



Providence Church

A Reformed Evangelical Congregation

THE LORD'S SERVICE

January 5th 2020

Second Sunday after Christmas

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, we at Providence Church open wide our doors and welcome all who are spiritually weak and seek rest; all who mourn and long for comfort; all who struggle and desire victory; all who sin and need the Savior; all who are strangers and want fellowship; all who hunger and thirst for righteousness; all who are poor in spirit and desire the riches of the gospel; all who will come to Jesus Christ in living faith and repentance, looking to Him as both Liberator and Lord.

Providence
Church

Yes, Jesus was born on (or near) December 25

By Adam McIntosh, pastor at Saint David's Church in Houston

OK, maybe the title of my article is a little too bold. The Bible doesn't give us the date of Jesus's birth, so we can't claim a particular date with certainty. But is it the case that Jesus was actually born in late summer? Is it the case that the church chose December 25 to co-opt pagan festivals? Enough people — Christians and non-Christians alike — believe these theories that they are repeated every Christmas season. Yet given the historical data we have, there's no reason to believe them.

Let me state up front that it doesn't really matter when Jesus was born; what matters is that he was born. Remarkably, a New Testament author never recorded the date for us, even though they could have. Surely Mary and Joseph and the shepherds remembered the date, and this date would have been known by Jesus and passed on to the apostles. Yet the Holy Spirit didn't deem it necessary to put into writing.

If it doesn't matter, then why defend a December 25 date? Defenders of December 25 primarily do so in response to the naysayers. It's a matter of defending the decisions and intentions of the church, and of historical accuracy. Given the information we have, there's no indication that the church wanted to co-opt pagan festivals. In fact, the opposite was generally true: The church wanted nothing to do with pagan practices. Christians, of all people, should want to be charitable to our ancestors and not impugn their motives.

When people say the church chose December 25 to copy pagans, it is pure speculation at the conspiracy-theory-level. We have no written record of a church father admitting or hinting to it. There's no correspondence that says, "We must copy the traditions of the pagans" or anything of the sort. That means these theories are built on silence and therefore impossible to prove. There is no positive evidence to support the pagan theories whatsoever. They are nothing more than assertions about people's intentions — people whom we can't interrogate today.

Unlike the pagan theories, there is evidence for December 25 being Jesus's birth date. For starters, church fathers such as Theophilus of Caesarea and Hippolytus of Rome claimed that Jesus was born on December 25, and their claims predated the pagan Sol Invictus festival. It would be more plausible to say that pagans copied Christians, not the other way around.

Secondly, biblical and historical records point to a December 25 date. It all starts with the conception of someone else: John the Baptist. According to the Gospel of Luke, we know that John was conceived 6 months before Jesus (Luke 1:36). If John's conception date could be determined, so could Jesus's. You would then count 9 months for the pregnancy and arrive at a due date for the birth.

(Read the rest of this article at the Kuyperian Commentary website. <http://kuyperian.com/yes-jesus-was-born-on-or-near-december-25/>)

GOD IS RENEWING HIS COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE

GOD CALLS US AND CLEANSSES US

Prelude:	<i>Mrs. Danielle Poorman</i>
Lighting of the Advent Wreath	<i>Christmas Candle</i>
Exhortation	<i>Listening to Change</i>
Processional Hymn (Please Stand):	The First Noel, pgs. 248-249
Call to Worship	

Pastor: Let us worship God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 18:20; 28:19

People: Amen

Salutation: The Lord be with you!

Ruth 2:4

People: And also with you!

Pastor: I rejoiced when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord!" *Psalm 122:1-2*

People: Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord!

People: Maker of Heaven and Earth!

Pastor: Dearly beloved brethren, if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Therefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of heavenly grace.

Pastor: Come, let us worship and bow down!

People: And kneel before the Lord our Maker. *(Let all who are able kneel)*

Psalm 95:6

Pastor: Most merciful God,

All: We confess to you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed; not only in outward transgressions, but also in secret thoughts and desires that we are not able to understand, but which are all known to you. For this reason, we flee for refuge to your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring your grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Continue Kneeling for Silent Confession)

Assurance of Pardon

(Rise and Hear the Good News of God's Forgiveness)

Pastor: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He has not dealt with us according to our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. On this day know surely your sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 13:38

**All: Thanks be to God. Our sins are forgiven in Jesus' name.
Amen!**

Psalm of Faith:

People: Amen.

Of the Father's Love Begotten, pg. 246 (vss. 1-4)

GOD CONSECRATES AND RAISES US UP TO HEAVEN

Pastor: Lift up your hearts!

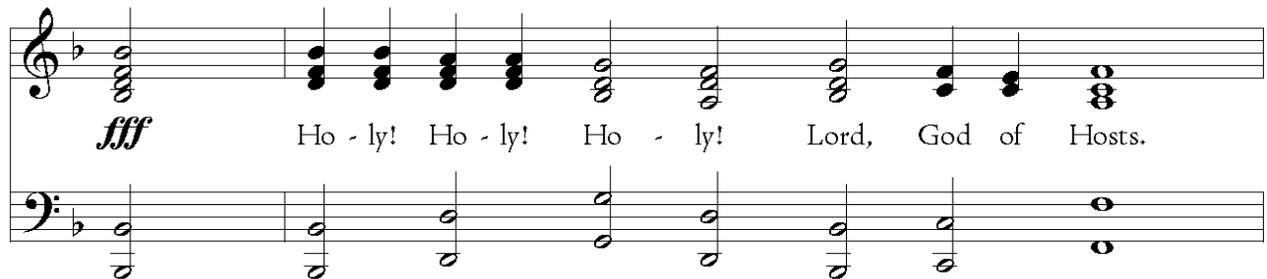
People: We lift them up to the Lord!

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

People: It is proper and right to do so.

SANCTUS

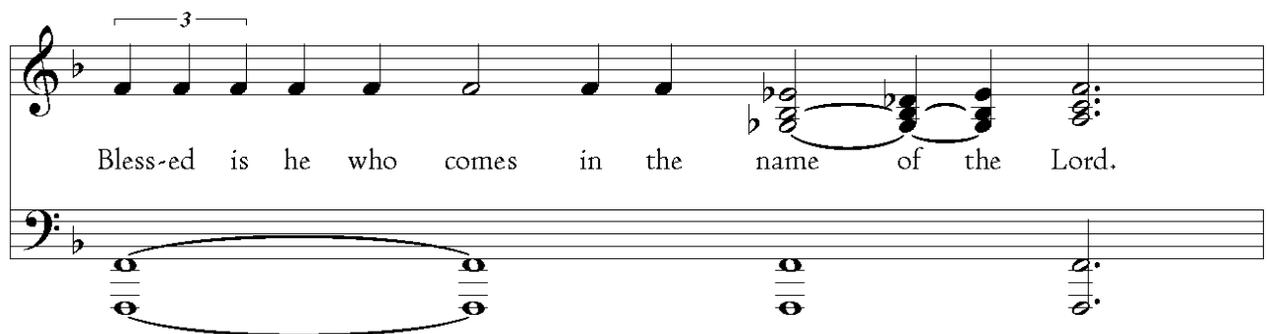
Pastor: Truly it is fitting, right, wholesome and beneficial that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks to You O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God. Therefore, with angels and archangels, with all the company of heaven, and with all the Church on earth, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:



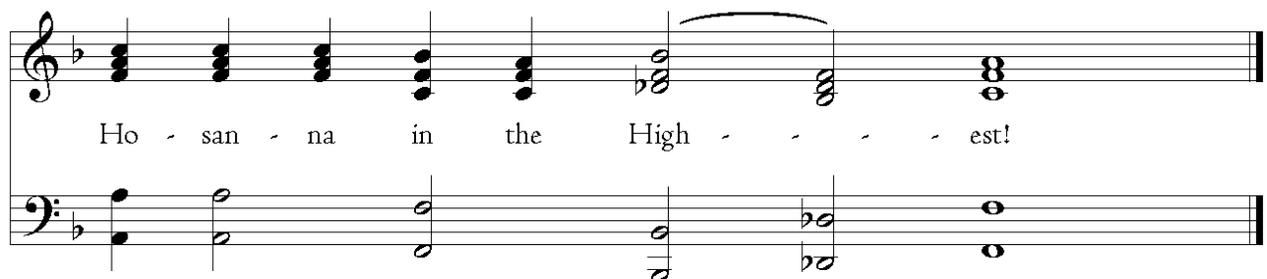
fff Ho - ly! Ho - ly! Ho - ly! Lord, God of Hosts.



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!

RESPONSIVE PSALM

Psalm 1

Pastor: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

People: And in the way of sinners does not stand, And in the seat of mockers does not sit;

But rather in Yahweh's Teaching is his delight,

And on His Teaching he meditates day and night.

And he is like a tree planted by streams of waters,

Who yields his fruit in his season,

And his leaf does not wither,

And whatever he does prospers.

Not so the wicked!

But rather they are like the chaff that Spirit-wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the wicked shall perish.

Blessed be Yahweh, God of Israel.

From everlasting to everlasting.

Amen!

Yes! Amen!

CONFESSION OF THE NICENE CREED

(Please Remain Standing)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND SUNG LORD'S PRAYER

Please respond at the end of each section:

Pastor: Father, hear our prayer!

People: For Your steadfast love endures forever!

The Lord's Prayer

Our Fa - ther, who art in heav - en, hal-low-ed be Thy name, Thy king - dom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heav - en. Give us this day our dai - ly bread,

and for-give us our debts, as we for-give our debt - ors,

and lead us not in - to temp-ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from e - vil.

For thine is the king - dom, and the pow - er, and the glo - ry for - ev - er. A - men!

READING OF GOD'S WORD

(Please Stand)

Old Covenant Reading:

1 Kings 3:4–15

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

New Covenant Reading:

Ephesians 1:3–14

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading in the Midst of the People:

Luke 2:39–52

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.

Hymn:

Of the Father's Love Begotten, pg. 247 (vss 5-7)

People: Amen.

SERMON

Pastor: Uri Brito

Title: When Mom and Dad Lost the Son of God (Outline on back page)

Text: Luke 2:39–52

OFFERTORY

(Ex. 23:15; 34:20; Dt. 16:16)

Pastor: Let us worship God with our tithes and offerings.

Communion Hymn:

Angels We Have Heard on High, pg. 230

People: Amen.

Offertory Prayer:

Pastor: Christians, how do you respond to our Lord?

People: We give only what the Lord has first given to us.

We present ourselves as living sacrifices,

And we offer the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

We cheerfully give these tithes and offerings

In obedience to the Lord, for the glory of His Name,

The health of the Church, and for the sake of the world.

Amen.

GOD COMMUNES WITH US

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 Session 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. If you have any doubt about your participation, please speak to one of the pastors before or after the service.

Passing of the Bread: **("The Lord be with you" "The Lord bless you")**

Passing of the Wine: **("The Peace of Christ be with you" "And also with you")**

Congregational Response: **Gloria Patri**

(Please Stand with Hands Raised)

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,

A-men, A-men.

GOD COMMISSIONS US

The Lord's Commission:

Matthew 28:18-20

Pastor: Our mouths will speak the praise of the Lord!

People: Let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever. AMEN!

Psalms 145:21

Closing Hymn:

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing, pg. 236

People: Amen!

Benediction:

Numbers 6:24-26

Threefold Amen

Announcements

Pastor: Go in peace to love and to serve our Risen Lord!

All: Amen!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Events

Jan.	No Vespers this Month	
Jan. 8th	Men's Study Picks Back Up	6am, Jeremiah 27 at Chick Fil A
Jan. 11th	Rally and Walk for Life	Maritime Park at 11am. Pastor Stout is the Emcee for this event and will need his volunteers to meet him there at 9:30am. Please consider coming for the rally and walk.
Jan. 26th	Fellowship Meal	Please bring a main dish and a side or dessert.

OUTLINE

Text: Luke 2:39-52

Remember those milk cartons that contained photos of lost children? I used to look intently to their faces as I ate my cereal trying to imagine what it must have felt to be lost; separated from loved ones. In our Gospel story, we have the story of the world's creator lost from the sight of his parents for three days. Of course, in a clear way, Jesus was not lost. Jesus always knew his place, and in a twist of scenarios, it's actually Mary and Joseph who are lost when they fail to grasp Jesus' central mission in the Temple.

- I. The Obedience of the Royal Family.
- II. Jesus' Humanity.
- III. The Significance of the Number 12.
- IV. Mary and Joseph Return to Look for their Son.
- V. Jesus is Submissive to Authorities and his Parents.
- VI. Treasuring Things in Our Hearts.

48 And when his parents saw him, **they were astonished**. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." **49** And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I **must** be in my Father's house?" **50** And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. **51** And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and **was submissive** to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Providence Church is a member of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC),
and a member of Athanasius Presbytery.

THE SESSION

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