome differences in seeking ways to be as one voice within the communities in which we live, work, and worship.

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for our relationships with our family, friends, neighbors and colleagues that we will always be honest and open, able to listen to the needs of others, respond to that need, and forgive and accept forgiveness easily overcoming difficulties and strengthening all relationships.

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Let us pray for all children. We think especially of all those children left homeless and without parents due to war, violence, natural disasters, poverty and illness both here in the USA where children daily become the victims of violence and poverty and in the developed and the developing countries of the world. May God ease the suffering of all children and bring hope through the agencies working to improve their health and wellbeing. Let us pray for the safe keeping of all children throughout the holiday period. May they enjoy the summer - able to engage in the many activities and events held within our communities.

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Let us pray for the elderly, the frail, the lonely, and all those in our hospices or hospitals terminally ill. We pray for all those affected by depression and other mental health illnesses knowing that this time of year can be very difficult,

Especially praying for those who have thoughts of suicide, and those struggling with drug or alcohol addiction. May help be available whenever and wherever it is sought.

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Let us pray for those who have died recently and for family and friends who mourn their loss. We pray for those who have died unexpectedly in accidents both on our roads and at our

beaches. We pray for the many who have experienced a first Christmas without a loved one. May the memories of the past be of comfort to them?

Lord in Your Mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Let us pray in silence those concerns closest to our hearts whilst being thankful that our faith brings us closer to the unconditional love and grace of God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

May we on our journeys always see the light to show us the way.

Let us now conclude our time of prayer with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive those our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

* **CLOSING HYMN** **"Take the Name of Jesus with You"** **Red Hymnal #235**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWJycJx-1Co>

* **BENEDICTION**

The night has gone and the Light has come! May the light of the Bethlehem star, the wisdom of the Magi, and the hope that the Christ Child brings be with you always. Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ and walk in his light.

Thanks be to God.

The End of Today's Worship Service – The Beginning of Service

Announcements

Welcome to worship with us this morning! We're glad that you're here! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to become a part of our compassionate church family... ask Carlos or an Elder about meaningful participation and membership!

Next Sunday Dr. Carlos Baladez will present his next sermon in the series, "Knowing God by Name."

Weekly Calendar

TBD	TBD	Food Pantry
TBD	TBD	Clothes Closet
Sunday	10:00 AM	Sunday School
Sunday	11:00 Am	Worship Service

Holy Communion is observed the First Sunday of each month.

Crestholme Presbyterian Church Officers

Session

<u>Class of 2022</u>	<u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Class of 2024</u>
Irene Thomas	Katie Lamb	Netsy Williamson
Steve Tovar		

Clerk of the Session: Dick Crist
Church Treasurer: Fred Archer

Trustees

<u>Class of 2022</u>	<u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Class of 2024</u>
Fred Archer	Tommy Rudwick	Penny Christoff

Crestholme Presbyterian Church Staff

Stated Supply Minister	Vacant
Pulpit Supply Preachers	Dr. Carlos Baladez
	Elder Fred Archer
Choir Director	Robin Bernhard
Organist	Cathie Owen
Secretary/Coordinator	Vacant

Membership in the Presbyterian Church is open to those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Every member and officer will be more than happy to visit with you about salvation by faith in Jesus and membership at Crestholme.

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