



# FIRST PRESS

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FRIDAY, NOV. 14, 2014

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Nov. 15, 9 a.m.**

Sunday School in the Pastor's Study: Exodus 34,

"Covenant Renewal"

**Nov. 16, 10 a.m.**

Morning Worship: Isaiah 9, "A Child is Born"

**Nov. 16, 4 p.m.**

Sunday Night Study: Psalm 7, "Just Justice"

**Nov. 19, 5:15 pm**

Midweek Bible Study, *What do Presbyterians Believe:* "Repentance unto Life"

## From the Pastor's Pen . . .

I want to write to let you know about a program that FPC Winona has been participating in for some time. Many of you make purchases through the online retailer Amazon.com. Even though Amazon has never turned a profit, the company has a unique program to benefit organizations such as FPCW called "AmazonSmile."

Through this program, Amazon gives a half of a percent (0.5%) of nearly every purchase to a charity designated by the purchaser. Recently, FPC received the first deposit from the program; it wasn't a fortune, but it nonetheless helps the work that we do here at the Crossroads. Thanks to all who are already shopping!

Enrolling in the program was easy for the church and I encourage everyone who shops at Amazon to consider doing it this way. In order

to benefit FPCW from your purchase, you must do a couple of things.

First, instead of going to [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com), you go to **[www.Smile.Amazon.com](http://www.Smile.Amazon.com)**. This will take you to their homepage (and you should already be "logged in"). All of your account information and benefits (e.g. AmazonPrime) will be the same.

Second, you will need to search for and select "First Presbyterian Church at Winona" as your charity of choice. Once this is done, whenever you begin your online "shopping trip" at **[www.Smile.Amazon.com](http://www.Smile.Amazon.com)**, FPCW will get a small portion of the proceeds.

Third, go about your shopping business as you normally would, just begin at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.



## Westminster Shorter Catechism Meditation

The Second Commandment is one of the longest and concerns the way we worship God.

*Q50. What is required in the 2nd commandment?*

**A50. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.**

Contrary to 21st Century American opinion, God **does** actually care how we worship Him. It's common now for people to express sentiments about worship along the lines of, "it doesn't matter, just so long as you are sincere for God." But the testimony of the Scripture is exactly and precisely the opposite.

God wants, *demands* that those who worship Him do so in the way that He has set forth, outlined, and commanded in His word. We as God's people are not free to worship Him in a way that seems sensible and agreeable to us.

If you want to know how to worship God, you must look for it in His word. There He makes

clear there that what He desires in worship is our whole-hearted devotion to Him. In worship we are to praise Him for His greatness, glory, and redemption, meditate upon His excellencies, pray to Him for help, and proclaim His salvation from day to day. That is what we read about in the history of Israel, in the psalms, and what we see the New Testament church doing.

Today, much of what passes for Christian worship is centered on man, one's own feelings and emotions. Presbyterians, by contrast, have focused on God in worship. We worship because God is worthy of worship, we worship to give Him glory, not to make ourselves feel better. Yet for those who worship rightly, there is always a blessing from the throne of heaven.

Worship at First Presbyterian Church may look remarkably different from other places with different emphases in worship. Our emphasis in worship is to direct attention to God: who He is and what He has done and to give Him glory.



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# Faithfully Giving to the Kingdom of God

We are in the midst of the Holiday Season. We've said goodbye to Halloween, Reformation Day, and Guy Fawkes Day; Thanksgiving is almost upon us, and Christmas, Boxing Day, and New Years Day will be here before you know it.

Thanksgiving Day falls right in the middle of the Holiday Season. Quite often today Thanksgiving has become the perfunctory day that stands in the way of "Black Friday" when we all rush out to Mal\*Wart to get last year's model big screen TV for \$199 and a bunch of other stuff. It seems like it is almost a parable for the decay and decline of American culture that "Black Friday" consumption as taken precedence over Thanksgiving reflection and gratitude to God. Many Christians have lamented the change in what has become acceptable and decry it as yet another sign that American is no longer a "Christian nation." I like to turn such complaints and judgments about the culture around. Before condemning the culture, we ought to look at our own lives and examine to see whether we are committing the same sins of consumption and ingratitude.

Christians complain that the modern American lives only for himself; he spends his money on himself and what he wants and does not respond in gratitude and generosity to God for the many gifts that God has given. **Well let me ask you: are you responding in gratitude and generosity to God for the many gifts that God has given to you?** Does your giving to the work of the Kingdom here at First Presbyterian Church reflect a deep and profound gratitude to God for His sending His Son to save you from your sins and bring you into God's own family?

Under the Old Covenant, the Hebrews were commanded to bring in a tenth (a tithe) of all their produce to the Levites for the support of the ministry of the Church. Now under the New Covenant there are no Levites and no tithe, however God's people are no less required to give to His Kingdom. In fact, if under the Old Covenant (when the people were *less spiritual* and knew Christ only in shadows) the people gave 10%, how much *more* should we be giving now, we who have tasted the fullness of Christ?

Paul reflects on how knowing Christ profoundly impacts our giving to the work of the Church, **"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich"** (II Cor. 8:9).

Paul doesn't lay out a percentage for people to give, rather he appeals to us to consider what Christ gave for us, and respond accordingly. If you know Christ's grace, your priorities should look like Christ's priorities: **Not holding on to and getting stuff, but freely giving that others may come to know the salvation of Christ as well.** Take time to examine your own giving to the ministry at FPCW and spending habits generally and consider whether you are being a **faithful steward** over what God has given you.

It's one thing to want to give a big sum to the church if you have extra or when you die and have no use for "your" money, but it's quite another to give regularly, faithfully, and sacrificially *now*. Faithful giving to the local church, faithful stewardship reveals a heart that has not been captured by the things of this world, but is hidden with Christ.

## Sermon Snapshot: A Prophet Like Moses to Come

This past Lord's Day we started a new sermon series looking at some of the *principal* prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ. The entire Old Testament is filled with prophecies of the coming Christ beginning at Genesis 3:15 (which we considered last year), but we are just looking at some of the most explicit. When Christ appeared on earth, he had been expected by the Hebrews for quite some time.

We began with Deut. 18 in which Moses, who is about to go to his own death, proclaims to the church that God will raise up and send another prophet like Moses. Moses, of course, was the prophet *par excellence* in the Old Covenant.

Moses proclaimed God's word to the people so they would know how to live as His redeemed nation. Moses faithfully and continually pleaded with God for mercy and grace on a people so sinful and prone to wandering. Moses even tried to offer His own life to satisfy God's justice for the sins of Israel. God could not accept the life of Moses in

the place of the sinners in Israel because Moses was himself a sinner and stood in desperate need of God's mercy. For that reason God promised to send a prophet to the world who would be *like* Moses, but succeed where Moses failed.

Christ is the one who not only offered own righteous life in the place of sinners, but who now lives and reigns in heaven interceding, that is *praying*, for the saints of God on earth struggling through this earthly pilgrimage toward our Heavenly rest.

For the rest of the year we will get to consider some of prophecies that God used to prepare the world for the coming of His Son, the King:

**Nov. 16**, Isaiah 9:1-7, "A Child is Born"

**Nov. 23**, Isaiah 11, "The Righteous Branch of Jesse"

**Nov. 30**, Isaiah 40, "Prepare the Way of the LORD"

**Dec. 7**, Zechariah 9, "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion"

**Dec. 14**, Lk. 1, "The Son of the Most High, the Son of David"

**Dec. 21**, Mt. 1, "He Will Save His People From Their Sins"

CHRIST: THE LONG-EXPECTED KING  
*Seeing the Saviour in Old Testament Prophecy*

SUNDAYS 10 A.M. | STARTING NOV. 9 | FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH