



Princeville Presbyterian Church

DECEMBER 2018

When I was younger, hardier, more reckless about my well-being, and thought myself (wrongly) as being adventurous, I would backpack the southern Moraine trail twice a year. The southern Moraine is a serpentine trail that runs generally north and south just west of Milwaukee. I could give a rambling account of various adventures describing exhausting-20-mile stretches under the furnace of a mid-summer sun or raccoons scratching at my tent in the middle of moonless nights or how I made a fool of myself while sharing a shelter with a couple unknown campers on a rainy evening, but something more ordinary and more stunning asks to be set out.

One could hardly consider the rising of the sun as anything unusual because it happens every morning - sometimes behind clouds or peeking through mist and at other times in sheer naked glory fully exposed in brilliance, might and birdsong. But there was one morning when it wasn't rising fast enough. I hadn't slept well. The night was unusually cool and the air unusually wet so that dew settled on my head during the night, and I was chilled. Sitting up in my sleeping bag, I faced the ridge to the east and pleaded for the dawn. I just wanted to collect some firewood so I could start a fire for coffee and breakfast and coffee (yes . . . I really said that twice). Everything around me was silhouetted forming the recognizable shapes of trees and rocks, but also fabricating, in the pre-dawn, creatures of imagination that could be moving but probably weren't.

The sky slowly paled from nearly black to faded gray-blue as I nodded into my arms hoping to cat-nap just a bit more. I looked up again surprised into alertness by pink shafts of light stretching up into a bluing sky fully reminiscent of "rosy-fingered dawns" seen by Odysseus on the Aegean . . . and they were slowly moving and shifting as the body of the sun pushed up to the margin of the earth. It was as though I was seeing morning for the first time. Everything around was becoming clearer and more detailed, no longer ominous silhouettes of forest monsters but identifiable friends such as beech and birch and pine. Flowers gradually appeared almost stepping forward out of late night's grey hues making a shy display of their peculiar beauty.

I rested my head on my arms for a few moments more before making the effort to build a fire - and then the sun

December Events

- 1st – Men of Iron
- 2nd – Communion
Hanging of the Greens
- 5th/19th – AWANA
- 6th/20th – Food Pantry
- 16th – Sister Christmas
- 24th – Candlelight Service

broke over the horizon. That first beam of morning light caressed my forehead with warmth that - Ah! - filled my whole body. I looked up to let the light warm my face. Just to the left, the light tangled in a spider web suspended between stalks of fresh green grass, the dew on the strands transformed into a diamond necklace. Dewdrops sparkled everywhere ornamenting common shrubs and grasses as though it was Christmas morning. Light flashed through the twitching ears of a baby rabbit, and a Jay in brilliant reflective azure darted back and forth announcing Helios' arrival.

LIGHT! What a mystery! We know that it is energy, but we don't know exactly what it is, we just have an idea of what it does. Without it our world is a black blob. Every "day" would be boringly the same. We would have to feel the shape of one another's face but we'd never see the color of eyes and lips and hair.

We need light. It gives us food (photosynthesis), ease of breathing (water vapor), heat for our homes (energy captured in wood and other burnables), fiber for our clothes (cotton), Vitamin D, let alone the means by which we navigate through life. Light can touch us, but we cannot keep it or grab it or hold onto it. Oh, certainly we can cause things to release light, but we ourselves can't make light (which makes fireflies so fascinating!). We can only make things that will conveniently produce light for our use. Light remains a mighty mystery as well as a profound need.

The fact is, we don't actually see light – we see the light source, and we see the things that reflect light, but light itself isn't seen. Its presence is perceived by the illumination of things around us.

It was Divine genius that made light first. It is ongoing Divine artistry that uses light ALL THE TIME to beautify and mesmerize – in sunrises, sunsets, storms, meteorites, reflective phases of the moon, stars, aurora borealis, reflective flashes off ocean waves or snowflakes, rainbows, the sparkle in another person's eyes and a thousand thousand other things.

How could we not respond in great wonder, love and worship when we are told of the Lord Jesus Christ, "*In him was life, and the life was **the light of men***" (John 1:4)? When we reflect even briefly on our daily need of light and how pervasive it is enabling us to engage the world in wonder, it should give us great pause to know that physical light (if indeed it is physical) is but an earthly emblem of our need and source of spiritual light.

Yet is it an emblem only? Is it possible that the only real light we have is God himself – that the Lord God illumines the world we look at every day? Poet John Milton in *Paradise Lost* suggests as much when he writes,

Since God is Light
and never but in unapproached light dwelt from eternity,
dwelt then in thee bright effluence
of bright essence increate.

Milton's thought captures well the Bible's expression of what we may see as we stand before the throne of Grace or in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

God is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings
and Lord of lords,
who alone has immortality, **who dwells in
unapproachable light,**
whom no one has ever seen or can see.
1 Timothy 6:15-16

And night will be no more. They will need no light of
lamp or sun,
for **the Lord God will be their light . . .**
Revelation 22:5

Some would claim that this is mere metaphor . . . but I wonder . . . For now, anyway, I offer this encouragement. Whether seen in the pastels of morning or evening, or in the prism of a drop of water, the tail of a lightning bug, glittering rivers, a candle or the lights on a Christmas tree, wherever we see light may it move us to rejoice in the True Light who comes to us in the flesh - our Lord Jesus.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was
coming into the world.
John 1:9

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has
shone in our hearts
**to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God
in the face of Jesus Christ.**
2 Corinthians 4:6

As long as I am in the world, **I am the light of the
world."**
John 9:5

Merry Christmas!
Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ,

Chris



Come And Celebrate the Birth of Christ and His Pure Holiness

*Sister Christmas 2018
December 16th 5-8 pm*

*Please bring a wrapped gift for the exchange and a side dish or dessert to share.
The night will include:
Dinner (Ham, Turkey, and Au Gratin Potatoes Provided)
Devotion
Games/Craft
Gift Exchange*

©craedingshort.com

The real Saint Nick

What if a young Christian comes to you and asks if Santa Claus is real? Is your response, "Of course he's not real! He's just made up to sell stuff at Christmas! We have to focus on Jesus during this time of year." This was the hard line taken in my home in earlier years, but I admit it has softened considerably since I learned that there was a real Saint Nick.

Nicholas of Myra (c. 288—354), was a fourth century pastor, who was the model of graciousness, generosity, and Christian charity.

Not much is known of his childhood, but indicators are he was probably born to wealthy parents at Patara in Lycia, a Roman province of Asia Minor. As a young man he was noted for his piety, judiciousness, and charity, and so he was chosen bishop of Myra (southern Turkey along Mediterranean coast.) Myra was at that time a rundown district. There he gained a renown for his personal holiness, evangelistic zeal, and pastoral compassion.

He was diligent about his charitable work on behalf of the poor, the despised, and the rejected. While much of his history has been distorted by legend and lore over the centuries, it is evident that he was a champion of the downtrodden, bestowing upon them gifts as



Leadership Transition

January 1st, 2019 will mark a new milestone in the life of the Women's Ministry. It is with great joy (and tears) that I step back as the coordinator and hand the position over to Teresa Snodgrass. Teresa has been a faithful member of the Leadership Team from the beginning and has grown and flourished in her knowledge, her faith, and her love and passion for the Word of the Lord. Her commitment to the Gospel is profound and she has a desire to see women grow up in their faith and seek the face of the Lord.

With the help of Pastor Baker and the approval of the Session, Teresa and I were able to create a Women's Ministry Policy. This is something that has always been in the back of our minds, but moving forward, needed to be solidified and available for all to have.

You may not even know, but there is a lot of work involved in coordinating the ministry and making sure that the focus is always the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a constant commitment to study and prayer. The hearts and minds of all who come to study are at stake and we cannot take lightly the teaching that we are doing. The women's ministry is under the authority of the Session but even more importantly, under the authority of God. Teresa understands this authority well and takes great comfort (as I always have) that the Session helps the ministry to stay Gospel-Focused.

As Teresa transitions into this role, would you please keep her in your prayers? Lift her up and thank her for her service to the Lord and the Church. Encourage her when things get tough and seek to love her well. If you have not been engaged in the women's ministry before, consider joining the Bible study on Tuesday nights (there will not be a Monday study any more). Join together and grow alongside your Sisters in Christ. Come and learn the language of discipleship!

Thank you so much for your support these last 5 years as I have sought to teach and help the women of this church (and beyond) to grow in their knowledge and love of the Lord. This has been truly a time of growing, stretching, and serving. I have been changed by the studies we have done and by the sharing of lives with my Sisters. You all have seen me through some tough challenges and have remained faithfully by my side as I sought to create a Gospel-Centered Women's Ministry here at Princeville Presbyterian. I can truly say that it has been an honor and a blessing to serve you all. May the Lord continue to bless you all as you seek His face!

Love in Christ,
Amanda Keighin~~

tokens of the grace and mercy of the Gospel.

One legend tells of how a citizen of Patara lost his fortune, and therefore he could not raise dowries for his three young daughters. Because of this, he was going to give them over to prostitution. After hearing this, Nicholas took a small bag of gold and threw it through the window of the man's house on the eve of the feast of Christ's Nativity. The eldest girl was married with it as her dowry. He performed the same gracious service for each of the other girls on succeeding nights.

Embellished or not, through accounts such as this Nicholas of Myra became the inspiration for Christians to begin the habit of gift-giving during each of the twelve days of Christmas from December 25 until Epiphany on January 6. His elevation to "sainthood" has been traced back as far as the 6th century to a church in Constantinople being dedicated to him.

Our popular cultural symbol of Santa Claus is a modernized, although secularized, version of St. Nicholas. Our present custom of Father Christmas or Sinterklaas (a Dutch variant of St. Nicholas gradually corrupted to "Santa Claus") delivering gifts, is based primarily on the Dutch custom of giving children presents. Through the centuries, various other traditions have become associated with the Feast of St. Nicholas and Christmas. Beginning in the middle ages, the season was marked by festively decorating homes and by a sumptuous feast that interrupted the general fasting of Advent. And notably in Scandinavia, Christmas was celebrated with a day of visitation, when the elders of all the remote country churches would bundle themselves in their thick furs and drive their sleighs laden with gift pastries through the snowy landscape to every home within the parish.

Such customs, rooted in history and Biblical expectations, have proven to be a reminder and an inducement to steer clear of the twin pitfalls of materialism (where we think our wealth is our security) and asceticism (where we believe that denying ourselves any pleasures is to be "truly spiritual".) Christmas traditions like those that revolve around the character of Nicholas of Myra may be abused by modern marketers and commercial concerns, but more significantly, they can also be powerful inducements to remember the things that matter most: doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly and joyfully with our God. They can be the means by which beauty, goodness, and truth come to prevail in our homes, our communities, and our land.

"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

Luke 2:29-32

Summary of Session work for November 2018

The session meeting opened with a devotion and prayer led by Pastor Chris Baker. In joint session with the deacons, the deacons discussed upcoming events: specifically the Community Thanksgiving service and dinner, and plans for Hanging of the Greens. The deacons also announced the decision to discontinue immediately the Saturday hours for the community pantry due since there was no participation from community. The deacons were then dismissed with thanks and prayer.

We then discussed and approved a Policy and Guidelines for the Women's ministry especially as it touched upon leadership. We also approved Teresa Snodgrass as next coordinator of Women's ministry effective January 1, 2019 understanding that she will transition with Amanda Keighin. Manse renovations were discussed and approved, and the work was released to Country Tradesman, confirming that the work is to be complete by February 1, 2019. We then carefully discussed and approved the remuneration package for the new Pastor pending his approval by the congregation at the upcoming candidate weekend. In particular we recognize the need to look at alternatives for health insurance plans because of his family's special needs. We discussed and approved the move to ChurchTrac accounting software, since the system we are presently using will be discontinued at the end of December. This move assumes transfer of records from previous years for history tracking. The Session also approved Pastor Baker to take vacation from Christmas to New Years. Finally, we prayed for the shepherding needs and spiritual growth of the congregation.

The next Session meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at 7:00 pm. As always, session meetings are open for congregational members to attend unless there are matters to be discussed that require the protection of personal reputation.

December 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Men of Iron @7am
2 Communion Hanging of the Greens @4pm	3 Prayer Group @ 9:30am W.O.W. @ 10:30am	4 W.O.W. @ 6pm	5 AWANA @ 6:15pm Prayer Service @ 6:30pm	6 Food Pantry @5pm	7	8
9	10 Prayer Group @ 9:30am W.O.W. @ 10:30am	11 W.O.W. @ 6pm Deacons @ 6:30pm Session @ 7pm	12 NO AWANA Prayer Service @ 6:30pm	13	14	15
16 Sister Christmas @ 5-8pm	17 Prayer Group @ 9:30am	18	19 AWANA @ 6:15pm Prayer Service @ 6:30pm	20 Food Pantry @5pm	21	22
23	24 Candlelight Service @7pm	25 Merry Christmas	26 NO AWANA Prayer Service @ 6:30pm	27	28	29

Prayer Warriors

Yess Family
Harwood Family
Heck Family
Carpenter Family
Church Elders & Deacons
W.O.W Ministry, Men of Iron Ministry
AWANA Ministry
Sunday School Teachers
Fellowship Team

Our Missionaries:
Jeff & Marilyn German
Paul & Elizabeth Branch

Birthdays

3rd – Rachel Williams
4th – Kathy German
12th – Eric Kuntz
Heather Bolton
19th – Robin Harwood

Anniversaries

19th – Ron & June Peterson

*“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those
with whom he is pleased!”
Luke 2:14”*