




*“God is Spirit, and His worshippers must worship  
in spirit and in truth.” —John 4:24*


## ***Philadelphia Baptist Church***

**February 19, 2012**



*Hungry, and faint, and poor,  
Behold us, Lord, again  
Assembled at Thy mercies door,  
Thy bounty to obtain.*

*Thy Word invites us nigh,  
Or we must starve indeed;  
For we no money have to buy,  
No righteousness to plead.*



*The food our spirits want  
Thy hand alone can give;  
Oh, hear the prayer of faith, and grant,  
That we may eat and live.*

*—John Newton  
1725—1807*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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### **This Week's Memory Verse**

*“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word  
stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends  
knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.”  
Proverbs 15:1-2*

### **CALL TO WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP**

Hymn: “All Creatures of Our God and King”  
(Hymnal page No. 9)

### **WORSHIP THROUGH SCRIPTURE**

OT Reading: *Psalm 2*  
Brett Huber

### **WORSHIP THROUGH CONFESSION**

Responsive Reading  
Psalm 51:1-4

**Leader:** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your  
steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.*

**Response:** **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin!**

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## WORSHIP THROUGH BENEDICTION

Hymn: “To God Be the Glory”  
(Hymnal page No. 33, verse 1)

CCLI #2977331

## NO EVENING SERVICE TONIGHT



*God Moves in a Mysterious Way*

**William Cowper**

1731—1800

William Cowper was one of the greatest English poets of the eighteenth century; but, was a man plagued by dark seasons of mental torment and yet also was a lover of Christ to the end.

John Piper, in a biography of Cowper, wrote that he wanted to know the man behind the *hymn* “*God Moves in a Mysterious Way*”, one of the last poems Cowper ever wrote. It appeared in the collection of hymns written by John Newton and William Cowper, “*Olney Hymns*”. Piper writes: “For 14 years an embroidered version of this hymn has hung in our living room.”

Born in 1731, Cowper’s mother died when he was 6 years old. His father sent him away to a boarding school where he was bullied and possibly abused for years.

In 1752 he sank into a paralyzing depression—the first of four major mental battles in the darkness of the mind that left him staring out of windows for weeks at a time. In some of the darkest of times, he tried to commit suicide. He tried poison, but his fingers became stiff and he dropped the vial and it shattered; he tried three times on one occasion to hang himself. The third time he became unconscious, but the noose broke. He planned to get a ride to a bridge in order to jump to his death in the river below, but the driver became lost in the fog and ended up back in front of Cowper’s own dwelling.

He was committed to an Asylum for the Insane and it was there that Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, a devout Christian,

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met William. They became friends and William Cowper was transformed into a lover of God and the Gospel. He left the asylum as a Christian hungering for knowledge of his Savior, and grateful for the mercy and providential grace of God.

In God's Providence, Cowper became a neighbor to, and intimate friend of John Newton. Cowper attended Newton's church in Olney and worked with him as what we might call an associate pastor, visiting the sick and needy, consoling the downcast and praying with great power.

In 1771, several of William's beloved relatives died; one of which was his brother John. Those losses coupled with gossip in the community regarding his longtime friend Mary Unwin gave an open door to his worst battle with psychological problems.

On January 1, 1773, John Newton introduced a new hymn to his congregation at Olney; a hymn we know as *Amazing Grace*. William Cowper was in that congregation. "After leaving for a walk in the fields around Olney he was struck by a terrible premonition that the curse of madness was about to fall on him again. Struggling to make a declaration of his faith in poetic form before his mind was enclosed in the darkness, he struggled home, picked up his pen, and wrote a hymn that many regard as a literary and spiritual masterpiece. *"God Moves in a Mysterious Way"*." -John Newton, by Jonathan Aitken.

The darkness came, but so did his friend John Newton. Cowper moved into the home of his friend and stayed for thirteen months. He probably never completely recovered, but persevered in his love for Christ. He became mostly a recluse and never attended church at Olney again or worked with the congregation. Though saddened by the "mysterious illness" of his friend, Newton wrote that he bowed to "the Lord's sovereignty, wisdom, and love."

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## The Heidelberg Catechism

—1563—

**Question: Are all men, then, saved by Christ as they perished through Adam?**

Answer: No; but only those who by a true faith are ingrafted into Him and receive all His benefits.

**Question: What is true faith?**

Answer: True faith is not only a sure knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also a firm confidence which the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

