

TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch /Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Michael Simmons

#3 Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah

#429 Oh, To Be Like Thee

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch

#332 Lead Me to Calvary

Lord's Supper and Contribution

#538 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Sermon: "Take Up Your Cross"

Mark 8:34-35

#940 Only a Step

#841 Hide Me, O My Savior

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Welcome by: Daniel Balch

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Michael Simmons

#615 He Keeps Me Singing

#545 Precious Memories

Scripture Reading: Tristan Strickhausen

Prayer by: David Smith

#593 I Come to the Garden Alone

Sermon: "Worship in Song: The Power of the Cross"

Romans 1:16

#753 Farther Along

#470 Victory in Jesus

Closing Prayer by: David Warren

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 6:00pm — Worship

Wednesday: 10:00am — Ladies Bible Class, 7:00pm — Bible Study Classes

June 10, 2018

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

A Wall of Separation

This week, the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Masterpiece Cakeshop*, in which a baker refused to craft a wedding cake for a same-sex marriage due to his religious beliefs. There were a number of issues in play, but the Court hinged their decision on the Colorado Civil Rights Commission's overt hostility to the baker's faith. This is a very narrow holding that does not really address the larger questions the case raised, leaving many on both sides of the issue dissatisfied.

I am not a lawyer, so I do not wish to wade deeper into the legal side of things. But I do think there is value for us in considering the concept of separation of church and state from a historical perspective, particularly in terms of Thomas Jefferson, the most prominent voice on this issue in American history. His pronouncement that the First Amendment builds a "wall of separation" between church and state has become so well known that it has almost replaced the actual text of the Constitution in the popular mind and even in the judicial world. Unfortunately, a great deal of confusion exists over just what Jefferson's beliefs were. If people are to take him as an authority in this area, a better understanding of his position is essential.

Jefferson has been categorized as a Unitarian, a Deist, and even an atheist by both his contemporaries and scholars. He considered himself a Christian at least in the loose sense that he believed Jesus of Nazareth represented the pinnacle of religious philosophy, though he did not believe in his deity or miracles, even fashioning a harmony of the Gospels with those references cut out. This led him to a view of religion that emphasized morality over theology and an anticlerical distrust of established churches. He valued freedom of conscience and toleration above all.

Accordingly, he supported the separation of church and state, not as an end in itself, but as a means of achieving religious freedom. It is critical to keep that principle in mind; for Jefferson, the "wall of separation" did not mean that there should be no interaction whatsoever between the civil and religious realms. Though his "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom" in Virginia, for example, is rightly celebrated as a tremendous achievement and treated as representative of his position, most people are unaware that several other bills authored by Jefferson were introduced at that same legislative session. One of these, for example, forbade disturbing worship services on Sunday, while another specifically authorized the proclamation of public days of fasting.

These would be difficult to reconcile with the popular interpretation of Jefferson's wall metaphor. When it is remembered that his guiding principle was freedom to practice religion unmolested by the government, however, no conflict exists. The government could interact with the church, and could even enact laws to support religion in at least a general sense; it could not inhibit it. In the same way, the line about the "wall of separation" is taken from a letter to some supporters in the Baptist

Our Sick

Dana Wiggins is taking chemo treatments.

John Sanchez, Claudia Girard's father is in Methodist Hospital.

Dani Brister has been ill with double pneumonia and is doing well.

Brian Arnold, J. P. Williams' son in law is having health problems.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, James Scott, Gary Nielsen, Harold Cryer, Gerald Lucy, Steve Ward, Teresa McKewen, Jackie David, Patricia Padon, Frank & Tina Garcia, Ronnie Davis, Bill Lunceford, Eric Davis, J. P. Williams, Stacie Copeland, Mark Wilcox, Doris Trahan, Phillip Cottle

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Pauline Taylor, Winona Angelle, Pat Henley, Myrtle Sheffield, Ronnie Rubit, Joe Leonard

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Plastic Bags

The Food Bank is in need of plastic grocery bags. A barrel is in the foyer.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, June 11th at 7pm.

Primetimers will be having a Hamburger Supper on Tuesday, June 12th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship room.

Baby Shower for Sara Smathers, Sunday, June 24th from 2-4 pm. She is registered at babylist.com.

VBS is July 23-26th. Make your plans to attend.

It's almost time for those Happy Campers to head off to church camp....

The kiddos will be going to Camp Red Oak Springs and Camp Bandina this year. 2 sessions for CROS. Please register ASAP for spots are filling up fast.

Ages 10-18, Camp Red Oak Springs

Session 2 June 18-23, Session 5 July 2-7

Online registration and payment @ campredoaksprings.net

Ages 10-18, Camp Bandina-Elliot Session

July 15-21

Online registration and payment @ campbandina.org.

FYI-Don't forget to print the medical release form for they will need this when they get to camp.

See Phillip Strickhausen if you have any questions

Communion Preparation: Abbey Perkins

Nursery Attendants: Marsha Rader

Children's Bible Hour: Tania Balch

Teen Helpers: Dylan Balch, Brandon Smith

Communion Preparation for Sunday, June 17th: Abbey Perkins

Nursery Attendants for Sunday, June 17th: Pat Hobbs

Children's Bible Hour for Sunday, June 17th: Emily Nance

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Association of Danbury, Connecticut. Jefferson was expressing his conviction that they ought to have complete freedom to worship as they pleased.

This brief foray into the past has ramifications for us in a couple of ways. For the history churches of Christ in America, the climate of religious toleration created by Jefferson cannot be overestimated in significance. Without the ability to interpret the Bible and worship as an individual saw fit, it is possible that the Restoration Movement would not have taken place. At the least, it almost certainly would not have been so successful.

Secondly, in our contemporary context, it should be noted that Jefferson's wall metaphor is often abused; it did not mean that religion should have no place in the public square. At the same time, it reminds us that, contrary to what we often think, separation of church and state is actually a good thing. As Jefferson knew, the result of intertwining them is ultimately the loss of religious liberty.

You see, we focus on cases like this because we want the state to be favorable to our religious beliefs. But for the church to be the church – to be a witness in the world of God's rule, an outpost of his heavenly kingdom – a benevolent state is no less threatening than an oppressive one. In fact, it may be *more* threatening, because it tempts us to rely on the state to do the church's work. We must trust in the Lord and follow his ways – not the world's ways – to accomplish our mission. That isn't just good advice or a history lesson; it's deeply Biblical.

My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting...But my kingdom is not from the world. (Jn 18:36)

Bryant Perkins