



PARISH

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND COVENANT RENEWAL

Advent

17 December 2023

When the church is in the storms of persecution, and almost covered with the waves, the stoutest passengers in it may suffer as much from the boisterous passion [of fear] within as from the storm without; and all for want of thoroughly believing, or not seasonably remembering that the Lord high Admiral of all the ocean, and Commander of the winds, is on board the ship, to steer and preserve it from the storm. —John Flavel

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.

Choral Anthem (third service)—A Christmas Introit

Text: Traditional Latin text, English text by Audrey Snyder, 2015; Music: Audrey Snyder, 2015.

Gospel Invitation—Isaiah 7:14

Good news. Glad tidings. Great joy. “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Sung Response—Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Vs. 1

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo-ry to the new - born King;
Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!”
Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;
With th’an - gel - ic host pro - claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”
Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing, “Glo-ry to the new - born King.”

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

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Call to Worship—based on Isaiah 6:1-3; Psalm 96:9

Pastor: The Lord sits upon a throne, high and lifted up.

All: **The train of His robe fills the temple.**

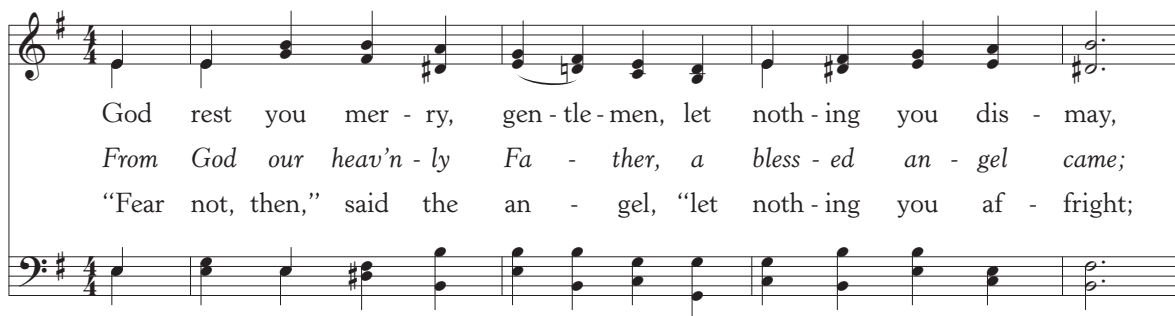
Reader 1: Above Him stand the seraphim. Each has six wings.

Reader 2: With two they cover their faces, and with two they cover their feet, and with two they fly. And one calls to another saying:

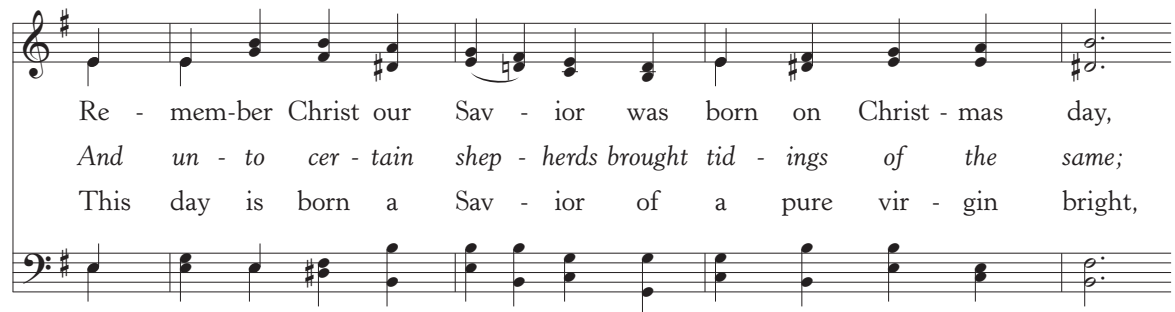
All: **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”**

Pastor: Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before Him all the earth!

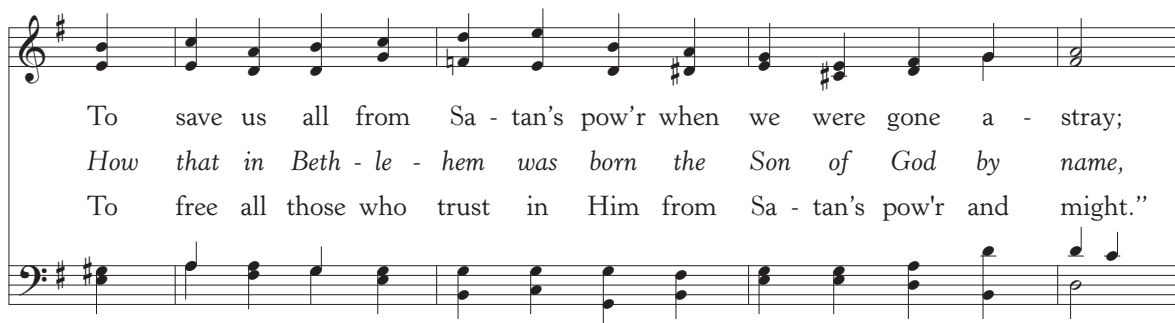
Congregational Hymn—God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen



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: 18th century English Carol.

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.

Scripture Reading—Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 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. 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—Gentle Mary Laid Her Child



Gen - tle Ma - ry laid her child low - ly in a man - ger
An - gels sang a - bout His birth, wise men sought and found Him,
Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger,

There He lay the un - de - filed, to the world a strang - er,
Hea - ven's star shone bright - ly forth, glo - ry all a - round Him.
He is still the un - de - filed, but no more a strang - er

Such a babe in such a place, can He be the Sav - ior?
Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, heard the an - gels sing - ing;
Son of God of hum - ble birth, beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;

Ask the saved of all the race who have found His fa - vor.
All the plains were lit that night all the hills were ring - ing.
Praise His name in all the earth, hail the King of glo - ry!

Text: Joseph Simpson Cook, 1919; Music: TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM, *Piae Cantiones*, 1582, arr. Ernest MacMillan, 1930.

Reading of the Word—Isaiah 8:11-22

¹¹ For the Lord spoke thus to me with His strong hand upon me and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: ¹² “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. ¹³ But the Lord of hosts, Him you shall honor as holy. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. ¹⁴ And He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”

¹⁶ Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. ¹⁷ I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in Him. ¹⁸ Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. ¹⁹ And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. ²¹ They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. ²² And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sung Response—Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Vs. 2

Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
Late in time be - hold Him come, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King."

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

Sermon—*The Hopes and Fears of All the Years*

—Pastor, James Crampton

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 Isaiah 6:1, 3-5

Pastor: Lord, we come confessing. You sit on a throne, high and lifted up. And the train of Your robe fills the temple. The seraphim call to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"

All: And so each of us says, "Woe is me! For I am undone."

Pastor: For we all have unclean lips, and we dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

All: Our eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!

(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—Isaiah 6:6-7; Revelation 15:3-4

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

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, 18th 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

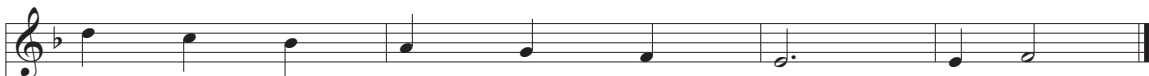


We praise You, we bless You, we wor-ship You, we glo-ri-fy You,

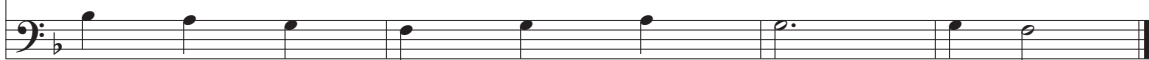
MEN



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—Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying



"Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing," the watch-men on_ the heights are cry - ing,
Zi - on hears the watch - men sing - ing, and all her heart with joy is spring - ing;
Now let all the heav'ns a - dore Thee, and men and an - gels sing be - fore_ Thee,

"A - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last!" Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es,
She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom, for her Lord comes down all - glo - rious,
With harp and cym - bal's clear - est tone; of one pearl each shin - ing por - tal,

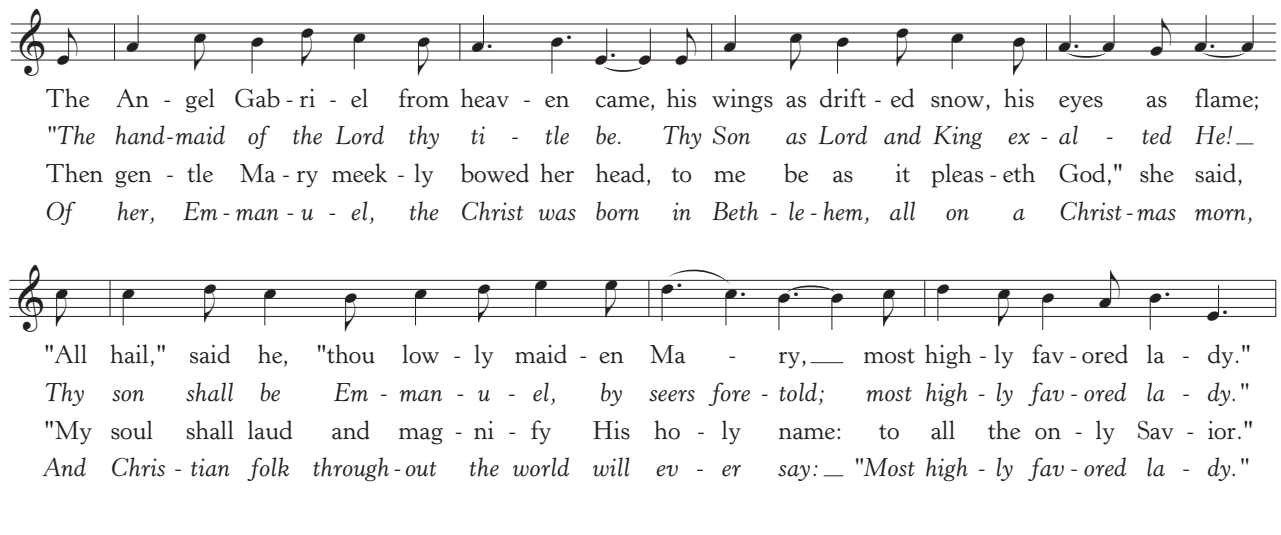
And at the thrill - ing cry rej - oic - es: "Come forth, ye mai - dens, night is past!
The strong in grace, in truth vic - to - rious; Her Star is ris'n, her Light is come!
Where we are with the choir im - mor - tal Of an - gels round Thy daz - zling throne;

The Bride - groom comes; a - wake, your lamps with glad - ness take; al - le - lu - ia!
Ah, come, Thou bles - sed Lord, O Je - sus, Son of God, al - le - lu - ia!
nor eye hath seen, nor ear hath yet at - tained to hear what there is ours;

And for His mar - riage feast pre - pare, for you must go to meet Him there."
We fol - low 'til the_ halls we see where Thou hast bid us sup_ with Thee.
But we re - joice, and_ sing to Thee our hymn of joy e - ter - nal - ly.

Text: Phillipp Nicolai, 1599, tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; Music: WACHET AUF, Phillipp Nicolai, 1599.

Congregational Hymn—The Angel Gabriel



The An - gel Gab - ri - el from heav - en came, his wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame;
"The hand-maid of the Lord thy ti - tle be. Thy Son as Lord and King ex - al - ted He!_
Then gen - tle Ma - ry meek - ly bowed her head, to me be as it pleas - eth God," she said,
Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ was born in Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn,

"All hail," said he, "thou low - ly maid - en Ma - ry, _ most high - ly fav - ored la - dy."
Thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told; most high - ly fav - ored la - dy."
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy His ho - ly name: to all the on - ly Sav - ior."
And Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say: _ "Most high - ly fav - ored la - dy."

Glo - - - ri - a!

Text: Traditional, tr. Sabine Baring-Gould, 19th Century; Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Traditional Basque Carol.

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—Angels We Have Heard On High

An - gels, we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
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.

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

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—Isaiah 60:1-2

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. *Amen.*

Sung Response—Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Vs. 3

Hail the Heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Right-teous - ness!

Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.

Mild He lays His glo - ry by, born that man no more may die,

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."

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines.

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

Choral Anthem (third service)—*Carol of the Children*

Text and Music: John Rutter, 1982.

Announcements

Worship Notes:

During Advent, we try to group the seasonal hymns around a central theme which changes from week to week. The past two Sundays have presented groups of hymns celebrating Jesus as the coming King and taking on human form as a baby. This morning, the hymns will focus on the annunciation of Jesus' birth by angels. The three verses of Charles Wesley's magnificent *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* form the backbone of the service, occurring several times throughout the morning. Some hymns will provide narratives: *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen* and Martin Luther's *From Heaven On High* recount the story of the angels appearing to shepherds in Luke 2, while *The Angel Gabriel* (a carol from the Basque region of northern Spain) puts Gabriel's message to Mary in Luke 1 into poetry. Two lesser-known pieces, *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child* and *Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying* mention angels in passing, referring to a "choir immortal" singing about the Savior's birth—in the hills near Bethlehem and around the throne of Heaven. The service concludes with the beloved French carol *Angels We Have Heard On High*, in which we join the angels in an ecstatic melisma of "Gloria in excelsis Deo." —Henry C. Haffner

Key Words: Fear, Honor, Holy, Sanctuary, Hope, Children, Dawn

Keystone verse: I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in Him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me. (Isaiah 8:17-18a)



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Elders

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Michael Mastroberti (973-879-1368)

Mike Miserocchi (594-3880)

Matt Morrison (482-5107)

Jason Parolini (497-3337)

Jonathan Thornton (703-801-1355)

Elders Emeritus

Phil Hutcheson

Steve Nelson

John Scherrer

Deacons

Aaron Anderson (973-1797)

Brandon Blair (575-430-6436)

Kevin Cowherd (967-5099)

Ben Crist (509-3040)

Chris Ragsdale (619-988-1876)

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