



# PARISH

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND COVENANT RENEWAL

Advent

*1 December 2024*

God never made a promise that was too good to be true. —D.L. Moody

I believe the promises of God enough to venture an eternity on them. —Isaac Watts

## GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO WORSHIP

*It is God Himself who calls His people to worship. We do not call ourselves, but it is the King who opens His gates and beckons us into His courts.*

### Gospel Invitation—John 11:40

Good news. Glad tidings. Great joy. “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

### Sung Response—Angels We Have Heard On High, Vs. 1

An - gels, we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,

And the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o,

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: Traditional French Carol; Music: GLORIA, Traditional French Melody, arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1937.

## Lighting of the Advent Wreath

### Call to Worship—based on Micah 5:2, 4-5

Pastor: Rejoice, O you people, and be glad.

**All: For the Lord has spoken and His promises are sure.**

Reader 1: O Bethlehem, you are too little even to be among the clans of Judah, but from out of you shall come forth one who is to be ruler in Israel.

Reader 2: His coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God.

**All: We shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.**

Pastor: And He shall be our peace.

### Congregational Hymn—Angels From The Realms Of Glory

An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Shep - herds, in the field a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear;

Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth.  
God with us is now re - sid - ing; yon - der shines the in - fant light:  
Seek the great de - sire of na - tions; ye have seen His na - tal star.  
Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, in His tem - ple shall ap - pear.

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new-born King.

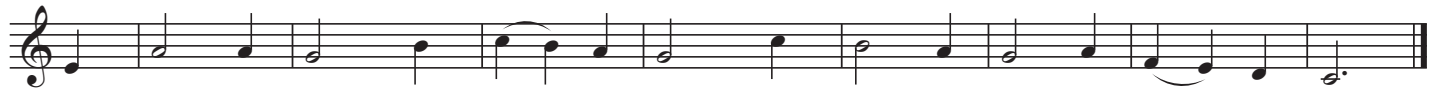
# GOD SPEAKS TO HIS PEOPLE THROUGH HIS WORD

*The Bible is the means by which God graciously reveals Himself to His people—so we listen, read, and study with expectant hearts.*

## Congregational Hymn—From Heaven On High



From Heav'n on high I come to you, I bring you ti - dings good and new;  
"To you, this night, is born a Child of Mar - y, chos - en vir - gin mild;  
"This is the Christ, our God and Lord, who in all need shall aid af - ford;  
Wel - come to Earth, Thou no - ble Guest, through whom the sin - ful world is blest!



Glad ti - dings of great joy I bring, where - of I now will say and sing.  
This lit - tle Child, of low - ly birth, shall be the joy of all your Earth."  
Him - self will your Sal - va - tion be, Him - self from sin will make you free."  
In my dis - tress Thou came to me, what can we ren - der, Lord, to Thee!

Text: Martin Luther, 1535, tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1855;  
Music: VOM HIMMEL HOCH, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1539.

## Responsive Scripture Reading—Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Elder: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**All: Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.**

Elder: For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder.

**All: His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Elder: Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

**All: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**

Elder: This is the Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## Congregational Hymn—God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen



God rest you mer - ry, gen - tle - men, let noth - ing you dis - may,  
From God our heav'n - ly Fa - ther, a bless - ed an - gel came;  
"Fear not, then," said the an - gel, "let noth - ing you af - fright;



Re - mem - ber Christ our Sav - ior was born on Christ - mas day,  
And un - to cer - tain shep - herds brought tid - ings of the same;  
This day is born a Sav - ior of a pure vir - gin bright,



To save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r when we were gone a - stray;  
How that in Beth - le - hem was born the Son of God by name,  
To free all those who trust in Him from Sa - tan's pow'r and might."



*O tid - ings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and joy, O tid - ings of com - fort and joy.*

Text and Music: 18<sup>th</sup> century English Carol.

## Reading of the Word—Luke 1:5-25

<sup>5</sup>In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup>And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup>But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup>Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup>according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup>And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup>And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup>And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup>for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup>And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup>and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

<sup>18</sup>And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." <sup>19</sup>And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. <sup>20</sup>And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." <sup>21</sup>And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. <sup>22</sup>And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. <sup>23</sup>And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

<sup>24</sup> After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, <sup>25</sup> “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

### Sung Response—Angels We Have Heard On High, Vs. 2

Shep-herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro-long?  
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o,  
Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: Traditional French Carol; Music: GLORIA, Traditional French Melody,  
arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1937.

### Sermon—Too Good to Be True

—Pastor Emeritus, George Grant

## GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND RECONCILIATION

*The people of God respond to His Word by confessing their sins, repenting of their sinful ways, and seeking God's favor through the reconciling work of Jesus, the Son of God.*

### Confession of Sin—from Psalm 51:3-13

Pastor: Lord, we come confessing. For we know only too well our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.

All: **Against You, and You only, have we sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.**

Pastor: Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach wisdom in the secret of our hearts.

All: **Purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow. Let us hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from our sins and blot out all our iniquities.**

Pastor: Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

All: **Restore to us the joy of Your salvation and uphold us with a willing spirit.**

*(Silent prayers of confession)*

## Sung Response—Lamb Of God

UNISON

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. —

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. —

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,

*Slightly faster* WOMEN

Grant us Thy peace, Grant us Thy, Grant us Thy peace,

MEN

Grant us Thy peace, Grant us Thy peace, Grant us Thy peace.

Text: Traditional, based on John 1:29; Music: CLOVERCROFT AGNUS DEI, Henry C. Haffner, 2019.

## Assurance of Pardon—based on Isaiah 44:21-22; Revelation 15:3-4

Remember, O My people, for you are My servants; I formed you; you are My servants; you will not be forgotten by Me. I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to Me, for I have redeemed you.

Pastor: This is the promise of God.

All: **This is the Word of the Lord.**

Pastor: Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the nations.

All: **Who will not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?**

Pastor: For You alone are holy. Amen.

## Sung Response—Twofold Amen

A - men, a - men

Text: Traditional; Music: DRESDEN, Johann Naumann, 18<sup>th</sup> century.

# HEAVENLY GIFT—EUCCHARISTO

*As God beckons His people to the bounty of His table, they make joyous profession of their fealty to Him.*

## Profession of Faith—The Apostles' Creed

We believe in God:

The Father Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,

Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

Was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell.

On the third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into Heaven and now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

From whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit; the one holy church—both visible and invisible;

The communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;

The resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

*Amen.*

## Sursum Corda

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You, Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. Therefore, we praise You, Triune God, and we join our voices with the angels, the archangels, and the whole company of Heaven in this hymn of eternal praise:

UNISON



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to His peo-ple on earth. —

WOMEN



We praise You, we bless You, we wor-ship You, we glo-ri-fy You,

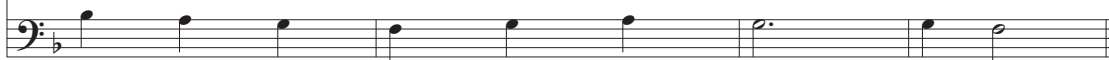
MEN



We praise You, we bless You, we wor-ship You, we glo-ri-fy You,



We give You thanks for Your great glo - ry.



We give You thanks for Your great glo - ry.

Text: Traditional, based on Luke 2:14; Music: CLOVERCROFT GLORIA, Henry C. Haffner, 2019.



## WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND THE LORD'S TABLE

*This table is open to all baptized Christians who have made a profession of faith. You may come forward to receive the bread and wine or grape juice.*

### Congregational Hymn—Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;  
*King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on Earth He stood,*  
Rank on rank the host of Heav - en spreads its van - guard on the way,  
At His feet the six - winged ser - aph; cher - u - bim, with sleep - less eye,



Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in His hand,  
*Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,*  
As the Light of light de - scend - eth from the realms of end - less day,  
Veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry,



Christ our Lord to Earth de - scend - eth, our full hom - age to de - mand.  
*He will give to all the faith - ful His own self for heav'n - ly food.*  
That the pow'rs of Hell may van - ish as the dark - ness clears a - way.  
"Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

Text: Liturgy of St. James, 5<sup>th</sup> century, alt. Gerard Moultrie, 1864; Music: PICARDY, French melody, 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### Congregational Hymn—Thou Who Wast Rich Beyond All Splendor



Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor all for love's sake be - cam - est poor;  
*Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing all for love's sake be - came - est man;*  
Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing, Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship Thee.



Thrones for a man - ger didst sur - ren - der, sap - phire paved courts for sta - ble floor.  
*Stoop - ing so low, but sin - ners rais - ing heav'n - ward by Thine e - ter - nal plan.*  
Em - man - u - el, with - in us dwell - ing, make us what Thou woudst have us be.



Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor, all for love's sake be - cam - est poor.  
*Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing all for love's sake be - cam - est man.*  
Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing, Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship Thee.

Text: Frank Houghton, 1934; Music: QUELLE EST CETTE ODEUR AGREABLE, French Carol melody, arr. Charles H. Kitson, 1939.

# GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND IN GRATEFUL PRAISE, PETITIONS, TITHES & OFFERINGS

*Our praying, serving, and giving are essential aspects of worship. It is here that our faith moves from our heads and hearts into our lives and callings.*

## Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession—The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

## Congregational Hymn—Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, — “Glo - ry to the new - born King;  
Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, — Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord!  
Hail the Heav'n - born Prince of Peace! — Hail the Sun of Right - teous - ness!  
Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, — God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!”  
Late in time be - hold Him come, — off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all He brings, — ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.  
Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, — join the tri - umph of the skies; —  
Veiled in flesh the God - head see; — hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty, —  
Mild He lays His glo - ry by, — born that man no more may die, —  
With th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, — “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”  
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
Born to raise the sons of Earth, born to give them sec - ond birth.  
Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing, — “Glo - ry to the new - born King.”

Text: Charles Wesley, 1739; Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1840.

# GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE OUT

After calling His people into His presence, forgiving their sins, instructing them in His Word, and providing a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb, God sends His people into the world to show His light in the darkness.

## Benediction—based on 2 Corinthians 4:6

For God who said “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Christ Jesus. Let us therefore walk in His light. *Amen.*

## Sung Response—Angels We Have Heard On High, Vs. 3

The musical score is written for voice and piano in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: 'Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing; come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o, glo ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.' The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody. The final system ends with a double bar line.

Text: Traditional French Carol; Music: GLORIA, Traditional French Melody,  
arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1937.

## Announcements

## Worship Notes:

Advent is usually observed as a season of confession, preparation, and anticipation, looking forward to the birth of Christ on Christmas Day. You'll notice several elements in the service this morning that are different from other times of the year: candles are lit during the Call to Worship, purple accents adorn the bulletin and the pulpit, Scripture readings are done responsively, and a time of silent prayer follows our corporate confession of sin. Three short musical responses fill out the center section of the service, in which we ask for mercy and peace (CLOVERCROFT AGNUS DEI), we say "Amen, Amen" to the assurance of pardon (DRESDEN AMEN), and we join with the angels in heaven to say "we give You thanks for Your great glory" (CLOVERCROFT GLORIA). There is also an insert in the bulletin with a series of daily scripture readings, which you can use at home with your family throughout the season. I hope these added elements help prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus—the "light of light" who descended from the realms of endless day to vanquish powers of Hell, and the "sun of righteousness" who brings light and life to all His people.

—Henry C. Haffner

**Key Words:** Priest, Duty, Angel, Good News, Vision

**Keystone Verse:** I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. (Luke 1:19)



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Mike Misericchi (594-3880)

Matt Morrison (482-5107)

Jason Parolini (497-3337)

Jonathan Thornton (703-801-1355)

### Elder Emeritus

Steve Nelson

### Deacons

Aaron Anderson (973-1797)

Brandon Blair (575-430-6436)

Kevin Cowherd (967-5099)

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*All Biblical quotes taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.*