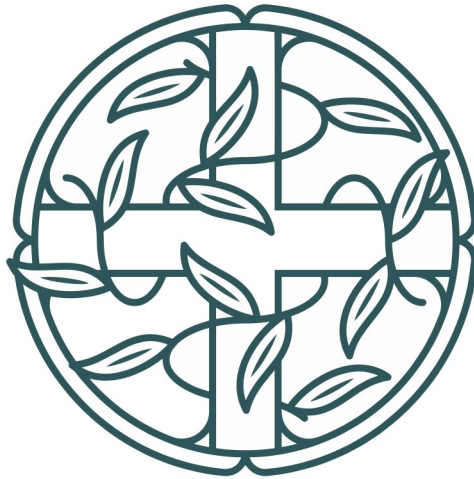


November 24, 2024

Worship | 8:15 and 11 am

Livestream | 11 am



LEXINGTON

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

For God's glory, we are making disciples of Jesus as we worship, love, and serve.

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We invite you to experience the meaning of the Gospel through this service, which reflects both ancient and modern elements of Christian worship. When we gather as a worshipping community, we enter into a dialogue with the living God. God calls us into worship, we rejoice in the hope of the Gospel, confess our sins, lament the brokenness of our world, give our offerings, and hear God's Word read and preached. We hope that by worshipping with us, you will experience joy and hope from a community of people who love Jesus.

At Lexington Presbyterian Church, for God's glory, we are making disciples of Jesus as we worship, love, and serve.

Complete our Connect Card at lexpreschurch.com/connect to join us on mission!

General inquiries: hello@lexpreschurch.com

LORD'S DAY WORSHIP

* Congregation, please stand if able

Prelude

PRAISE

Updates | Following Christ Together

* **Call to Worship** | From Psalm 104:1-4, 24, 33

*Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul!
 O LORD my God, you are very great!
 You are clothed with splendor and majesty,*

All: covering yourself with light as with a garment,
 stretching out the heavens like a tent.
 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters;
 he makes the clouds his chariot;
 he rides on the wings of the wind;
 he makes his messengers winds,
 his ministers a flaming fire.

*Leader: O LORD, how manifold are your works!
 In wisdom have you made them all;
 the earth is full of your creatures.*

All: I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
 I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

* Come, Ye Thankful People, Come-Trinity Hymnal No. 715



1. Come, ye thank-ful peo - ple, come, raise the song of har - vest home;
2. All the world is God's own field, fruit un - to his praise to yield;
3. For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take his har - vest home;
4. E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come to thy fi - nal har - vest home;



all is safe - ly gath - ered in, ere the win - ter storms be - gin;
 wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, un - to joy or sor - row grown:
 from his field shall in that day all of - fens - es purge a - way;
 gath - er thou thy peo - ple in, free from sor - row, free from sin;



God, our Mak - er, doth pro - vide for our wants to be sup - plied:
 first the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall ap - pear:
 give his an - gels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
 there for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, in thy pres - ence to a - bide:



come to God's own tem - ple, come, raise the song of har - vest home.
 Lord of har - vest, grant that we whole - some grain and pure may be.
 but the fruit - ful ears to store in his gar - ner ev - er - more.
 come, with all thine an - gels, come, raise the glo - rious har - vest home.

Trinity Hymnal No. 715
 TEXT: Henry Alford, 1844, 1867
 TUNE (ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR): George J. Elvey, 1859
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* Prayer of Invocation

* **Scripture Reading** | Philippians 1:3-11 | Pew Bible p. 980

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness-Trinity Hymnal No. 32



1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Fa-ther; there is no shad-ow of
2. Summer and win-ter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their
3. Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, thine own dear presence to



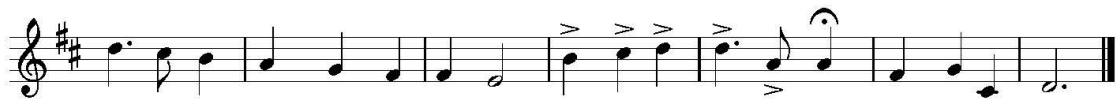
turn - ing with thee; thou chang-est not, thy com - pas-sions, they fail not;
cours - es a - bove, join with all na-ture in man - i - fold wit-ness
cheer and to guide, strength for to-day and bright hope for to - mor-row,



as thou hast been thou for - ev - er wilt be.
to thy great faith - ful-ness, mer - cy, and love. Great is thy faith-fulness!
bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be - side!



Great is thy faith-fulness! Morn-ing by morn-ing new mer-cies I see: all I have



need-ed thy hand hath pro-vid-ed— Great is thy faith-fulness, Lord, un-to me!

Trinity Hymnal No. 32

TEXT: Thomas O. Chisolm, 1923

TUNE (FAITHFULNESS): William M. Runyan, 1923

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RENEWAL

Call to Confession | Psalm 66:16-20

*Leader: Come and hear, all you who fear God,
 and I will tell what he has done for my soul.
I cried to him with my mouth,
 and high praise was on my tongue.
If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
 the Lord would not have listened.
But truly God has listened;
 he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God,
 because he has not rejected my prayer
 or removed his steadfast love from me!*

Corporate Confession of Sin | From “Valley of Vision”

All: O God, You are very great,
My lot is to approach You with godly fear and humble confidence,
for Your condescension equals Your grandeur,
and Your goodness is Your glory.
I am unworthy, but You are welcoming,
I am guilty, but You are merciful,
I am indigent, but Your riches are unsearchable.
You have shown boundless compassion towards me
by not sparing Your Son, and by giving
me freely all things in Him.
This is the foundation of my hope, the refuge of my safety,
the new and living way to You, the means of that conviction of sin,
brokenness of heart, and self-despair,
which will endear to me the gospel.
Thank you for loving me when I did not love myself.
Hear the cries of my heart in this confession. Amen.

Silent Confession

* Words of Comfort | Romans 8:1-2

Leader: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

* Passing of the Peace

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

* **Blest Be the Tie That Binds-Trinity Hymnal No. 359 (vv. 1, 2, 3, 4)**



1. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2. Be - fore the Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
3. We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
4. When we a - sun - der part, it gives us in - ward pain;



the fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet a - gain.

Trinity Hymnal No. 359 (vv. 1, 2, 3, 4)

TEXT: John Fawcett, 1782

TUNE (DENNIS S.M.): Hans G. Nægeli, 1773-1836;

Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1845

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Friendship Register

Kindly remember to give your neighbor the Friendship Register. Once it reaches the end of the pew, then please pass it back. Making acquaintances with guests and fostering friendships within the larger church family is the goal of this register. Starting from the middle aisle, the register is located at the head of each pew. Please, make sure to write your name legibly.

Worship Through Giving

The offering is a way for members and friends of Lexington Presbyterian to present the substance of their whole lives to God. Please feel no pressure to give.

Ways to give:

- You may use the offering plates.
- Go to “Giving” on your Church Center mobile app or lexpres.churchcenter.com.
- Text2Give: text any dollar amount to 84321.

Now Thank We All Our God-Trinity Hymnal No. 98 [8:15 a.m. only]

1. Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voic - es,
2. O may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
3. All praise and thanks to God the Fa - ther now be giv - en,
who won-drous things hath done, in whom his world re - joic - es;
with ev - er - joy - ful hearts and bless - ed peace to cheer us;
the Son, and him who reigns with them in high - est heav - en—
who from our moth - ers' arms, hath blessed us on our way
and keep us in his grace, and guide us when per - plexed,
the one e - ter - nal God, whom earth and heav'n a - dore;
with count - less gifts of love, and still is ours to - day.
and free us from all ills in this world and the next.
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ev - er - more.

Trinity Hymnal No. 98

TEXT: Martin Rinkart, 1636; Tr. by Catherine Winkworth, 1858

TUNE (NUN DANKET): Johann Crüger, 1647

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Now Thank We All Our God | Choir Anthem [II a.m. only]

Praise, O praise our God and King;
Hymns of adoration sing;
For His mercies still endure, [For His mercies still endure,]
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts [joyful hearts]
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God
Whom earth and heav'n adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His mercies endure forever.
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Text: Henry Williams Baker, Martin Rinkart (Tr.
Catherine Winkworth); Psalm 136:26
Tune (NUN DANKET): Johann Crüger; Set-
ting by Howard Helvey
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* The Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all

The first system of musical notation for the Doxology. It consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 2/4 time and G major. The treble staff contains the vocal melody with lyrics underneath. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics for this system are "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all".

creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'nly host:

The second system of musical notation. It continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics for this system are "creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'nly host:". The treble staff has a fermata over the final note of the phrase.

praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The third and final system of musical notation. It concludes the piece with a double bar line. The lyrics for this system are "praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.". The treble staff has a fermata over the final note of the phrase.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1674
Tune (OLD HUNDREDDTH): Louis Bourgeois, 1551
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* Offertory Prayer

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Corporate Prayer

Children's Sermon | Those who love you will _____ you.

*** Scripture Reading** | Colossians 4:7-18 | pp. 985

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Sermon | An Exposition of the Letter to the Colossians

27. Our Sufficiency in Christ's Comfort

Rev. Dr. Curt McDaniel

Sermon Notes

There is a famous WWI story about a soldier who asked his commanding officer if he could go into the “no man’s land” zone to bring back one of his comrades who lay grievously wounded. His officer told him, “You can go, but it is not worth it. Your friend is probably dead, and you will risk your own life away.” Yet, the soldier went anyway. Somehow he managed to get to his friend, hoisted him on his shoulders, and brought him back behind the lines, where they tumbled into the trenches and sat side-by-side together.

When the commanding officer found them, he looked tenderly at the rescuing soldier and said, “I told you it would not be worth it. Your friend is dead, and you are now seriously wounded.” But the soldier interrupted him and said, “No, sir. It was worth it.”

“What do you mean, ‘worth it?’ Your friend is dead.”

“Yes sir, but it was worth it, because when I got to him, he was *still* alive, and he said to me, ‘Jim, I knew you would come for me.’”

Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Jesus told His disciples, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). It seems that the acid test that determines friendship in the truest sense of the word is the kind of commitment that is shown in the relationship. There are many people in the world that could be called “fair weather” friends, but fortunate is the person who can say in the words of Proverbs 18:24, “There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.”

The older I get, the more I realize how the kind of friends you have describes the kind of person that you are. How so? Friendship is always a two-way street (some call it “dyadic” in nature). So often, I meet people who are lonely, frustrated, and thirsty for meaningful relationships with others. God created us with a social need to engage and to connect with people; however, some individuals put far too many demands and expectations on others which too often lead to exasperation and a sense of overload. There is an important balance in a two-way friendship that needs careful thought and examination. Friends do not replace your family, the God-ordained institution where love and grace originate, but certainly they add value and enrichment that satisfy an important dimension in your life.

We have arrived at the final section of the Colossian letter (maybe some of you thought we would never get here!). So many powerful lessons have come to us in this amazing journey. Time and again we have seen that in a day when false teachers were seeking to persuade the

Colossian Christians to believe and to practice a different kind of religious discipline, the apostle Paul tells the Colossian believers that Jesus Christ is sufficient for your life. His gospel, His triumph, His work, His freedom, His love, His authority, His hope, and most of all His very being—the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation (1:15), the One in whom all the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form (2:9)—is totally and completely sufficient for everything you need.

The Colossian letter is a profound statement of the beauty and wonder of Christianity. It proclaims a great uniqueness, a profound power, a glorious hope, and a magnificent message: “You can receive fullness and completeness in life only in and through Jesus Christ. Continue rooted in Him, and grow in this faith. Do not be lured or taken captive by the hollow philosophies of the day. See what Christ has done for you. Embrace it by faith, live in grace, and grow to maturity with *agape* love. When you die to the old self and put on the new self in Christ, your life will take on a new shape and a new look” (summarizing chapters 2 and 3).

The depth and quality of your Christian faith have a way of attracting or repelling others from you. In many respects, like attracts like, especially at the soul level. Certainly, other factors come into play, like background, common experiences, vocation, and personal interests and hobbies. But the kind of deep-seated friendships that define satisfaction in life for many people come when you connect with people who have the same beliefs, worldview, Christian convictions, and passions that you have.

When you arrive at the end of the Colossian letter, Paul does four things that have something to do with the relationships that he has with others. When you look at each of these things, you see that there is a common thread that runs through all of them. Each of them brought some degree of comfort to Paul in the bonds of Christ. All the various and sundry relationships that the apostle had with other people are brought to a head to show that our sufficiency in Christ oftentimes produces varying kinds of comfort from others: “Apostolic gospeling was not a solo calling but occurred in the company of fellow ministers. Paul’s ministry was a connected set of ministers in regular communication with one another. Paul’s highest value was faithful fellowship in Christ and mutual commitment to gospel ministry.”¹

1. **Comfort from Co-Laborers (4:7-9, 12-14).** The apostle begins this final section of the letter by mentioning four important people who, in one way or another, have collaborated

with him in the gospel:

- *Tychicus* is described as “a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord” (4:7). These are affectionate words. The word “dear” (aga-pay-tos) appears 27 times in the NT, usually in the context of Christian fellowship (token examples: 1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Timothy 6:2, 1 Corinthians 4:14, 17, 10:14, 15:58, Ephesians 5:1, 6:21, Philippians 2:12, 4:1). We know from Acts 20:4 that Tychicus was from the province of Asia and had accompanied the apostle at the close of his missionary journey when Paul was returning from Greece through Macedonia and then across into Asia Minor and on to Jerusalem with a charitable gift. He also appears in Titus 3:12 at the end of Paul’s life in connection with a mission to Crete and also in 2 Timothy 4:12 in connection with a mission to Ephesus. He was a busy person and apparently was very dependable, for he was entrusted with this letter and the other letter to Philemon. In this light, he is seen as a letter carrier, bringing not only written communication but also an eyewitness account concerning the apostle’s current condition, something Paul may not have desired to write down: “Readers need to view the people delivering the letter as reliable and trustworthy because they not only deliver the letter but also read and interpret it for the church. Furthermore, they will convey additional information about Paul.”² See also another similar parallel in Ephesians 6:21-22.

◇ *Key attributes: Faithfulness, Trustworthiness.*

- *Onesimus* is described as “our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you” (literally “from you”). Obviously, the occasion for Paul’s letter to Philemon comes from this man who was formerly a runaway slave in Philemon’s home. By God’s providence, Onesimus somehow gets to Paul, experiences spiritual conversion, and becomes a dear friend to the apostle. He accompanies Tychicus with both letters (Colossians and Philemon), but he is not recognized as a mere bystander in this mission. Carefully notice the words in 4:9, “They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.” Only the gospel can do something like what is described here. Only the gospel can take a destitute, runaway slave and change him no more to be a slave but now as a faithful and dear brother and a fellow ambassador in the work of the Kingdom of God.

◇ *Key attributes: Bondedness, Usefulness (From Philemon 10-12).*

- *Epaphras* appears in 4:12 as “One of you, a servant of Christ...always struggling on your

behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.” Paul elaborates on him in 4:13, “He has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.” Apparently Epaphras was the founding pastor of the churches in these cities, for we learned from 1:7 that the Colossians, Laodiceans, and those in Hierapolis “heard and understood the grace of God in truth” from him. And Epaphras learned the gospel during Paul’s two-plus year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19). He was the one who came to Paul and reported to him about the state of the Colossian church, prompting the apostle to pen this letter. Note how Paul connects the content of Epaphras’ prayer (that they would attain Christian maturity in the will of God) with the major objective of this letter: to combat the false teaching that the “mystics” were using to persuade them away from the truth of the gospel (refer back to 2:6-23). This was the reason Epaphras came to Paul, and this was the focus of his prayers for their spiritual well-being. Note well that the verbs “stand mature” and “fully assured” are both in the passive mode, indicating that God is the one who empowers His people to attain maturity and assurance (through the prayers of others), not something they can generate for themselves: “This filling is an act of God accomplished for the Colossians rather than something that they attain through their own striving.”³

◇ *Key attributes: Diligence, sacrifice, boldness, leadership.*

- *Luke* is mentioned in 4:14 as “the beloved physician.” We remember him most as the author of the 3rd Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles. He was often a traveling companion with the apostle in his missionary journeys, accompanying Paul at points of his second mission (Acts 16 and 20) and toward the end of his third mission (Acts 20). We can only surmise that Luke ministered to Paul medically and served as a good layman to the apostle in his ministry: “If we add to this [verse] the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, not to ignore that some think he’s made an anonymous appearance in 2 Corinthians 8:18, Luke becomes one of the most significant voices in the apostolic era.”⁴

◇ *Key attributes: Friendship, support.*

- *Timothy* appears at the beginning of the letter (1:1) and is called “our brother.” Often it appears to me that Timothy does not receive the credit that is due to him for the collaboration and work that he did alongside the apostle Paul. While certainly this letter’s content is the “brainchild” of the apostle under the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit, many NT scholars sense that Timothy contributed to its formulation, perhaps even scribing the words of the body of the letter since the apostle was in chains. Note that the “greeting” Paul gives at 4:18 could simply be Paul’s signature at the letter’s end, guaranteeing that his personal inscription would let his readers know that he was responsible for the letter’s content, not necessarily the transcription of it. ⁵ Likely he also signed it to prevent counterfeit authorship. ⁶ See also Galatians 6:11, 1 Corinthians 16:21, 2 Thessalonians 3:17, and Philemon 19. Keep in mind that it would be important for Paul to sign his own greeting in this original letter, as it would soon go into copying and distribution to other churches. The mention that he signed the first letter would grant future generations the knowledge that this first letter authentically came from him.

◇ *Key attributes: Father/son in the Faith, soldier, collaborator.*

- *Demas* is mentioned here with Luke (4:14) and in Philemon 24 as a “fellow worker” with others. If this is the same Demas that departed the faith because of a love for the world (2 Timothy 4:10 with application in 1 John 2:15 and James 4:4), it is little wonder that Paul barely mentions him. Dependability and trustworthiness were key factors in the apostle’s mind for true servants of Christ.

These five men—Tychicus, Onesimus, Epaphras, Luke, and Timothy—had a special relationship with the apostle. They were laborers with him in the work of the gospel, and this was a source of great encouragement to him. This area is where one source of your comfort and encouragement should come from. If you engage in any kind of work for the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be (should be) people who will collaborate with you that will supply great comfort and encouragement as you fulfill your calling.

2. **Comfort from Companions (4:10-11).** There is a second group that appears in this text that brought comfort to Paul in a different way. Three men are identified as fellow Jews (“the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the Kingdom of God”) who were a comfort to Paul. Each of these men joins the apostle in sending greetings to this Colossian congregation.
- *Aristarchus* is mentioned in 4:10 as a sender of greetings. We know from Acts 20:4 and 27:2 that he was a Macedonian from Thessalonica. From Acts 19:29, he was one of two men who were rushed by the Ephesian mob into the great theater at Ephesus. This fact

gives some support to the suspicion that he was sent to the Ephesian prison for this disturbance and that Paul soon accompanied him in this Ephesian bondage and penned this letter from prison in Ephesus and not from Rome. Keep in mind also that Ephesus is only about 100 miles from Colossae, whereas Rome is 1,200 miles away. The fact that Aristarchus is listed as a “fellow prisoner” suggests that possibly he chose to live at times with Paul in temporary confinement to be a support to him. ⁷

- *Mark* is mentioned in 4:10 as “the cousin of Barnabas.” This is new information, previously unknown to those who read the Acts of the Apostles. It may explain partially why Paul and Barnabas had such a sharp disagreement in Acts 15:39 and why Barnabas chose Mark to go with him. Paul thought Mark was not dependable, but Barnabas thought of him as family. In any case, we know from Acts 12:12 that Mark’s mother’s name was Mary, so it is probable that they were related to her side of the family. This is the same John Mark that penned the 2nd Gospel, often regarded as the earliest Gospel account, and also the evangelist that took the gospel to Alexandria, Egypt, where a church still remains there in his honor (Saint Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral). The fact that Mark is mentioned favorably here gives a strong indication that he and the apostle had reconciled with one another, and this affinity continues at the end of Paul’s life in 2 Timothy 4:11.
- *Jesus*, called Justus, is mentioned in 4:11 as also sending greetings, but other than this reference, we know nothing about him. Most likely the only reason Paul mentions him is because of his devotion to the apostle and his friendship with him.

These three men—Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus—provided Paul a different kind of comfort. They were Jews and no doubt talked with Paul on a different frequency than the others named in this text.

3. **Commands from Paul (4:15-17).** It is important to see these three imperatives in the context of a relationship.
- 4:15 states, “Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house.” This communication reveals “the interlocking nature of the church as it spread into the diaspora, the liveliness of early Christian communication between leaders and churches, and their need to make use of the travels of one another.” ⁸ We also learn that a woman named Nympha, maybe a widow but likely a

wealthy person whose home “is able to serve as a meeting place for a group usually estimated to consist of thirty to fifty people.”⁹ It is important to see how the participation and mention of women played an important part in the beginning development of the early church.

- 4:16 states, “And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.” What is this letter from Laodicea? A large number of NT scholars believe it is what we know now as the Epistle to the Ephesians.¹⁰ Here and in 1 Thessalonians 5:27, there appears to be a pattern of letter circulation. Since house churches marked the presence of the Body of Christ in early Christianity, letters were often distributed from one location to another, as is apparent also in Galatians 1:2 (“churches” in plural): “It is significant that a letter written for a particular church should be regarded as of sufficiently wider relevance as to be read elsewhere. That suggests an awareness on the part of the author(s) that Paul’s teaching, even in specific letters, was of not merely occasional or passing significance. In other words, we see here already the beginning of the sense of the letters’ importance that thereafter developed over the decades into the acknowledgment of their canonical status.”¹¹ “Keep in mind that letters were predominantly read in public because the literacy rate was very low, likely under twenty percent.¹² Only when letters were meticulously copied were they allowed to circulate to other churches in other cities.
 - 4:17 states, “And say to Archippus, ‘See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.’” It has been conjectured that in lieu of Epaphras’ absence in Colossae (because he was visiting Paul in prison), Archippus could have been the remaining pastor at Colossae, for Philemon 1-2 mentions him as a “fellow soldier,” and because he is connected to Philemon and Apphia (likely husband and wife), it is possible that Archippus is their son. We are not sure about this, but it is a strong speculation that has found favor in NT scholarship circles.
4. **Chains to remember (4:18).** The apostle leaves them with these words, “Remember my chains” (found in the present imperative (command) mode). It is not exactly clear what this phrase fully means, although many scholars see the concept of “remembering” deeply rooted in OT narrative (Noah, Moses, Hannah, Nehemiah, the prophets). It does have something to do with remembering his imprisonment for Christ and praying

with fervor that God would use him in the advancement of His kingdom.

Personal Application:

What do we learn from this final section? What do we see that tells us of the theme of God's sufficiency?

- a. You will find comfort ***in*** the work of God by a certain group of friends who partner with you.
- b. You will find comfort ***from*** the work of God by a certain group of friends who are like you (in Paul's case, they were 3 Jews).
- c. You will find comfort knowing that people are praying ***for*** you and supporting you in your Christian walk. Apparently the Laodicean church had a woman host named Nympha, and along with the Colossian church (Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus), at least two churches were praying for him, and no doubt Paul was strengthened by their intercessions.
- d. You will find comfort ***in the gospel***, knowing that God's grace is found in its center. The last words of the apostle to his readers tell us this truth: "Grace be with you." It is noteworthy that this theme of grace began this letter (1:2). That is the message of the Christian gospel from beginning to end. It is all about the grace of God, seen in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and promises found in Christ.

Reflection:

"While combatting the visionaries' teaching, Colossians has set its Christology and ecclesiology in a cosmic context. Colossians presents Christ as creator and ruler of the whole cosmos and as initiator and head of the church. It is 'in Christ,' indeed through being identified with Christ, that believers receive God's gifts in their fullness. Through baptism, without further ritual requirements, believers attain identification with Christ. Because they are identified with Christ, certainly Christ should determine the whole of believers' lives. Christ so permeates all aspects of life that being 'in Christ' determines how believers conduct themselves in their specific social locations. Thus, even the household code testifies to the Lordship of Christ over all of life.

In the argument of Colossians, the most important affirmation is that because believers have been incorporated into and identified with the Christ who is over all, they need no

dramatic spiritual experience to bring them to God or to demonstrate that they are God's people. The identity given them in baptism assures them of forgiveness, of the closest relationship with God, and of their status as coheirs with Christ. Nothing a vision can offer them compares with or supplements the position or blessings they already enjoy in Christ. No powers or additional rites can bring them better knowledge of what God wants or greater access to God's blessings. Through their acceptance of Christ in baptism, they are the holy and elect of God, who have been securely 'transferred into the kingdom of [God's] beloved Son.' They can be certain that Paul's concluding prayer will be answered, since what he asked for, they already possess, and its continued possession is the gift of being in Christ. So indeed, grace will be with them."¹³

Study and Discussion Questions:

- What types of comfort are drawn from true "friends in the Lord" that you glean from this text?
- Review and discuss: What are the prominent themes in this epistle, and what do they mean?
- Take time to reflect on what you have learned from this letter. How have you grown from this study?

Footnotes:

1. Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Ed. Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, 381.
2. Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008, 266.
3. *Ibid.*, 275.
4. McKnight, 394.
5. See a good discussion in E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First -Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
6. Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, 206.

7. J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Fourteenth Printing. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, 236. Originally published by MacMillan and Company in 1879.
8. McKnight, 386.
9. Marianne Meye Thompson, *Colossians and Philemon*. *The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*. Ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 107.
10. G.B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, 212ff offers an excellent discussion.
11. James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Eds. I Howard Marshall, W. Ward Gasque, and Donald Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 286.
12. Thompson, 107.
13. Sumney, 283.

* We Gather Together-Trinity Hymnal No. 363



1. We gath-er to - geth - er to ask the Lord's bless-ing; he chas-tens and
2. Be - side us to guide us, our God with us join - ing, or - dain - ing, main-
3. We all do ex - tol thee, thou lead - er tri - um-phant, and pray that thou



has tens his will to make known; the wick-ed op-pressing now cease from dis-
tain-ing his king-dom di - vine; so from the be - gin-ning the fight we were
still our de-fend-er wilt be. Let thy congre - ga - tion en - dure thro' trib - u -



trous-ing: sing prais - es to his name; he for - gets not his own.
win - ning: thou, Lord, wast at our side: all glo - ry be thine!
la - tion: thy name be ev - er prais'd! O Lord, make us free!

Trinity Hymnal No. 363

TEXT: Netherlands folk hymn; Tr. by Theodore Baker, 1917; Alt. 1990

TUNE (KREMSER): Adrianus Valerius's *Nederlandsch Gedenckclank*, 1626; Arr. by Edward Kremser, 1877

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* Sending

* Benediction | Colossians 2:6-7

Leader: Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

* Postlude

Serving This Morning:

Updates: Andrea Fuller

Liturgist and Pastoral Prayer: Doug Inman

Readers: Ted Brewer, Karen Williams

Musicians: Diane Britton, Theron and Katie Drayton, Barb Howell, and Josiah Rogers

Audio/visual and livestream: Chris Hollis

Faith Promise Giving:

LPC fiscal budget year is July 1st to June 30th.

Through the end of October 2024:

General Fund transfer to missions	\$43,332
Faith Promise Giving:	\$33,603
Missions Disbursements	\$61,146

Stewardship

Through the end of October, 2024:

Budget FYTD	\$407,092
Received FYTD	\$372,023
Expenditures FYTD	\$336,982

Updates

Director of Music and Worship

LPC is seeking a full-time Director of Music and Worship. Please visit lexpreschurch.com and click on “Jobs” at the bottom of the home page to view the full job description and learn how to apply. Thank you!

Church Facilities Booking

Wednesday Midweek Reset is in full swing; many church groups started their meetings back, as well as new committees are in working mode. If you would like to have any meeting on the church premises, we kindly ask you to book it before your meeting by using the Event Request form in the ChurchCenter app., or by emailing the church office at hello@lexpreschurch.com, or by calling the church office at 803.359.9501. Thank you for understanding.

Wednesday Morning Prayer Group

Lexington Presbyterian Church has a Prayer Group gathered every Wednesday in the Parlor from 9 to 10 a.m. You are welcome to join them or stop anytime within that hour even if you can spare just a few minutes. If you have any questions, please contact Ginny Wingard at ginny.wingard@gmail.com.

Office Closed | November 27 and 28

Please note that in observance of Thanksgiving celebration, the LPC office will be closed in the afternoon on **November 27** and full day on **November 28**. If you have plans to stop by, please reschedule accordingly. Thank you for understanding.

Cookbooks

We have plenty of 50th Anniversary Cookbooks for sale, they can be a perfect Christmas gift for your loved ones. Please call/email a church office at 803.359.9501/hello@lexpreschurch.com, and stop by to pick up yours!



Cookie Swap

Friday, December 6th | 7:00pm

in Tomlin Hall

Bring 2 dozen cookies
and wear your ugliest
Christmas Sweater!



Stay TODAY and help us
Deck the Halls after the 11:00 Service
Lunch will be provided

LPC Children's Christmas Extravaganza
 Wednesday, December 4th | 6:00 - 8:00pm
 Tomlin Hall | \$5.00

- Crafts
- Games
- Cookies
- Hot Chocolate
- Christmas Movie
- BRING A FRIEND!

← Register by December 1






Mission to North America

THANKSGIVING OFFERING
 ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR ANNUAL THANKSGIVING OFFERING WILL SUPPORT MNA DISASTER RESPONSE IN AIDING THOSE IMPACTED BY HURRICANE HELENE AND HURRICANE MILTON



Christmas Poinsettias

The church will be decorated during Advent with poinsettias. You can purchase one (or more) in memory or in honor of a loved one. \$14 each. Deadline TODAY!





Christmas Worship Schedule
 December 22nd & 29th
 One Service at 10am
 No CE classes

Connect Card

Thanks for joining us today.
We would love to come alongside you in your walk with Jesus, whether you're new to our community or you've been here a while.

Visit lexpreschurch.com/connect or scan the QR code to fill out our Connect Card!

If you're not familiar with QR codes, we're here to help!

1. Open your smartphone's camera and point it at the QR code so that it shows clearly on your screen.
2. Wait for the camera to recognize and scan the QR code.
3. Click the link banner or notification when it pops up on your screen. Our Connect Card will automatically load in your browser.



Women's Ministry website and Facebook group:

<https://lexpreschurch.com/womens-ministry/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LPCWomen>

Youth Ministry Newsletter Subscription

Please, scan this QR Code with your phone camera.



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