

In our world today many of us may feel like we don't get to experience miracles firsthand. The disciples were so blessed to be in ministry with Jesus Christ and get to see the miracles of Jesus turning water to wine, of Jesus healing those who were sick, and even of Jesus bringing people back to life from the dead. We long to experience these miracles of Christ, yet most of us would admit that we have never seen anything like this.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ this evening, we too must recognize that God is still at work in the world today through the ministry of Jesus Christ and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Miracles still happen today, and we should be on the lookout for them.

One of the biggest miracles I have ever personally witnessed happened in the re-birth of a worship service at my first appointment in Newport News, Virginia. The church had tried to start a contemporary service unsuccessfully for seven years. Each time it would seem to start out okay, but only a month later the service would wane, and attendance would come to a halt.

When I arrived, the church relayed to me these stories of death, and how they longed for new life. So, I took to praying. First, “Why me God?” I mean this was the first year of my first appointment after all. What did I know about starting a new service?”

I asked more questions about the way the services had ended, and these stories all had something in common. That pastors that tried to start them and ended up becoming burnt out because they could not add this to their plate with all their other pastoral responsibilities.

Then I realized something important, that I myself would not be able to start this new service. **You see God's miracles happen within the context of the body of Christ.** Once this weight was lifted off my shoulders there seemed to be signs of new life all around us.

This service was founded on the Scripture from Matthew 5:14-16 when Jesus said: “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

We called this service “The Lampstand” this symbolism reminding us to be filled with the light of Christ in worship and extend the light of Christ to the world beyond the doors of the church.

Now the Lampstand is the largest service in this mid-size church in Newport News, Virginia. For ten years they have done countless baptisms, offered communion to thousands of people, and even housed sacred services of marriage and funerals. This service came to life not because of the talent or hard work of a pastor, but through the passionate faith of a community of people who wanted to reach out to those who did not have a church home.

This is one of the most beautiful miracles that I have experienced, and it reminded me that God is still a God of miracles.

Tonight, you are invited to expect a miracle as we once again approach Christ’s communion table. In the sacrament of communion Christ is with us offering us the miracle of God’s grace.

No matter what we have done since the last time we have come through the doors of the church we are invited to come home for this spiritual supper, we are invited into this miracle of God’s story where God calls us to be God’s people through our faith in Jesus Christ.

The good news for our lives this evening is that we are invited to be part of the miracle birth story of Jesus Christ. We are invited to help others to see that God is still at work in the world today.

May we always be people who expect God’s miracles of resurrection and life and when we raise our candles tonight at the end of the service may we too take on Christ’s ministry of new life and resurrection in the world today. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Go to communion table.

Invitation & Prayer of Confession

Christ our Lord invites us to this table of miracles. Where the ordinary elements of bread and juice become for us means of grace and symbols of the body and blood of Christ. The only thing we have to do to partake in this miracle this evening is to participate in this prayer of confession.

Loving God, tonight we confess to you that we are imperfect. We have failed to see the ways in which your miracles of resurrection and life are still happening in the world today.

We have failed to love our neighbors, we have failed to be an obedient church, we have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Almighty God, forgive us of our sins those present and those past. Help us to approach your table with love and gratitude on this special night. In the name of your Son Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Now we will take some time in silence to confess our sins before God...

When we ask for God’s forgiveness God forgives us, in the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

Passing of the peace