

PIONEER

CONNECT

DECEMBER 30, 2017






WELCOME

to Pioneer

This is the time of year that we pause to think about changes. On the cusp of a new year, we often consider resolutions. What is the change that you long for this morning? The top resolutions are often to exercise more, lose weight, save more money, and get organized. Each year similar resolutions are made and broken, this year let us try something new!

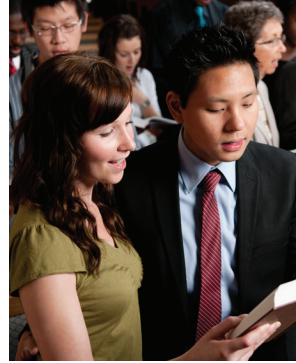
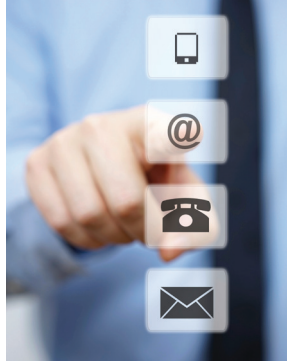
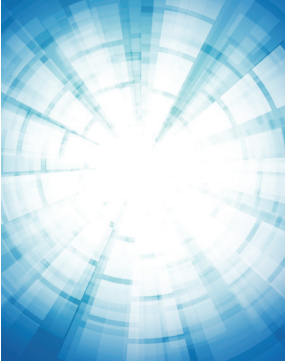
This morning we welcome you to Pioneer Memorial Church, and we invite you to join us as we ask for a fresh daily baptism of the Holy Spirit! This is the one change that brings other changes with it! This resolution gives the God of the universe the ability to make His own resolutions for your life. So no matter what 2017 has been like for you, we invite you to join us on a journey for 2018; a journey with the Holy Spirit!

–Ben Martin

 PIONEER MEMORIAL CHURCH 8655 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD, BERRIEN SPRINGS, MI 49103		
OFFICE HOURS Monday – Thursday (8 to 5) • Friday (8 to 12)		PHONE – 269.471.3133 FAX – 269.471.6152
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**THE FOURTH
WATCH BLOG**
"The Piercing
White Light"

6

**PIONEER
@ WORSHIP**
11:45 AM Service

9

**MEMBERSHIP
TRANSFERS**

8

SABBATH SCHOOL
Christian Living

10

ANNOUNCEMENTS



"THE
PIERCING
WHITE
LIGHT"

BY DWIGHT K. NELSON

For this final blog of the now diminished, vanishing year, may I share with you the reflections of a young British poet and horticulturalist, Philip Britts (1917-1949). His pensive brooding is the sort of ruminating that does our souls good on the spiritual eve of yet another journey around the sun.

Britts wisely observes: "We are human and finite, and thus cannot live perpetually in a sense of expectation, or in a continuous Advent" (*Watch for the Light* 110). The truth of our frail humanity is that we simply are unable to sustain a red hot expectancy—for anything, let alone the advent of our Lord. "We are distracted by many things. Our spiritual awareness waxes and wanes in intensity. . . . We may get lifted up in moments of tenderness but will be cast down in hours of dryness. The swing of emotions is natural to us, and some are more subject to extremes than others. We mustn't despair about this" (ibid).

Truth is, feelings are both our boon and our bane. Which is why holiday seasons like this one can jack us up, only moments later to jerk us back down. The roller coaster of human emotions—of a life overrun by feelings—who hasn't ridden that ride?

Thus our deep need is for the objectivity of the faith story, Britts reminds us: "It is here that we need to see why it was necessary for Christ to come to the earth. God has come to us because we, by our own power of soul, by our own emotions, even the noblest and most sublime, can never attain redemption, can never regain communion with God" (111). He is right: "Spiritual depth, it is true, is the working of God coming down and penetrating to the depths of our hearts, and not of our soul's climbing. *No ladder of mysticism can ever meet or find*

or possess God" (ibid, emphasis supplied). Bethlehem, Nazareth, Calvary—the narrative of Christ's birth, life, death is never the tale of us climbing up, but rather ever the story of His coming down. The ladder is His, not ours.

"To put it quite simply, spiritual experience, whether it be of faith, hope (or expectancy) or love, is something we cannot manufacture, but which we can only receive. If we direct our lives to seeking it for ourselves we shall lose it, but if we lose our lives by living out the daily way of Christ we shall find it" (111-112).

Philip Britts then thrusts his point: "... what is decisive is that we accept and live by and surrender ourselves to a strength which is not our own, to the piercing white light of God's love" (113). Pause for a moment and reread that line.

Because that is my New Year prayer for you, "the piercing white light of God's love"—a Light so bright, a Love so strong no residual darkness from the waning year could possibly hold you back or keep you down.

"[For Jesus] said, 'I am the Light of the world'. . . . [and] having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 8:12; 13:1).

"The piercing white light." ■

You can follow Pastor Dwight's blog at www.pmchurch.org/blog.

WE WORSHIP

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THE CALL

The Meditation *The Old Year Has Passed Away • Johann Sebastian Bach*

The Introit *O God, Our Help in Ages Past • William Croft*

The Call Micah 7:18-19 NIV • Rodlie Ortiz

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?

You do not stay angry forever but delight in mercy.

You will again have compassion on us;

You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Come then, let us worship our God, who in mercy forgets what He forgives.

The Doxology *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow • 2*

The Invocation Dwight K. Nelson

THE CELEBRATION

In Praising *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross • 154*

In Praying Rodlie Ortiz

In Thanking Don & Carol Dronen

In Giving Michigan Evangelism • Rodlie Ortiz
As We Sail to Heaven's Shore • Greg Nelson/Phill McHugh

In Telling Children's Story

In Proclaiming "The Gift of a Good Forgetter:
Your #1 New Year's Promise"
Dwight K. Nelson

THE CLEANSING

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." —John 13:12-17 NIV

THE COMMUNION

In Reading

Vida Giddings

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." —Matthew 26:26-29 NIV

In Praying

Philip Giddings III

In Partaking

There Is a Savior • Nelson / Farrell / Helvering

THE COMMITMENT

In Singing

Sent Forth by God's Blessing • 407

In Blessing

In Giving

PMC Assistance Fund

In Leaving

Bless the Lord, O My Soul • Charles Wood

PRESIDING PASTOR: Rodlie Ortiz; ORGANIST: Kenneth Logan
OFFERTORY: Ryan Clough, tenor

WE STUDY

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Song Service

Christina Carroll

Opening Hymn

Great Is Thy Faithfulness • 100

Welcome & Prayer

Lois Nicholas

Special Feature

"Does God Care About New Year?" • Lois Nicholas

Offertory

Bible Study

Classes • "Christian Living"

Theme Song

Make Me a Blessing

Make me a blessing; make me a blessing.
Out of my life may Jesus shine.
Make me a blessing; O Savior, I pray.
Make me a blessing; to someone today.

"Make Me a Blessing," Ira Bishop Wilson

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Benediction

Christina Carroll

ORGANIST: Kenneth Logan

| TRANSFERS IN |

ABRIOL, Natanael & Graciela
 ARISTIDE, Talisa
 BUENO, Gabriel & Guilherme
 HOWARD, Justin & Ana
 LACSON, Leomar & Gina
 LANGAT, Fredrick & Valarie
 LEACOCK, Angelina & Julia
 MARCELLINO, Anthony
 NOGUEIRA, Leila
 SINISCARCHIO, Fabio
 UMANA, Maxine
 WHITE, Carlita

| TRANSFERS OUT |

METELLUS, Marchenry
 NICOLAO, Isaac
 WATSON, Terry
 WEITHERS-BRUCE, Merillee

| PROFESSION OF FAITH |

MENANI, Mugisha
 SANCHEZ, Luis & Keila

| FROM |

Central • Fresno, CA
 Mountain View • Las Vegas, NV
 Primeira Essencia, Brazil
 Jacksonville, NC
 Mountain View • Las Vegas, NV
 The Way • Shoreview, MN
 Mount Zion • Hamden, CT
 Atholton • Columbia MD
 Portuguese • Fall River, MA
 Igreja de Genebra • Onex, Switzerland
 Stevensville, MI
 Lewisville, TX

| TO |

Rockville, MD
 Ubungo Hill/Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
 First/Tampa, FL
 Kent, WA

MUSIC ALIVE

THE WONDROUS CROSS

The accolades are so profuse. Why have people said such things about "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" by Isaac Watts? One dubbed it "the greatest of all his poems"; another called it "The Pearl of English Hymnody." Charles Wesley said that he would trade all the hymns he had ever written for this one, while Leonard Ellinwood believed that Watts' entire theology was expressed in the last stanza ("Were the whole realm

of nature mine . . ."). A sharp critic of hymns, Matthew Arnold, was attending a Presbyterian church service in Liverpool, England and listened to the congregation's singing of the hymn. Arnold repeated to himself lines of the hymn after the church service, and at lunch spoke of it as our greatest hymn. Why not meditate on these words (hymn 154) before singing them today? ■

SUBMIT bulletin announcements by visiting our form online at www.pmchurch.org/announcements/submit. Requests must be received Monday by 5:00 PM for consideration.

NEXT WEEK'S OFFERING
PMC Operating Expense

SUNSET TODAY • 5:22
SUNSET NEXT FRIDAY • 5:28

PIONEER PULPIT

| 01 • 06 |

DWIGHT K. NELSON
"Bring Your Heart to Life"

| 01 • 13 |

BRANDON VON DORPOWSKI

FINANCIAL FEATURE

MICHIGAN EVANGELISM

Following Jesus' method, the Michigan Conference's evangelistic strategy and aim is to Grow Michigan churches through a five-stage evangelistic process that includes: (1) *preparing* the soil of the heart with friendship and compassionate service; (2) *planting* the seeds of God's Word with literature; (3) *cultivating* spiritual interests with Bible studies, (4) *harvesting* decisions for Christ and the truth with public evangelistic meetings; (5) *preserving* new members with ongoing discipleship. Your offering today will help assist in this important work.

Adult Sabbath School Quarterly

Adult Sabbath School teachers or group representatives may pick up lesson quarterlies on behalf of their Sabbath on-duty leaders or Sabbath School group from the Welcome Center through December. Sabbath School materials are also available for free at <http://ssnet.org/study-guides/>. For questions or to submit Sabbath School information, contact Pastor Sabine or Gracie via gracie.gaytan@pmchurch.org or 471.3133.

PMC Office Closed

The PMC office will be closed on Friday and Monday, December 29 and January 1, for the New Year holiday. We will be open at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, January 2, and look forward to serving you then.

PMC Honduras Mission Trip

The PMC Youth Missions team arrived safely in Honduras and had a good start to the Friendship camp with about a 100 kids. We are happy to provide positive Christian activities for the children in these troubled times in Honduras. We distributed food baskets for dozens of the surrounding families for Christmas. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers. Donations can be made to PMC Youth Missions—Honduras.

Ten Days of Prayer

JANUARY 1-10 • 6:45-8:00 PM
4731 GREENFIELD DR.

Come and join the Youngbergs at their home for the 28th Annual Ten Days of Prayer. Start the New Year right—on your knees! Each night there will be inspiring short presentations on the Father God, our loving Savior, the Holy Spirit, and angelic ministries with personal sharing on what these have meant in incidents in your lives. Bring your prayer lists to share. This small group is for young or old. What happened after the waiting disciples prayed ten days in the Upper Room? Is this the gift that you want above all others? Out-of-state and foreign prayer requests gladly shared and prayed for.

Grow Groups!

Thinking about leading a GROW Group between February 18 to April 29? Here are just a few ideas for activities or themes to hopefully inspire new ideas: hammocking, paying your student debt, single dads, speaking other languages, random acts of kindness, cooking on a budget, buying your first home, and many more. To be included in the Spring 2018 semester catalog, sign up at www.pmchurch.org/grow and help others GROW new friendships with God and each other. Questions? Contact Pastor Sabine or Gracie Gaytan via growgroups@pmchurch.org.

Year-end Contributions

Dec. 30 is the last Sabbath to return your tithe and offerings for 2017. Mailed donations must be postmarked no later than Dec. 31 to be included in your 2017 tax-deductible receipt. You can also make your contribution at www.pmchurch.org; click GIVING.

Thank You

Dear PMC Family, thank you for the beautiful flower arrangement, your prayers, and support following the loss of my brother. We are so looking forward to Jesus second coming, the resurrection, and no more tears.

-Barbara Ray and family

Saying Goodbye

We have been blessed to have Rachele Offenback as our Graphic Designer here at Pioneer for over 6 years now. Starting January, 2018, Rachele will be starting a new job as stay-at-home mom. "I know my children are the most important treasures from God," Rachele says, and feels the Holy Spirit has lead her and her husband, Brenton, to this decision. We look forward to seeing them around the church as they continue to raise their children in this community. Please continue to submit your announcements online at www.pmchurch.org/announcements/submit and all other bulletin information still emailed to bulletin@pmchurch.org. We are currently interviewing candidates for the position.

-Richard Parke, Media Director

We Mourn

Today we mourn with Ami Hendrickson on the death of her mother, Marie Anne Long. Marie died on December 12, at the Gilead Elder Care, in Saint Joseph, Michigan. There are to be no services. With the family we look forward to the resurrection morning. "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

More Announcements

For more PMC and community announcements, please visit our website at www.pmchurch.org/announcements.

TRANSFORMING
THIS **GENERATION**



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