

The Covenant Renewal Service

**Providence Reformed
Presbyterian Church**

9124 Sappington Road, St. Louis, MO 63126
314-843-7994 www.providencestlouis.com



Christmas Day
December 25, 2011

Welcome

If you are **visiting** our church today, we welcome you to our worship service and Christian community. Please find the registration book in the foyer of the church and help us serve you better by leaving your name and contact information. We promise to keep this information confidential and only use it for personal contact with you and your family. Please join us downstairs for coffee after this morning's service.

If you are unfamiliar with **our form of worship**, please feel free to speak with one of the Pastors or Elders. We have resources that will help you understand the biblical rationale for why we worship the way we do. Visit our website for articles, essays, and other helpful information on our worship and life at Providence: www.providencestl.com.

The **Lord's Supper** is observed every Sunday as the climax of covenant renewal worship. We invite to the Lord's Table all those who are baptized disciples of Jesus Christ, under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church. By eating the bread and wine with us as a visitor, you are acknowledging to the elders of this local church that you are in covenant with God as an active member of a congregation in which the Gospel is faithfully confessed, taught, and believed. If you have any doubt about your participation, please speak to one of the elders or the pastor before or after the service. **Note:** The middle circle of cups in each tray contains grape juice, the larger outer ring contains wine. (The grape juice has a darker color than the wine.)

Christus Victor (*Front Cover*)



The traditional monograms **IC** and **XC** are ancient Latin abbreviations for **Jesus** (*IHCOYC*, a Latinized form of his Greek name) and **Christ** (*XRICTOC*). **NIKA** means Victor or Conqueror. Jesus Christ was born to conquer sin, death, and the Devil. The cross in the center of the world reminds us that Jesus has conquered by means of his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus now reigns *because* he died for us.

Today our Pulpit and Table paraments are white, symbolizing joy, celebration, gladness, light, and the shining forth of God's glory through Jesus Christ.

The Morning Service

The Lord's Day — December 25, 2011

Christmas Day

Preparation For Worship: *Luke 2*

Organ - Mr. Bill Hoover

Welcome & Announcements - Pastor Joshua Anderson

The Entrance

Silent Preparation

Call to Worship: *Luke 2:8-14*

Pastor Joshua Anderson

†Hymn #164 "Angels from the realms of glory" *Trinity Hymnal*

†Salutation & Responsive Scripture

Pastor: In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Congregation: **Amen!**

Matthew 28:19

The Lord be with you!

Ruth 2:4

And also with you!

Unto us a Child is born;

Isaiah 9:6

Unto us a Son is given!

And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called,

**Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!**

†Pastor: Let us pray to the Lord:

God of grace, through long generations you prepared a way for the coming of your Son, and by your Spirit you still bring light to illumine our paths. Renew us in faith and hope that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts and claim our love, as Lord of lords and King of kings, to whom be glory always. Amen!

Purification

†Pastor: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins unto God our Father, asking him, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

Come let us worship and bow down;

Psalm 95:6

And kneel before the Lord, our Maker. [*congregation kneels*]

Merciful God, our heavenly Father, you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you. I humbly confess my sins and ask for your mercy. Have mercy on me, O God, because of your lovingkindness. In your great compassion, cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. *Silent prayer. Amen!*

†Pastor: Now lift up your heads and hear the good news . . . !

Ascension

†Pastor: Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to the Lord!

†Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

It is proper and right to do so.

†Truly it is good, right, and beneficial that we should give thanks to you at all times and in every place, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God. For in the mystery of the Word made flesh you have given us a new revelation of your glory so that knowing you in the Person of your Son, we may be drawn to love you and your people. Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, and with the church on earth, we praise and magnify your glorious Name, evermore praising you and singing ...

†The Sanctus

with vigor
fff Ho - ly! Ho - ly! Ho - ly! Lord, God of Hosts! Hea-ven and earth are
full of Your glo-ry! Ho - san-na in the High - est! Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the High - est.

†Hymn #149 "Joy to the world!"

Trinity Hymnal

The Appointed Readings for Christmas Day

The Old Testament Reading: *Isaiah 52:7-10*

Intern Ryan Van Horn

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

The Epistle Reading: *Hebrews 1:1-13*

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Hymn #160 "God rest you merry, gentlemen"

Trinity Hymnal

†The Gospel Reading: *John 1:1-18*

This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Praise be to you, O Christ!

†We Confess our Faith: *The Nicene Creed*

**I believe in one God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds: God of God,
Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made;
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made:**

**Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man; and was crucified also for us**

**under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,**

and sits on the right hand of the Father.

**And he shall come again with glory to judge both the living
and the dead whose kingdom shall have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and
glorified; who spoke by the prophets.**

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen!**

†The *Gloria Patri*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen!**

Sermon Text: *John 1:14-18*

Pastor Joshua Anderson

Sermon: **Grace Upon Grace**

†Hymn of Praise: #168 “Hark! the herald angels sing” *Trinity Hymnal*

The Tribute Offering

Offertory “Christmas Day” (Gustav Holst)

Choir

† [Hands Raised] The Doxology

Trinity Hymnal, p. xvi

† [Hands Raised] The Lord’s Prayer

The Sacrifice of Peace

Prayer of Thanksgiving & Memorial

Communion Hymn #159 “Good Christian men, rejoice!”

†The Song of Simeon (*Nunc Dimittis*): *Luke 2:30-32*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy Word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou has prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

†Pastor: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

Congregation: **And his mercy endures forever!**

Pastoral Prayer: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ; grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge; in the name of him who lives and reigns with you and Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Congregation: **Amen!**

Benediction

†Hymn #151 “O come, all ye faithful”

Trinity Hymnal

†Commission: *Matthew 28:18-20*

†Benediction: *Numbers 6:24-26*

†Three-fold Amen

Announcements

Nursery Volunteers for Today:

Morning Service – Moore

Nursery Volunteers for Next Week:

Morning Service – Wood

Poinsettias — Please feel free to take a poinsettia home after the service this morning.

End of Year Tax Reminder — For a contribution to Providence to be considered a gift in 2011, it must be received or postmarked on or before Saturday, Dec 31, 2011. Any contribution received or postmarked after 12/31/11 (e.g., Sunday, Jan 1, 2012) will be considered a gift in 2012.

Officer Nominations — The session is receiving officer nominations for next year. Forms are available in the foyer. Several things to keep in mind this year: Elder Brad Wood will be going on a required sabbatical this year. Elders Ken Pratt, Jason Carter, and Monte Shields are finishing 3-years and are eligible for re-nomination and re-election for 3 more years. Please pray and consider your nomination carefully before submitting it to the session.

The Thursday Morning Bible Study for ladies will resume on Thursday January 12, 2012. Come and join us for a time of study, prayer, and fellowship! We will start promptly at 9:30 AM. If you have any questions please contact Judy Linton.

The Whole Bible in a Year — On January 8 we will begin a new adult Sunday school class that will continue through the end of 2012. The class will take us through a summary of every book of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. We are combining the class with an expedited through-the-Bible-in-a-year reading program. Every week there will be readings for Monday through Friday from the book or books of the Bible that we will cover in class on the following Sunday. This program is designed to guard against the kind of frustration that usually comes quickly with most yearly Bible reading programs. The readings are not too long. You will not read the entire Bible word for word, but only key portions. We would like to encourage everyone to participate in this Bible reading program this year. "The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" - Psalm 119:130.

Food Pantry Donations — Many thanks to all who have donated to the Resurrection Food Pantry. For the next few months, the items to donate are cereal and peanut butter.

Church Calendar

January 1	11 AM Morning Worship, No Sunday School
January 8	Memory Listening During Sunday School
January 12	Ladies' Bible Study Resumes
January 22	Parish Groups Meet

Sermon Notes and Prayer Requests

Sermon Notes and Prayer Requests

The Lord's Service Explained

Christmas Season

Just as the great redemptive events recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures were keyed to the changes in the seasons—Passover in the Spring means life from the dead—so also the church has ordered her Scripture readings and prayers so that the life of Christ would be correlated to the symbolic changes evident in the seasons of the year. Easter, for example, is celebrated in the Spring when the entire created order is symbolically restored from death to life.

Consider how this works for Christmas. Why is Christmas celebrated on December 25th? Not because anyone really believed that Jesus was actually born on this date--although the early church had good reasons to suspect a winter birth. Nor is it the case, as some maliciously teach, that the church gullibly adopted a pagan Roman holiday, the festival of the Invincible Sun (*Dies Natalis Dei Solis Invicti*). The early church was not so naïve. The date was picked for symbolic reasons.

The winter solstice occurs around December 25th (solstice from the Latin: *sol* = sun, and *sistere* = to stand still). This is the time of the year when the Sun reaches its southern-most extremity (or to put it another way, it is the point on the Sun's ecliptic at which it is the farthest south). The longest night and the shortest day occur at this point, and from this day onward the days get longer and the nights get shorter. The darkness of winter begins to give way to the light and warmth of Spring and Summer. This continues until the summer solstice when the other extreme is reached.

What does this have to do with Christmas? Much in every way. Just as death and darkness give way to life and light in the yearly cycle of seasons, so also the death and darkness brought on by sin gives way to the life and light realized in the work of Jesus. Jesus' birth is celebrated when the darkness of night has reached its peak, and once he is born the light begins to wax and the darkness wanes. As the traditional German hymn (#153) reminds us:

Behold a branch is growing
Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sung, foreknowing;
It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little Flower
In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

Christmas Scripture Readings – This Week

Monday, Dec. 26	–	1 Sam. 1:1-12	Psalm 13	Luke 1:1-24	1 John 1:1-4
Tuesday, Dec. 27	–	1 Sam. 1:13-20	Psalm 14	Luke 1:26-38	1 John 1:5-10
Wednesday, Dec. 28	–	1 Sam. 1:21-28	Psalm 15	Luke 1:39-45	1 John 2:1-6
Thursday, Dec. 29	–	1 Sam. 2:1-11	Psalm 16	Luke 1:46-56	1 John 2:7-11
Friday, Dec. 30	–	1 Sam. 2:12-17	Psalm 17	Luke 2:57-66	1 John 2:12-17
Saturday, Dec. 31	–	1 Sam. 2:18-26	Psalm 18	Luke 2:67-80	1 John 2:18-27

Officers and Resource People

The Session (Pastors & Elders)

Rev. Jeffrey J. Meyers	314-842-9329 (O)	John Moore	314-984-9869
Senior Pastor	314-842-9309 (H)	Ken Pratt	314-416-1176
Rev. Josh Anderson (Assoc.)	314-814-5213	Monte Shields	314-849-0597
Jason Carter	636-257-2441	Allan Wamsley	314-560-9602
Richard Hiers	314-543-3010	Brad Wood (Clerk)	636-587-9211

The Deacons

Jack Boeve (Chairman)	636-461-1398	Steve Shaffer	314-843-1964
Bryan Carter	636-271-7288	Pat Staebel	314-303-4369
Rick Gibbs	636-451-3463	Paul Svezia	314-406-9101
Dan Hayes	314-984-9814	Bob Wooldridge	314-963-9671
Daryl Hoegemann	314-962-4874		

Women in the Church Officers

President: Denise Gerstung	314-821-9324	Nursery: Lu Greeno	618-538-5885
Vice President: Judy Linton	636-349-9028	Christine Greeno	618-514-0935
Secretary/Treasurer:		Melanie Greeno	518-926-9046
Lori Shaffer	314-843-1964	Bethel: Rachel LeCroy	314-604-2089
Committee Coordinator:		Kitchen: Rosamma Weston	314-205-2018
Rhonda Hoard	636-938-3575	Tracy Boeve	636-461-1398
WIC advisor: Joanie Harris	636-394-6896	Hospitality: Barb Hoover	314-966-3523
Prayer Chain: Doris Daily	314-961-8799	Joanie Harris	636-394-6896
Carolann Van Heest	314-966-5732	Amanda Cone	314-497-7950
Brenda Svezia	svezia@sbcglobal.net	Wedding Coordinator:	
Missions: Debbie Keane	636-938-3108	Barb Hoover	314-966-3523

Church Staff

Rev. Jeffrey J. Meyers	314-842-9329 (O)	Rev. Tim Weston	314-205-2018 (Home)
Senior Pastor	314-842-9309 (H)	Pastor to International Students	814-2019 (Cell)
Rev. Joshua Anderson	314-814-5213	Rev. Timothy LeCroy	314-604-2088
Associate Pastor		Bill Hoover (Music Dir.)	314-966-3523
Paul Jaeggi, Sr.	314-843-7994 (Church)	Melanie Carter (Secretary)	636-271-7288
Asst. to the Pastor	314-631-4394 (Home)		

Pastoral Interns

Matt Teeselink	563-579-3674	Scott Pitts	314-974-1364
Ryan Van Horn	314-620-3744	Steve Schleppehorst	217-257-2592

Home and Foreign Ministries

Ross Dixon	RUF Ministry (Mizzou)	Blake & Cathy Purcell	Russia
Garrett & Michelle Crow	Santa Clarita, CA	John & Cathy Rug	Chile
Jamison & Laura Galt	New York City	Brian & Jessie Steadman	New York City
Shane & Kim Gibson	New Orleans, LA	Lian & Clara Tombing	India
Bryan Walker	US Army Chaplain	Marcus Toole	Canada
Daniel & Stephanie McKinney	Salt Lake City	Tim & Rosamma Weston	ISI (St. Louis)
Emad & Michelle Mikhail	Middle East	Dan & Becky Young	Mexico