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ST LUKE JOY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



*Fall on your knees
Oh hear the angels voices
Oh night, devine, oh night
when Christ was born*





How to Expose the Idols in your Life

WRITTEN BY PASTOR LUKE JOHNSTON

Few stories in the Old Testament tend to make us feel more superior to the Israelites than the tale of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1–6. How backwards they must have been to think you could make a god out of metal! How silly to think bringing offerings to a statue would bring peace, joy, and happiness! The entire story is almost too absurd to believe.

Or at least, until we examine our own idols.

Imagine if the Israelites could see the idols we bow down before—cable-news shows on big-screen TVs, grades on a report card, acceptance on social media. They would likely find our idols even more ridiculous than we find their golden calf.

The reason idolatry is listed first in the Ten Commandments is because idolatry is always the reason we ever do anything wrong. As Tim Keller points out, “We never break the other commandments without breaking the first one.” The secret to change, then, is always to identify and dismantle the basic idols of the heart.

Dismantling our idols, however, is often difficult because we don’t want to expose them. We don’t want to admit—even to ourselves—that we’ve made an idol out of our politics, our work, our relationships, or our comfort. It’s easier to rationalize that they’re not really idols at all, merely good things we sometimes focus on too much.

Not everything that we love is an idol, of course; there is much in creation that we’ve been given for our enjoyment. We can appreciate the gifts of God without making them a replacement for him. But if they are the first things our mind turns to, then you may have identified a problem area.

Here are a few areas to examine in order to determine whether the “good things” in your life have replaced a good God.

- Examine your imagination. What do you daydream about? When your mind wanders, is it to material goods, like fishing boats and exotic vacations, or to intangible items, such as the fame of celebrity or the approval of your peers?






- Examine your attention. Consider the times you would rather be doing something else rather than practicing a spiritual discipline. What activity would you rather be doing instead? Are there one or more time-wasting activities you regularly turn to when to avoid engaging in more productive tasks?
- Examine your finances. Most of us have discretionary or disposable income, money left over after the bills have been paid. How do you spend your disposable income? For what material goods or services are you most likely to go into debt to finance?
- Examine your prayer life. How do you feel when God doesn't respond to your prayers in the way that you wanted? Do you trust that he knows best, or do you become angry and bitter? Have there been unanswered prayers that have made you doubt God's goodness or made you want to turn away from him?
- Examine your relationships. What person do you love the most? What person do you most want to please? Do you have friendships or romantic attachments that lead you away from God?
- Examine your emotions. What do you most fear? What do you most hope for? What are you most passionate about? What do you most desire? What makes you extremely angry or sad?
- Examine your concerns. What do you worry about? What makes you most anxious? What do you most fear losing?
- Examine your past and future. If you had a time machine and could travel into either the past or the future, what would you use it to change? What makes you nostalgic? What are your biggest regrets? What do you most want to happen in the future? What would cause you to despair if it didn't come to pass?

Use these questions to uncover deepest cravings and desires of your heart. Once you've identified a potential idol, consider whether you've put it ahead of or in place of God. Pray that he will help you become more aware of your idols, and that he'll lead you on the long, hard path of faithfulness.

Like the Israelites, we may have to accept the bitter consequences of our idolatry. But any price is worth paying if it helps us to turn back to the true worship of Jesus.





Report to the Congregation of the Session Meeting November 23, 2020

The session met via Zoom at 7:00pm. The following members were present: Pastor Luke Johnston, acting clerk Selina Garcia, Debbie Blackman, Pat Schoenrade, Kim Smedley, Al Steed, and Janice Stewart.

Pastor Luke opened the meeting with prayer.

Study

The session discussed their study of the book *Experiencing God*, Henry and Richard Blackaby. The focus this month was on “Doing God’s Will”, with a great reminder that “we don’t do things for God; we do things WITH God.”

Replant Planning

An update on where we are with the replanting efforts was then discussed. Pat Schoenrade shared connections she has made, and Pastor Luke reported that the Session of Colonial Presbyterian is excited about our replant as GlenHaven, and has indicated an interest in working along with us in support. After some discussion, the Elders voted to meet for some preliminary conversations with Elders from Colonial in early December to explore this partnering relationship. A tentative time line of our launch was discussed, with a celebration of our legacy and history and unveiling of the Honor Wall in mid to late April, a soft launch for our congregation soon after, and a community launch in the fall. The progression and control of Covid-19 will impact these plans and will be watched as we go forward.

Leadership

Training Pastor Luke and Pat have been reading a book called *The Shepherd Leader*, and shared a chart that breaks down the ministry of Elders in a very helpful way.

Elders were encouraged to keep it in our Bibles and we will be using the information as we go forward in our ministry.

Committee Reports

- Christian Education and Discipleship: (Janice Stewart and Al Steed)

The new Orange curriculum was utilized for the first time with new attendees for the Wednesday night Children’s program, and it went very well. Judy Teague has been using lessons in the nursery with the toddlers and they are enjoying it





Report to the Congregation of the Session Meeting - Continued

Makayla has been doing a great job with the youth, as well as helping to organize the education wing and assisting with outreach. The adult studies are small in attendance but powerful in impact on those participating. Several new people are participating, and it is hoped that God will supply the numbers as the virus threat decreases.

- Personnel and Placement: (Pat Schoenrade)

A policy for return of staff following Covid exposure or a positive test which includes submission of a negative test if infected and completion of a quarantine if exposed was shared. Additional volunteers to help with media are being recruited. Results of personnel meetings with the nursery coordinator, Choir Director, and organist were shared. Pastor Luke has requested vacation days for December 7-8 for his family's move to a new home, and December 27-30 were approved. The committee has decided to delay pursuing candidates for the Director of Children's Ministry position in light of current limitations resulting from Covid-19 restrictions until late winter or early spring.

- Mission and Outreach: (Pastor Luke)

The committee reviewed the ideas for incarnational mission projects and worked on a budget for 2021. Pastor Luke has been in communication with the Bubalos and the Keabes, EPC missionaries to Ethiopia.

- Worship and Prayer: (Debbie Blackman)

Advent and Christmas services and events are being planned as follows:

Decoration of the church November 28 at 10:00am

Adventful Celebration December 6 at 5:00pm

Service of Light December 16 at 6:00pm

Christmas Eve Service December 24 at 5:00pm

A new live stream was started on November 22 and kinks with the internet are being worked out. This will allow better access for viewers to the slides and improved sound quality. A rotation of Praise Team members has been started, and the choir has returned to practice and will perform monthly.





Report to the Congregation of the Session Meeting - Continued

- Building and Grounds: (Don Smith)

In Don's absence, Selina shared bids that were received for new custodial services, and the pros and cons of using a new service or staying with our current provider were discussed. A final recommendation will be made by the committee and voted on by the Session via email.

- Stewardship: (Kim Smedley)

A loss in the investment account was noted for this month due to market changes. Contributions were up slightly but below budgeted amounts. The Session reviewed the current budget and possible changes or adjustments for 2021. Elders shared their committee budget recommendations. Salaries for the two full-time employees (Pastor and Administrative Assistant) were discussed by the Session without those employees present. An updated budget will be presented by Kim for a vote by the Session at the December Session meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Submitted by Debra J. Blackman, Clerk of Session



LUKE 2:9-14 "AND, LO, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME UPON THEM, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM: AND THEY WERE SO AFRAID. AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, FEAR NOT: FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD. AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU; YE SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER. AND SUDDENLY THERE WAS WITH THE ANGEL A MULTITUDE OF THE HEAVENLY HOST PRAISING GOD, AND SAYING, GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."





Deacons



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY—The deacons invite you to help us stay in contact with members of the congregation. Do you regularly talk with members of our congregation? Would you be willing to commit to calling each person at least twice a month, and if needed, report any immediate needs to Pastor Luke or any deacon? Would you be willing to maintain confidential information that persons do not want shared? Would you be willing to submit a monthly report of your calls to the deacons? And most of all would you be willing to pray daily for your contact? If so, we need you! Contact Brenda Hunnicutt.



THANK YOU JUDY STRASBURG—Judy, St. Luke appreciates the last three years that you have served as a deacon. You were very dedicated and always willing to help in any way.
Much Appreciation, Your St. Luke Family



Poinsettias



If you would like to order poinsettias in honor of loved ones to decorate our sanctuary during Advent, there are forms available on the table in Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$8.00 per plant. You can also contact Debbie Blackman (816-225-3529 or dblackman4@gmail.com) or the church office to order plants. The deadline is December 4.

MATTHEW 1:21" AND SHE WILL BEAR A SON, AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS,
FOR IT IS HE WHO WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."





Special December Church Services

Services will be in person, however, you can still watch them from home because all services will be live streamed, you can view them on the St. Luke Joy Church Facebook page.



Adventful Night of Music

Please join us for a safe, joyous version of this annual event kicking off the season of Advent at our church on Sunday, December 6th at 5:00pm. We will enjoy an evening of music and readings as we await the coming of our Lord and Savior! Socially distanced seating will be available in the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, or you may enjoy it via live stream. Sadly, due to Covid restrictions, no desserts will be served this year.



Service of Light

Join us for a Service of Light on Wednesday, December 16th, at 6 pm. This service is a special time for healing, wholeness, and hope amid the dark nights of winter. During the advent season, we should remember that Light has come into the world! The service will provide a reverent time for healing, prayer, and anointing by our elders.



Christmas Eve

The Christmas Eve Service will begin at 5:00pm.





New Church Directory

An updated Church Directory will be available on December 13. One per family please.

2021 Contribution Envelopes

2021 Contribution Offering Envelopes will be placed on a table in the Fellowship Hall on December 13. The offering envelopes will look different this year. Each packet will include 52 envelopes, one for every week of the year. Please ensure you always write these 2 things on your offering envelope:

- Your name
- Current Expense/Deacons Fund/Team Table/ or Memorial Fund

If you don't remember your offering number, that's not a problem! All giving/offering numbers are tracked by name in our financial system.

Annual Review Reports

As we wrap up the 2020 year, it is once again time to draft reports . **DUE DATE: January 11, 2021**

Please send your 2020 Annual Review reports for: Ministry Teams, Deacons, & Boy/Cub Scouts to Selina via email. Call the office if you have questions.



MATTHEW 2:1-2" NOW WHEN JESUS WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA IN THE DAYS OF HEROD THE KING, BEHOLD, THERE CAME WISE MEN FROM THE EAST TO JERUSALEM, SAYING, WHERE IS HE THAT IS BORN KING OF THE JEWS? FOR WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST, AND ARE COME TO WORSHIP HIM.





Thank You!



Melissa Ball - For collecting, editing and preparing all Advent Devotionals and creating a booklet for all to read and enjoy! Great Work!



To all that came in last Saturday to decorate the church for the holiday season!

Christmas Giving

Rachel House Drive:

This year instead of Operation Christmas Child our outreach committee has decided to help support Rachel House and our local mothers. Rachel house is in need of "New Mom Care Packages" and "Dad Bags." What does this look like?

New Mom Care Package: Pick a tote for a young woman and fill it with these items. \$5 QT gift card, cute water bottle, nail polish, pampering beauty products, a personal letter of encouragement and a pocket New Testament!

Dad Bag: Fill a backpack/diaper bag with 1 of each of the following: Blanket, pacifier, sleeper, onesie, baby wash, baby lotion, diaper cream, toy, baby bottle, package of Diapers (size 2), package of wipes. Also a personal letter and pocket New Testament.

You can put together a basket or just donate some items and we will assemble them for you! Bring your gifts to the church prior to December 20. This is a great and easy way to bless our local (soon to be) parents!"

Golden Oaks Christmas:

Christmas ideas for the kids and teachers at Golden Oaks School.

We will again be providing toys and small gift cards to our adopted school, Golden Oaks, for Christmas. As you are shopping, please pick up a few things for our school. Listed below are the items the teachers have told us the kids would like:

- Hot wheels
- Anything that lights up or makes noise (for our Autistic students)
- Drawing or coloring items
- Cool erasers
- Small stuffed animals
- \$5 gift cards (Quick Trip, Starbucks, Scooter's Coffee)

There will be a container marked "Golden Oaks" for your items in the Fellowship Hall.





Happy **BIRTHDAY**

- 1 Andrea Phipps
- 2 Rebecca Hughes
- 6 Kim Smedley
- 6 Jacob Horowitz
- 6 Everett Fisher
- 9 Tyler Jenkins-Austin
- 11 Pamela Bailey
- 13 Ron Jenkins
- 15 Emily Seymour
- 15 James Phillips
- 26 Marti Mitchell

Happy **ANNIVERSARY**

- 17 Rich & Dodie Rayl
- 25 Richard & Ruth Kimmel
- 30 Joe & Leonie Pallikkathayil

Special Events in December

- 6 - Noon TownHall Meeting
- 6 - 5:00pm Adventful Service
- 9 - Last Open Table until January 6th
- 13 - 2021 Directory and Offering Envelopes available
- 14 - 7:00pm Ministry Teams Meet
- 16 - 6:00pm Service of Light
- 20 - Noon Deacons Meeting
- 24 - 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service
- 25 - Christmas Day!



COMING IN DECEMBER

01 TUESDAY

7:00 Bible Study
7:00 CA Group

02 WEDNESDAY

Noon Prayer Group
6:30 Open Table
7:00 CA Group

03 THURSDAY

6:00 Girl Scouts 972

04 FRIDAY

7:00 CA Group

05 SATURDAY

9:00pm CA Group

06 SUNDAY

9:00 Bible Study
10:30 Worship
Noon - TownHall
3:00 Girl Scouts 1677
5:00 Adventful Service

07 MONDAY

6:00 Boy & Cub Scouts

08 TUESDAY

7:00 Bible Study
7:00 CA Group

09 WEDNESDAY

Noon Prayer Group
6:30 Open Table
7:00 CA Group

11 FRIDAY

7:00 CA Group

12 SATURDAY

9:00 pm CA Group

13 SUNDAY

9:00 Bible Study
10:30 Worship
3:00 Girl Scouts 1677

14 MONDAY

6:00 Boy & Cub Scouts

15 TUESDAY

7:00 Bible Study
7:00 CA Group

16 WEDNESDAY

Noon Prayer Group
6:00 Service of Light
7:00 CA Group

17 THURSDAY

6:00 Girl Scouts 972

18 FRIDAY

7:00 CA Group

19 SATURDAY

9:00 pm CA Group

20 SUNDAY

9:00 Bible Study
10:30 Worship
Noon Deacons
3:00 Girl Scouts 1677

21 MONDAY

6:00 Boy & Cub Scouts

22 TUESDAY

7:00 Bible Study
7:00 CA Group

23 WEDNESDAY

Noon Prayer Group
7:00 CA Group

24 THURSDAY

5:00 Christmas Eve Service

25 FRIDAY

Christmas
Office Closed

26 SATURDAY

9:00 CA Group

27 SUNDAY

9:00 Bible Study
10:30 Worship
3:00 Girl Scouts 1677

28 MONDAY

6:00 Boy Scouts

29 TUESDAY

7:00 Bible Study
7:00 CA Group

30 WEDNESDAY

Noon Prayer Group
7:00 CA Group

31 THURSDAY

New Year's Eve

