

December 28, 2025

A Reflection Before the Service

"It is hard for us to realize this today, but when Christianity first arose in the world it was not called a religion. It was the non-religion. Imagine the neighbors of early Christians asking them about their faith. "Where's your temple?" they'd ask. The Christians would reply that they didn't have a temple. "But how could that be? Where do your priests labor?" The Christians would have replied that they didn't have priests. "But... but," the neighbors would have sputtered, "where are the sacrifices made to please your gods?" The Christians would have responded that they did not make sacrifices anymore. Jesus himself was the temple to end all temples, the priest to end all priests, and the sacrifice to end all sacrifices.

No one had ever heard anything like this, so the Romans called them "atheists," because what the Christians were saying about spiritual reality was unique and could not be classified with the other religions of the world."

Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*. New York, NY: Dutton. 2008. Pgs 13-14)

The Prelude

The Welcome and Announcements

The Call to Worship: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, CH 1, vv. 12-18

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

(Prayer)

The Opening Hymns of Praise

9:00 “Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim” (all 4 verses) #165

“To God Be the Glory (all 3 verses) #55

11:15 “Behold Our God” -Baird, Altrogge

Who has held the oceans in His hands? Who has numbered every grain of sand?
Kings and nations tremble at His voice; all creation rises to rejoice.

**Behold our God seated on His throne
Come let us adore Him
Behold our King nothing can compare
Come let us adore Him**

Who has given counsel to the Lord? Who can question any of His words?
Who can teach the One who knows all things? Who can fathom all His wondrous deeds?
(Chorus)

Who has felt the nails upon His hand, bearing all the guilt of sinful man?
God eternal humbled to the grave, Jesus, Savior risen now to reign.
(Chorus)

You will reign forever (Let Your Glory fill the earth)
You will reign forever (Let Your Glory fill the earth)
You will reign forever (Let Your Glory fill the earth)
You will reign forever (Let Your Glory fill the earth)

Behold our God seated on His throne
Come let us adore Him
Behold our King nothing can compare
Come let us adore Him
(Repeat)

11:15 “The Heavens Declare Thy Glory”

-Bach, 1685/Birks/Barnes

The heav'ns declare Thy glory, the firmament Thy pow'r;
Day unto day, the story repeats from hour to hour;
Night unto night replying, proclaims in ev'ry land,
O Lord, with voice undying, the wonders of Thy hand.

The sun with royal splendor goes forth to chant Thy praise,
And moonbeams soft and tender their gentler anthem raise;
O'er every tribe and nation the music strange is poured,
The song of all creation, to Thee, creation's Lord.

How perfect, just, and holy the precepts Thou hast giv'n
Still making wise the lowly, they lift the thoughts to heav'n
How pure, how soul-restoring Thy gospel's heav'nly ray
A brighter radiance pouring than noon of brightest day.

All heaven on high rejoices to do its Maker's will;
The stars with solemn voices resound Thy praises still;
So let my whole behavior, thoughts, words and actions be,
O Lord, my Strength, my Savior, one ceaseless song to Thee.

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O Lord, my Strength, my Savior, one ceaseless song to Thee.

The Confession of Sin

Reader: Our Father, if Your Beloved Son had not confined His majestic greatness into the cramped quarters of the human nature, we could not know the boundless privilege of being Your children.

People: If Jesus Christ had not been blind in the womb, we could never have seen the light of the knowledge of God.

Reader: If the Lamb of God had not come to face death, we could never have received endless life. If He had not been torn, we could never have been healed.

People: Father, be merciful to us for not loving others as You have loved and forgiven us. Quiet our fears with the truth of how You come to us in Jesus Christ.

Reader: Free us to adore You for the gift of Your Son, for He is our hope, our health and our life.

(Silence Before God)

Assurance of Grace and Pardon for All Who Receive God's Gift By Faith:

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? (Romans 8.32-33)

Now together we pray as Jesus Christ taught us to pray, saying:

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 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. Amen.

The Declaration of Faith and Offering:

(We use the declaration of faith and offering to “preach to ourselves” the reason for our hope. The Christian’s confidence is in God’s truth and in God’s care. Because Park Road is a church for both convinced Christians and for people at different stages in their spiritual journey, we invite you to use this time and the musical reflection to think, pray, offer and consider what God is doing in your life.)

The Apostles’ Creed:*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord;

who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell;

the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,

and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;

from thence He shall come to judge the quick * and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,

the holy catholic church,**

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

Response: “The Doxology”

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, Ye heavenly host,

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Although not written by the apostles, the *Apostles’ Creed* is a concise summary of their teachings. It originated as a baptismal confession, probably in the second century, and developed into its present form by the sixth or seventh century. *i.e. “living” ** ‘Catholic’ means international unlike the Old Testament Church which was a single nation.

The heavens are silent, the wisemen have gone.
The flurries of angels have finished their song.
The shepherds have long since returned to their sheep.
The stable is empty, the star fast asleep.

I ponder the wonder I carry inside,
A star bright as diamonds, an ebony sky,
The shepherd who cradles a little white lamb,
The wiseman who offers the gold in his hand.

That Bethlehem evening is far, far away
From the world where I live, the world of today.
I pause and I ponder. A miracle starts.
The Savior is born once again in my heart.

I ponder the wonders I carry inside,
The thunder of wings from the angels on high
The sign of the manger, the scent of the hay.
The Child smiling up, the Child smiling up,
The Child smiling up at the creatures He made.

11:15 “I Can Only Imagine”

- Millard

I can only imagine what it will be like
when I walk by Your side
I can only imagine what my eyes will see
when Your face is before me
I can only imagine

**Surrounded by Your glory what will my heart feel
Will I dance for You Jesus or in awe of You be still
Will I stand in Your presence or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.**

I can only imagine when that day comes
and I find myself standing in the Son
I can only imagine when all I will do
is forever, forever worship You
I can only imagine. I can only imagine.

(Chorus—2x)

I can only imagine

The Scripture Reading: *Ezekiel 10.4, 18-19; 11.23; Haggai 2.1-9*

Ezekiel 10.4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD.

Ezekiel 10.18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. ¹⁹ When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD'S house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them.

Ezekiel 11.23 The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city.

Haggai 2.1 On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet saying, ² "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, ³ 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?' ⁴ 'But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of hosts. ⁵ 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' ⁶ "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. ⁷ 'I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁸ 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹ 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts."

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks Be to God!**

The Sermon

- The Reverend Dr. John Stevenson

In Lonely Exile Here | Mourning and Thriving in Babylon *Home Alone: Return from Babylon and a Missing Glory*

John Stevenson was formerly Chief of Port Everglades Fire and Rescue. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America and teaches at The South Florida Bible College. He and his wife, Paula, have one daughter, Sky (Lance), and two grandchildren. The Stevensons have attended Park Road since the late '80s.

The Closing Hymn

9:00 “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” (vv. 1-2, 4)

#345

11:15 “Better is One Day”

Redman

How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty
For My soul longs and even faints for You
For here my heart is satisfied within Your presence
I sing beneath the shadow of Your wings

**Better is one day in Your courts
Better is one day in Your house
Better is one day in Your courts
Than thousands elsewhere**
(Repeat Chorus)

One thing I ask and I would seek to see Your beauty
To find You in the place Your glory dwells
(Repeat)

(Chorus)

My heart and flesh cry out for You, the living God
Your Spirit's water to my soul
I've tasted and I've seen come once again to me
I will draw near to You. I will draw near to You

(Chorus)

The Benediction and Amen

The Postlude

SUNDAYS at PARK ROAD

SERMON SERIES

In Lonely Exile Here | Mourning and Thriving In Babylon
Good News from the Prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

*“O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns **in lonely exile here**, until the Son of God appear”*

Exile is a rich motif in the entire Bible. To be banished or expelled from one’s home and sent into a strange place is considered a monumental trial starting with the first humans. The list of major Bible characters who undergo exile is too long to include here. Exile is also a pattern for the Christian Life (1 Peter 2.11). How can our ancestors in the faith inform our modern lives as aliens in the present world and how is this motif so tied to the Advent or arrival of Jesus Christ?

SUNDAY CLASSES | 10:10-11:05 AM

Minor Prophets/Major Impact | Led by **Dr. John Stevenson** | **Fellowship Hall**

Tucked away at the end of the Old Testament are these voices that thunder with messages that are anything but minor. They give us the heartbeat of God as He calls His people to repentance, justice, mercy, and hope. They speak into times of crisis, idolatry, and decay, yet their words blaze with timeless truth—revealing the God who both judges sin and restores with grace. Their ancient messages still ignite faith, confront complacency, and point forward to the coming of Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of every promise.

Junior & High School Sunday Class | **Meegan Dorn & Sky McNeill** | **Room #4 (2nd floor)**

Join us this semester as Senior and Junior High listen to the bold voices of the Old Testament prophets calling for change in the hearts of Israel and Judah. These original "rebels" with a purpose call out corrupt kings and nefarious nations to turn back to God.

Elementary Sunday School (Grades K-5) Fall Session – Rooms #1 & 2 (2nd floor)

This month, our elementary students will celebrate the Advent season by learning about the coming of Christ through Scripture lessons, meaningful discussion, and hands-on activities.

THIS WEEK AT PARK ROAD PRESBYTERIAN

Welcome to Park Road Pres! We are glad to have you with us today.

Sunday	9:00, 11:15 AM	Worship Service
	10:15 AM	Sunday Classes
Wed.-Fri.		OFFICE CLOSED
Thursday	3:00-5:00 PM	PRYouth: Pool Party at McNeill's

Orchid

The orchid is given today by Frank Alfieri in loving memory of his wife, Charlotte and their upcoming 39th wedding anniversary on December 31st. If you would like to purchase (\$30) an orchid for 2026 to be placed in the Sanctuary for a special occasion, fill out your request on the ***Keeping in Touch*** form.

Men's Bible Studies

The Monday evening and Wednesday morning men's Bible studies will be taking a break for Christmas. They will resume the week of January 5th.

PRYouth

The Youth group will be taking a break on Tuesdays during Christmas and will resume on Tues., Jan. 6th. However, to kick off the New Year, **they will meet on Thurs. Jan. 1st** from 3-5 p.m. for a pool party at Lance & Sky McNeill's home. They live at 2601 SW 84th Terrace, Davie 33328.

ESL Classes

ESL will take a break from classes on Dec. 25th & Jan. 1st. Classes will resume on Jan. 8th.

Women's Bible Study through the Gospel of Luke Begins the Week of January 4

Join us Monday evening in-person, Tuesday evening online, or Thursday morning in-person for women's Bible study. All 3 Bible studies will be taking 12-weeks to go through the Gospel of Luke. Childcare is provided for both in-person studies. Sign up on the ***Keeping in Touch*** form. Please pick up a study book & complete week 1 before the first meeting (the week of January 4th). Study books will be in mid week. Suggested donation \$10.

New Church Directory

If you are a member, please take a few moments to complete the *Church Directory Information* form at the Kiosk. Drop it in one of the offering boxes in the back of the church by Jan. 4th.

HAPPENINGS at PARK ROAD

Women's Baby Shower for Anna Iszler & Kerri St Vil | Sat., Jan. 10 | 10:00 AM

All women are invited to help us shower mama's-to-be Anna & Kerri on January 10th from 10am-12pm. Bring a box of diapers to enter the diaper raffle. If you would like to bring a gift, a Target or Amazon gift card would be a blessing. RSVP on the ***Keeping in Touch*** form.

SALT Pot Luck Luncheon with Guitarist Timothy LaRogue | Wed., Jan. 14 | 11:30 AM

Bring your favorite side dish and a donation of \$10 to enjoy an hour with Timothy LaRogue on the guitar playing our favorite folk/soft rock songs of the 60's and 70's. Sign up on the ***Keeping in Touch*** form.

Women's Ministry Pajama, Pizza, & Prayer Board Night | Fri., Jan. 16th | 6-8 PM

The new year brings a great opportunity to set new spiritual goals and pray bold prayers. Join us for a fun night of having pizza & participating in an inspiring craft. We will be creating personal prayer boards where we will get to thoughtfully spend time thinking through some spiritual goals & prayer requests we have for 2026. All craft materials will be provided by the Church! Bring your Bible & wear your coziest pajamas! Sign up on ***Keeping in Touch*** form or online.

Lifeline Screening | Tues., Jan. 20 | Fellowship Hall

Life Line Screening offers a 4-screening package (Carotid Artery, Peripheral Artery, Atrial Fibrillation, & Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) at a special price of \$129. To book your appointment or get more info, visit LLSA.SOCIAL/HABC

Annual Church Picnic | Sat., January 24th | T.Y. Park | 11:00 am—3:00 pm

The annual church picnic will be Saturday, January 24th at Pavilion #12 at T.Y. Park, located at 3300 N. Park Road, Hollywood 33021. Everyone is welcome and invited to join for a time of fellowship and fun! Sign up begins soon!

Young Adults: Save the Date of January 30th at 6:30 PM

Annual Camping Trip | Feb. 19-22, 2026 | Fisheating Creek -Palmdale, FL

Save the date! All are welcome to join us! If you would like more information, please contact Mike Carpenter at 954-325-5468.

