

Worship

March 20, 2011

Today's date is March 14, numerically written as 3/14, and therefore celebrated around the world as Pi day. ... So here's our tribute to this amazing number, 3.14159 26535 89793 23846 26433 83279 50... This day is celebrated by the obligatory pi(e) eating, accompanied by pi digit memorization, pi songwriting and, for the more active, running pi kilometers or pi miles. I know someone who got on stage at a local nerd talent show, announced that he would sing his "favorite number" and proceeded to sing 300 digits of pi rendered to popular tunes. Oh brother! (NYTimes, *Numberplay: Pi in the Sky* by Pradeep Mutalik)

And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. ... but he [the older son] answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. (Luke 15.23-24,29)

Welcome, Prelude and Time for Reflection

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Declaring What We Believe: Confession of Faith (Apostle's Creed, 4th c.)

Welcoming Each Other (Kids may go to their classrooms)

Giving Back to God: Offering

Please use the tear-off on the back so we can let you know about upcoming events. Gifts to Grace Hill support the life and work of our community; our budget maintains for twenty percent of gifts to go to works of local and global mission.

Hearing God's Word: Scripture Reading Nehemiah 12.27-47.

27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with *thanksgivings* and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the district surrounding Jerusalem and from the villages ..., for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. 30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people and the gates and the wall.

31 Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great *choirs that gave thanks*. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. 32 And after them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. 37 At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

38 The other *choir of those who gave thanks* went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, 39 and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Gate of Yeshanah, and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard. 40 So both *choirs of those who gave thanks* stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; ... And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. 43 And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

44 On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. 45 And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. 46 For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47 And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron.

Understanding God's Word and Our Lives: Sermon *Dancing at the Dedication, Praying at the Party*

1. A Grand Celebration
2. But Quite Unlike How We Celebrate
3. Relearning Celebration



Grace Hill Church

Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Reading

Lord, we admit that so often when we celebrate, we do so apart from you. Not that you are not there, but we are focused on our own comforts or accomplishments. We find it hard to know how to mix together joy and worship, dedication and a party. We are out of touch with the category for the deeper type of spiritual party that celebrates you, your people and your work. But Father such a combination is not strange to you. It is no mixture at all, but it is what is true. You work in and through your people, celebrating both things accomplished and people renewed. Ultimately to bring this to the fullest, in this world and the next, you consecrated and sent your Son, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising its shame, for us.

Private Reflection

Words of Forgiveness

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1.8-9)

Remembering Jesus with Bread and Cup: Lord's Supper

Jesus called those who find their life in His death and resurrection to receive the bread and cup as a tangible sign to remember and be strengthened by His Gospel. It is a spiritual meal for all who believe in Him.

On the first and third Sundays of the month, we come forward as families, groups and individuals to receive the bread and cup and for a prayer of blessing. The second, fourth and fifth Sundays, we remain seated, with time to personally remember Jesus' death and resurrection for us with the bread and cup. Whether you take the elements or not, we encourage you to either come forward for prayer or use the time for personal reflection about your relationship with Jesus.

Juice is in the outer ring; wine is in inner rings.

Responding with Song

Taking hold of the Good Word: Benediction ("the good word")

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." 2 Thess. 2: 16, 17

Prayers for Those Not Taking the Bread and Cup

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reason for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me and open me to the reality of your identity. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am more wicked and sinful than I ever dared allow, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, to give me complete forgiveness and rightness with God. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, in joy I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Covenant Children (Not Yet Confirmed)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen.



**Grace
Hill
Church**

Grace Hill is a church that seeks to live by and testify to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ (see John 1.14-18). We are affiliated with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a denomination with a rich history of Christ's grace and truth. Our pastor is Ross Durham; he can be reached by email at ross@gracehillchurch.net or by cell phone at 919.593.2169. Our Worship Director is Michael Musser and our Children's Ministry Co-Directors are Robyn Musser and Kaylyn Fernandez.

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Grace Hill.

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