



## Preparing for 2019



*If we are to make a positive change in our pursuit of Christ in 2019 then we must plan how we are going to do it.*

By Alexander S. Brown, Minister

**I**t is hard to believe another year is drawing to a close. In just a few weeks we will be bidding farewell to 2018 and welcoming in a new year. If the past 11 months have felt like they passed in a whirlwind, December will rush through even more quickly – the passage of time hastened by the busyness of the Christmas season. Whether it is the purchasing of gifts, wrapping them, meeting mailing deadlines, or going to Christmas parties and visiting with friends, it seems like this month quickly becomes a blur of activity.

For many of us, the last month of the year often feels like the shortest. However, I want to encourage you to set aside a little time in this busy month to prepare for the dawning of 2019.

With the New Year comes the proverbial ‘New Year’s Resolutions’! It is that great, momentous occasion on which we resolve to transform our lives, usually focusing on some kind of personal improvement. For some, the resolution is to finally stop smoking. For others it is to start exercising. Others may decide that it is time to finally start eating better.

For Christians this list of personal improvement often includes some kind of resolution to improve our spiritual health – a desire to be more consistent reading our Bibles; a renewed effort to make prayer a larger part of our lives; a commitment to be more involved in the life of our church.

All of those – both the pursuit of spiritual and physical health – are good desires and aspirations. However, I think all of us know something of the disappointment that can often set in in February or March when we realize that after only a few short weeks (maybe even a few days) our lofty ambitions had feet of clay.

### *So, how can 2019 be different?*

Well, of course there are no foolproof measures that can be taken to ensure things will be different – there is no secret key to unlock the next level of spiritual success! However, there are some steps we can take to ensure that we are as well prepared as we can be for the arrival of the New Year.

*continued on page 2*

## December Calendar

### Sunday Schedule

**9:15 a.m. Sunday School**  
Classes: see pg. 5

**10:30 a.m. Morning Worship**  
Gospel of Matthew

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**Sun 12/9 Lessons and Carols**  
6:00 p.m., GIPC  
*Maestro Luis Haza, violinist*  
(pg. 2)

**Thu 12/13 Stated Session Meeting**

**Sun 12/16 (No Evening Service)**

**Wed 12/19 Family Movie Night**  
6:00 p.m., GIPC (pg. 5)

**Sun 12/23 (No Sunday School or Evening Service)**

**Tue 12/25 Christmas Day**  
(Church office closed Christmas week)

**Sun 12/30 Guest Minister,**  
Rev. Nick Batzig  
10:30 a.m. Worship  
(No Sunday School or Evening Service)

*See page 5 for additional  
Calendar details.*

## In this issue

Announcements, Updates, and  
Special Events..... 2-5



Shorter Catechism  
review Q & A..... 6

December Bible Reading  
Plan (M'Cheyne)..... 7

Fighter Verses..... 7

**T**he first thing that we can do is **make our resolution now**. If we wait until January 1<sup>st</sup> or December 31<sup>st</sup> to resolve to make a change, we will have already begun the year behind! So, now is the time!

As busy as December can get, the best way to set up for 2019 is to take a few moments away from the distractions and busyness of life and think and pray about what you would like to see changed in your life.

Perhaps you want to be more consistent in your Bible reading, or start a regular practice of family devotions.

Maybe your resolution is to be more involved in the life of the church; maybe you want to make sure that you are involved in one of our Bible Studies, or start attending Sunday School. Perhaps you want to be more regular at the Prayer Meeting. Whatever your resolution is, now is the time to decide, because now is the time to prepare.

A favorite cliché of mine is: ‘prior planning prevents poor performance.’ I think that is true in almost every area of life, and it is certainly true when it comes to the spiritual disciplines.

***If we are to make a positive change in our pursuit of Christ in 2019 then we must plan how we are going to do it.***

Greater involvement in the activities of the church will mean that you will have to examine your calendar and block out time to ensure that your involvement will not be crowded out by other commitments.

So, for example, if you want to regularly come to Sunday School, you will need to make sure you set your alarm early enough to get to church an hour earlier than you currently do!

Whatever your resolution is, it will need intentionality if it is to succeed.

This goes for devotions as well. If you are to regularly read the Bible or nurture family devotions, then you need to decide when in the day is best to do that. For many people first thing in the morning is best for Bible reading and prayer – setting aside time before the distractions of the day kick in. For others, the quiet of the evening provides the best opportunity to be alone.

The same is true for family devotions – for some it is best to do it at meal times, when all the family is gathered, but for others a separate time, set apart from all other activities and distractions, is most conducive to a time of worship.

However you decide to do it, the most important thing is to decide now, and the benefit of figuring this out at the beginning of December is that you can use this month as a kind of trial run, testing out different options.

This is particularly important with private and family devotions. If we are to succeed in these areas we don’t just need to set our schedule, we also need to decide on what resources we are going to use and what shape these devotions will have.

**O**ne of the first things that you are going to need to do is simply **decide how you are going to read your Bible**. Some people like to read sequentially through Scripture, reading from Genesis to Revelation, watching as the Redemptive storyline unfolds as they move from Creation, to the formation of God’s Covenant people, to the fulfillment of God’s Covenant promises in Christ, to the consummation of all things as it is depicted in Revelation.

*continued on page 3*

*Joy*  
*to the world*

THE LORD HAS COME

Join us for

LESSONS

and CAROLS

*Maestro Luis Haza, violinist*

Sunday, December 9th

6:00 p.m.

Golden Isles Presbyterian Church

48 Hampton Point Drive

Saint Simons Island

[gipc-pca.org](http://gipc-pca.org)

*Light refreshments served.*

**GOLDEN ISLES  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

48 Hampton Point Drive  
Saint Simons Island, GA 31522

Phone: 912.638.2563

E-Mail: [office@gipc-pca.org](mailto:office@gipc-pca.org)

[www.gipc-pca.org](http://www.gipc-pca.org)

Others, however, find that following this method often gets them bogged down in the more difficult books, such as Leviticus or Numbers, and so they prefer to read chapters from multiple parts of the Bible every day.

Some are always reading the Psalms and/or Proverbs – going sequentially through these books, and beginning again when they finish. Some like to trace particular themes in Scripture. Some like to devote months to the study of one particular book, digging deep so that they come away really understanding what that book says and what it means, and how it fits in the grander storyline.

Whatever you decide depends on your personality, preferences, experience and opportunity – remember, this plan needs to be realistic, and so plan on something doable. The goal is to nurture a long-standing discipline, and so have the long view in mind as you prepare.

***If you are just starting to implement these devotions I would encourage you to pitch it low. It is far better to find that your plan is too easy, and then add to it, than find it frustrating and discouragingly difficult.***

I think that is particularly true if you are trying to nurture a time for family worship. I have joined families in their devotional time who have had mini-worship services, complete with singing, prayer, Bible reading and even a short homily. That is undoubtedly too much if you are just trying to introduce this practice into the rhythms of your family life.

It would be much better to simply begin with a Bible reading and prayer – establishing a solid foundation on which you can easily build and expand as the practice matures.

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**L**et me encourage you to start preparing now. Pick out a Bible reading plan and give it a go in December. If it is not right for you, then there is time to look for something else. Try gathering as a couple or as a family a few nights a week to just get used to a new habit.

I know that I will be resolving to pursue holiness in 2019, and I hope that many of you will, too. Let's make our plans now, so that we can hit the ground running when January 1<sup>st</sup> rolls around. ☞

► See page 4 for a list of recommended Resources.

## Bible Reading Plans

- Crossway has compiled a list of different reading plans to guide you through the Bible, offering a variety of methods for guiding your reading. You can view a plan on your mobile device, print a copy, or have the daily reading emailed to your inbox. Find it here: [bit.ly/2gJ2np7](http://bit.ly/2gJ2np7)
- The Navigators offer 3 different plans for reading through the Bible. If Bible reading is a new discipline for you, their “5x5x5” plan might be a good place to start. 5 minutes a day, 5 days a week, with 5 helpful hints to help you dig deep as you read. They also offer the classic *Discipleship Journal* plan which is a perennial favorite. Alternately, their *Book at a Time* plan takes you through the Bible in a year with two daily readings. You can find those plans here: [bit.ly/2gkWa4i](http://bit.ly/2gkWa4i)
- If you want to go a bit slower, you can find a 2-Year Reading Plan here: [bit.ly/2gVI8aw](http://bit.ly/2gVI8aw)
- *The Gospel Coalition* has a helpful post which not only collates a number of different resources, but also gives suggestions for alternate ways to approach a daily intake of Scripture. You can find it here: [bit.ly/2gl7hKx](http://bit.ly/2gl7hKx)

## Personal Devotions/Prayer, Family Worship, and Bible Study

- [\*For the Love of God\*](#) by D. A. Carson is a helpful devotional that accompanies the M’Cheyne 365 Day Bible Reading Plan.
- Paul David Tripp’s [\*New Morning Mercies\*](#) is full of helpful and challenging insights and is a great companion to begin the day with.
- Tim Keller’s [\*The Songs of Jesus\*](#) leads the reader through the book of Psalms with daily readings. This book is ideal for those wanting to start or restart having a daily quiet time.
- [\*Experiencing the Trinity\*](#) has 50 short meditations on what it means to worship a Triune God, and could be easily incorporated into either personal or family daily devotions.
- [\*The Valley of Vision\*](#) continues to be a favorite help when it comes to prayer.
- Paul Miller’s [\*A Praying Life\*](#) is a great resource to help you make prayer a regular part of your life.
- [\*A Neglected Grace\*](#) by Jason Helopoulos is a great introduction to Family Worship if you are new to this concept, or if you want a booster to spur you on.
- [\*The Jesus Storybook Bible\*](#), [\*The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden\*](#), and [\*The Ology\*](#) are good resources to help guide your children or grandchildren through the Redemptive storyline of the Bible.
- I heartily recommend the [\*ESV Study Bible\*](#) as a help as you study the Bible.
- [\*The Reformation Study Bible\*](#) also has excellent notes for guiding you as you follow your reading plan.
- If you want some additional resources, the [\*New Bible Dictionary\*](#) (Marshall, Millard, Packer, Wiseman) and/or the [\*New Bible Commentary\*](#) (Wenham, Motyer, Carson, France) are great additions to your library.
- The [\*Pocket Dictionary of the Reformed Faith\*](#) is a helpful thing to have on hand, especially if you are new to Reformed Christianity.

A number of these resources are available at the GIPC Book Stall.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rev. Brown at: [abrown@gipc-pca.org](mailto:abrown@gipc-pca.org)

# Announcements & Updates

## Children's Discipleship

Sunday School Classes (9:15 a.m.):

K-2nd Grade: *The Gospel Project*

3rd Grade and older: *Catechism Class*

The Catechism Class is based on *The New City Catechism* (52 short questions and answers based on Calvin's Geneva Catechism, The Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms, and the Heidelberg Catechism).



> Copies of "The New City Catechism for Kids" are available at the Book Stall in the foyer.

## Adult Sunday School Class

December 9, 16 | 9:15 a.m.

(Room 201, South Hallway)

**"How to Grow:  
A Study in the Spiritual Disciplines"**

## Men's Discipleship

"2nd Saturday" Men's Bible Study

December 8th, 8:30 a.m. | Brown home

Current study: *Discipleship Explored*  
(based on Philippians)

**Each Tuesday: Young Men's Bible Study**

7:00 a.m.—Wake Up Coffee, St. Simons

## Women's Discipleship

**Women's Monday Prayer Group**

1st & 3rd Monday: 9:00 a.m., Parrish home

2nd & 4th Monday: 10:00 a.m., Parrish home

**Morning Bible Study** (Topic: *I John*)

1st & 3rd Monday: 10:00 a.m., Parrish home

**Evening Bible Study** (Topic: *I John*)

2nd & 4th Tuesday: 7:00 p.m., Chilton home

It's time to pop the corn!

# CHRISTMAS FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Join us for an outdoor movie with food, hot drinks, smores, and plenty of holiday cheer!

Wednesday December 19th  
6:00pm  
Bring Blankets and chairs

**GOLDEN ISLES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
48 Hampton Point Drive

There will be no "1st Wednesday" Dinner in January, in lieu of the **Annual State of the Church Dinner and Meeting** scheduled for **Wednesday, January 23, 2019.** (Watch for details!)

## "Beyond the Pages" Book Group

*"Open to all those who enjoy reading and discussing books"*

The Book Group, which normally meets on the first Tuesday of the month, will meet on Tuesday, January 8th to discuss "Portuguese Irregular Verbs," by Alexander McCall Smith.

The group meets at Magnolia Manor on St. Simons Island at 1:00 p.m. in the second floor lounge of the large building beside the water fountain.

**Book Group Contact:** Sharon Bolin



### Westminster Shorter Catechism

#### 1 year plan—Q & A to review/study:

Week of December 2: 100, 101

Week of December 9: 102, 103

Week of December 16: 104, 105

Week of December 23: 106, 107

Week of December 30: Use this week to review or plan ahead

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #100

**Question:** What does the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

**Answer:** The preface of the Lord's prayer, (which is, *Our Father which art in heaven,*) teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #101

**Question:** What do we pray for in the first petition?

**Answer:** In the first petition, (which is, *Hallowed be Thy name,*) we pray, that God would enable us and others to glorify Him in all in which He makes Himself known; and that He would dispose (overrule) all things to His own glory.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #102

**Question:** What do we pray for in the second petition?

**Answer:** In the second petition, (which is, *Thy kingdom come,*) we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #103

**Question:** What do we pray for in the third petition?

**Answer:** In the third petition, (which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,*) we pray, that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to His will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #104

**Question:** What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

**Answer:** In the fourth petition, (which is, *Give us this day our daily bread,*) we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy His blessing with them.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #105

**Question:** What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

**Answer:** In the fifth petition, (which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,*) we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #106

**Question:** What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

**Answer:** In the sixth petition, (which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,*) we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

### Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #107

**Question:** What does the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

**Answer:** The conclusion of the Lord's prayer, (which is, *For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.*) teaches us, to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to Him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen.*



### Sermon Podcasts

Subscribe to our sermon podcast by searching "Golden Isles Presbyterian Church" wherever you get your podcasts.

**DECEMBER**

“The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.”  
(Psalm 37:31)

**Family Worship**

**Old Testament Reading**

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>I Chronicles</i>	29	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<i>II Chronicles</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		3,4	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		5-6:11	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		6:12-42	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		11,12	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		14,15	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		19,20	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		22,23	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		24	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		25	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		26	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		27,28	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		29	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		30	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		31	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		32	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		33	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		34	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		35	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		36	<input type="checkbox"/>

**DECEMBER**

“The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.”  
(Psalm 37:31)

**Family Worship**

**New Testament Reading**

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>II Peter</i>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<i>I John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<i>II John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<i>III John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<i>Jude</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<i>Revelation</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		6	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		12	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		22	<input type="checkbox"/>

**DECEMBER**

“The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.”  
(Psalm 37:31)

**Private**

**Old Testament Reading**

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>Micah</i>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<i>Nahum</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<i>Habakkuk</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<i>Zephaniah</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	<i>Haggai</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	<i>Zechariah</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		6	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		12-13:1	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		13:2-9	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	<i>Malachi</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		4	<input type="checkbox"/>

**DECEMBER**

“The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.”  
(Psalm 37:31)

**Private**

**New Testament Reading**

Date	Book	Chapter	✓
1	<i>Luke</i>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		21	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		22	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		23	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		24	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	<i>John</i>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
12		2	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		3	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		4	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		5	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		6	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		7	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		8	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		9	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		10	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		11	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		12	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		13	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		14	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		15	<input type="checkbox"/>
26		16	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		17	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		18	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		19	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		20	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		21	<input type="checkbox"/>

 **Week beginning DECEMBER 2**

**Romans 14:7-8 “Security in God”**

For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

 **Week beginning DECEMBER 9**

**John 3:36 “Salvation”**

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

 **Week beginning DECEMBER 16**

**I Timothy 4:12 “Youth”**

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

 **Week beginning DECEMBER 23**

**I Corinthians 2:1-2 “Supremacy of Jesus”**

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

 **Week beginning DECEMBER 30**

**Revelation 5:12-13 “Praise and Worship”**

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”