



LIVING STONE

REFORMED CHURCH

ORDER OF SERVICE

March 1, 2026

NEXT WEEK: MARCH 8, 2026

LIVING STONE REFORMED CHURCH | 9:30 AM

NSA NORTH CAMPUS (112 N. MAIN ST) | JOSHUA EDGREN

CHRIST CHURCH | 8:00, 9:30, 10:00, 11:00 AM

8:00, 9:30, 11:00 | CHURCH HALL (820 DOMINION WAY) | JARED LONGSHORE

10:00 | CHRIST CHURCH DOWNTOWN (417 S JACKSON ST) | AARON YOUNGREN

KING'S CROSS CHURCH | 8:00 & 9:30 AM

8:00 | NUART THEATER (516 S. MAIN ST) | TOBY SUMPTER

9:30 | LOGOS FIELDHOUSE (1221 W. A ST) | TOBY SUMPTER

CHRIST THE REDEEMER CHURCH | 9:00 AM

YE OLDE BANK (424 S. MAIN, TROY)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JEREMIAH 20:7-18, MARK 8:31-38

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ORDER OF SERVICE

ANNOUNCEMENTS & MEDITATION

- CALL TO WORSHIP -

Please stand.

ADORATION

Minister: Bless the Lord who forgives our sins.

Congregation: His mercy endures forever.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 94:12-15

Minister: Lift up your hearts!

Congregation: We lift them up to the Lord!

PRAYER

HYMN

God of Vengeance, O Jehovah.....173

- CONFESSION -

Please sit.

EXHORTATION.....*Joshua Edgren*

PSALM

My Soul Is Broken with Desire.....228c

CONFESSION OF SIN

Congregation is invited to kneel if able.

Deuteronomy 6:13-15

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Please stand.

Isaiah 53:5

Minister: Your sins are forgiven through Christ.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Apostles Creed.....712

Minister: Christian, what do you believe?

Congregation: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hades. On the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

RESPONSIVE READING: PSALM 66

Minister: Make a joyful noise unto God, all you lands:

Congregation: Sing forth the honor of His name:

Minister: Make his praise glorious.

Congregation: Say unto God, How terrible You are in Your works!

Minister: All the earth shall worship You,

Congregation: And shall sing unto You; they shall sing to Your name. Selah.

Minister: If I regard iniquity in my heart,

Congregation: The Lord will not hear me:

Minister: Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer,

Congregation: Nor his mercy from me. Amen.

HYMN

God the Lord Is King.....183

- CONSECRATION -

SCRIPTURE READING

(Matt Gray)

Lamentations 3:19-30, 1 Peter 2:19-25

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

MEMBERSHIP

Caleb Schmidt

HYMN

Please sit.

Great is Thy Faithfulness.....677

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

(Matt Gray)

Opening: Psalm 94:1-3

Thanksgiving: Psalm 94:17-19

Petitions: Psalm 94:3-7

HYMN

Please stand.

Give unto God, You Mighty Ones.....56

SERMON

Please sit.

Flustered Foxes.....*Ben Zornes*

PRAYER

Ending with *The Lord's Prayer*.....725

OFFERTORY

Please stand

Psalm 127.....246

- COMMUNION -

Please sit.

MEDITATION.....*Joshua Edgren*

THE BREAD

What Wondrous Love Is This.....453

THE WINE

Thee, O God, Yes, Thee We Praise.....143

- COMMISSIONING -

Please stand.

CLOSING DOXOLOGY

The congregation may raise hands.

Gloria Patri.....736

CHARGE & BLESSING

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

“MAY I COME TO THE LORD’S TABLE?”

The Lord’s Supper is observed every Lord’s Day at Living Stone. We warmly 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. Since the elders are responsible for the table, when a baptized child begins taking the Lord’s Supper, we ask a parent to notify one of the elders. By eating the bread and drinking the wine with us as a visitor, you are acknowledging that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. You also acknowledge to the elders of this congregation that you are in covenant with God, being active in a congregation which is covenantally bound to the triune God through Word and sacrament. If you have any doubt about your participation, please speak to the elders before or after the service.

FLUSTERED FOXES / NEHEMIAH 4

INTRODUCTION

A great start doesn't always mean a strong finish. As we saw back in Ezra 4:4, God's people grew discouraged when things grew difficult. Being limp-wristed and giving up really is a besetting sin of God's people. But in Nehemiah we find a leader who doesn't falter.

THE TEXT

But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. [...] Nehemiah 4:1ff

SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Upon hearing the rumble of construction in Jerusalem, Sanballat and Tobiah are sent into a rage and give over to mockery and saber-rattling (vv1-3). Nehemiah responds to this threat by imprecatory prayer (vv4-5) and carrying on (v6). Because their threats hadn't produced the desired outcome, the enemies' anger is taken up a notch and begin laying actual plans for violence (vv7-8).

Nehemiah, once more, leads God's people to respond to these threats by prayer and action (v9). But some of the people were unnerved, and their shanties began to give voice to the overwhelming extent of the work (v10); rumors circulated of an intimidating and overwhelming threat (vv11-12). The steadiness of Nehemiah in all this is remarkable. He prepares for battle (v13), and exhorts the nobles and people to "remember the Lord and fight for your families (v14)."

By the courageous faith and action of Nehemiah, the enemies flinch when they realize their sneak attack was not so sneaky; this respite allowed the work to resume (v15). However, precaution was made and we are given a wonderfully memorable image of this great restoration project: a weapon in one hand, and a tool in the other. Sword and shovel. Spear and Chisel. Bow and plumb-line (vv15-18). The brilliance of Nehemiah is further displayed in his emergency response plan (vv19-20); he set watchmen on the wall, and if there was an attack they would give a trumpet blast and all other crews should hasten to that spot, with the motto of Nehemiah ringing in their ears: Our God shall fight for us. Lastly, Nehemiah and his entourage participated and set the example of the vigilance that was necessary for this tenuous situation (vv21-23).

YOUR ENEMY WANTS YOUR SPINE

It is quite instructive to notice the tactics which Nehemiah's enemies resort to using in their attempts to thwart the mission. First of all, remember that these enemies are tangled up with the issue of the idolatrous wives. That resentment was likely the low-grade fever, but Nehemiah's arrival, and with it the continued purification and stabilization of a holy city outrages them. Whatever their principle motive, it is plain that the progress of the city of God is like throwing a banana in a cage of starved chimps.

Fundamentally, the opponents of God's people still haven't altered their strategy. Sanballat's mockery consisted of disbelief that they could be successful in their project. He paints the project as bleak and hopeless. It could never happen. Why even try? Tobiah's mockery riffs on Sanballat's. He says, effectively, even if they were to build it, it'll be so feeble that a fox could knock it down. That's a potent combo of mockery: you're feeble and you can't do it, and even if you do it won't last.

What is their aim? To get God's people to stop, to take a step back, to rethink the wisdom of their project, to reconsider whether their objective is too ambitious. All they want is your spine. When this doesn't work, which is due to Nehemiah's wonderful disposition, these enemies have to resort to violence.

DON'T BE UNNERVED

It is your Christian duty to learn to not care. This sort of “not caring” is not the glazed eyes of a doom-scroller. You must care about the right things. But all too often Christians are intimidated and are unnerved. There are three particular areas of application. You must not be unnerved in regards 1) to your Christian convictions, 2) to godly ambition, or 3) to the turbulence of world events.

First, you've probably had people tell you that your efforts to try to live as faithfully and as biblically as you can is legalistic. Almost without fail, they tell you this not out of genuine concern about legalism, but out of their own guilt for not living according to scripture. They are giving voice to Sanballat's mockery, you can't live that way, it isn't possible.

Secondly, as you plan for the future both as families, and more broadly as we labor to restore our nation to its Christian convictions and Protestant heritage, we should expect to be lectured about how much of a failure it has been, and so we ought not to undertake it. But this is to give voice to Tobiah's mockery about how your efforts won't last.

Third, you are hemmed in by all manner of cultural events and voices that want you frightened, insecure, and paranoid. Culturally, there is always another panic or fad which seeks to insist that now you must abandon the principles of Scripture. Darwinism, LGBT, aliens, AI, Jew-hate, whatever conspiracy theory is being discussed on the socials or in the office. The argument comes dressed in different garb, but underneath it is always the same mutilated zombie corpse: you should stop the good work which God in His Word has given you to do.

Husbands, you need to be a model of this steadiness in your homes. Godly leaders must not swerve from biblically convictions, must not back away from ambitious projects undertaken for the glory of God just because it got difficult or was challenged, nor be swept along by the winds of popular positions or conspiracy theories. This is why Nehemiah's response is exemplary. He prays and then acts. He tells the people remember the Lord, and then fight. That is how you can shrug at that which terrifies the average unbeliever. That is how you can be steady when everyone else is shrieking. That is how you can plod forward when everyone is tempted to run for cover.

OUR GOD FIGHTS FOR US

You *are* feeble. Your efforts are inadequate. The foxes have probably knocked you over more times than you care to remember. However, the Gospel really is the removal of all the reproach of your sin. When you confess your sin, you are taking away the devil's principle mechanism for intimidating you. I know! I already told God about that. I know! I already confessed it to those I sinned against. I know! God told me that if I confess my sins, He will forgive me and cleanse me from all my unrighteousness. A clear conscience, given to you by the God who fights for you, is the only way to not be unnerved.

Nehemiah knew that “The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name (Ex. 15:3).” The Commander of the armies of the Living God met Joshua to assure him of Jericho's defeat. The Spirit of the Lord filled Samson to pull down the temple of Philistines. A shepherd boy, by certain faith in the God of Israel, sank a stone in the forehead of Goliath.

Now consider Christ. Surrounded by mockers and scoffers. Drinking up the cup of God's wrath for the sins of the elect. The temple of His body being torn down, in order that by the power of God He might erect an everlasting temple-city for you to live in. There is God fighting for you. He did not flinch in the face of it. And by that Gospel, and that alone, can you face your fears and foes. Because He fights for you, all the foxes who would do you harm must yelp and run off flustered.