



LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown
when thou camest to earth for me;
but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
for thy holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus! There is room in my heart for thee.
— Emily E.S. Elliott*

DECEMBER 10, 2023 • FELLOWSHIP HALL SERVICE

* Congregation standing as you are able.

Order of Worship

Welcome and greetings

Wil Nettleton, pastor of mission & worship

*** Call to worship**

based on Psalm 98 and Luke 1

Leader: Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

All: **The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel.**

Leader: Our souls magnify the Lord and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

All: **The Mighty One has done great things for us—holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation!**

*** Hymn of praise**

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o’er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heav’nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

traditional French carol and melody, arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1937

*** Prayer of adoration**

Call to confession

based on Romans 3:20–24

No one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Silent prayers of confession

Assurance of God’s pardoning grace

from John 1 and Ephesians 1

Leader: Jesus came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

All: **In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.**

* Hymn of assurance

“God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen”

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day,
to save us all from Satan’s pow’r when we were gone astray;

Refrain: O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav’nly Father, a blessed angel came;
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name. *Refrain*

“Fear not, then,” said the angel, “let nothing you affright;
this day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,
to free all those who trust in him from Satan’s pow’r and might.” *Refrain*

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,
and left their flocks a-feeding, in tempest, storm, and wind:
and went to Bethlehem straightway, the Son of God to find. *Refrain*
English carol and melody, 18th century

Lighting the candle of peace

Leader: In the days of the prophet Isaiah, the people looked forward to the coming birth of a Savior whom Isaiah described as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there would be no end, and he would reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

All: **He himself is our peace. He came and preached peace to those who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we have access to the Father by one Spirit.**

based on Isaiah 9:6-7; Ephesians 2:14a, 17-18

Worship in the giving of God's tithe and our offerings

Offertory hymn

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ, the babe, is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all. Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Stars were gleaming, shepherds dreaming, O the night was dark and chill;
angel's story, manger glory, shepherds heard it on the hill.
Ah, that singing, hear it ringing, earthward winging, praises bringing:
Christ the babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you.

Flocks were sleeping: shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you.

Polish carol, paraphrased by Edith M. G. Reed, ca. 1925; traditional Polish melody

¹There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. ²He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. ³Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. ⁴On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

⁹After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. ¹¹And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head." ¹²As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." ¹⁵But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." ¹⁷Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." ¹⁸And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

¹⁹They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Prayer of preparation for the study of God's Word

Sermon

“Miraculous Births: Samuel”

John Mark Scruggs, pastor of congregational care

1. A heartbreak endured: the triad of tragedy, taunts, and tears (vv. 1-8)
2. A grief processed: pouring out a broken heart to God in worship (vv. 9-18)
3. A child provided: The Lord Almighty sends a son. (vv. 19-20)

Pastoral prayer

* Hymn of response

“From the Squalor of a Borrowed Stable”

From the squalor of a borrowed stable, by the Spirit and a virgin's faith,
to the anguish and the shame of scandal, came the Savior of the human race!
But the skies were filled with the praise of heav'n, shepherds listen as the angels tell
of the gift of God come down to man at the dawning of Immanuel!

King of heaven now the Friend of sinners, humble servant in the Father's hands,
filled with power and the Holy Spirit, filled with mercy for the broken man.
Yes, he walked my road and he felt my pain, joys and sorrows that I know so well;
yet his righteous steps give me hope again—I will follow my Immanuel!

Through the kisses of a friend's betrayal, he was lifted on a cruel cross;
he was punished for the world's transgressions, he was suffering to save the lost.
He fights for breath, he fights for me, loosing sinners from the claims of hell;
and with a shout our souls are free—death defeated by Immanuel!

Now he's standing in the place of honor, crowned with glory on the highest throne,
interceding for his own beloved, till his Father calls to bring them home!
Then the skies will part as the trumpet sounds, hope of heaven or the fear of hell;
but the bride will run to her Lover's arms, giving glory to Immanuel!

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* Benediction

* Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

Musicians for this week:

Anna Davis – flute

Greta Erickson – vocals

David Henry – guitar, vocals

David Kaufmann – bass

Maddie Lee – vocals

Hannah Lutz – viola

Ethan Rester – piano

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU TO ALL who participated in this year's Serve the City: Boxes of Blessing. With more than 400 volunteers signed up to serve, over 5,000 food boxes were assembled for distribution by area schools, ministries, and churches. Please pray for the recipients of each box, that the Lord would reach them at their point of need.

THERE WILL BE A CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING at the end of each worship service in the sanctuary and fellowship hall today for the purpose of approving a slate of nominees for the offices of elder and deacon for the class of 2027. Those men approved to stand for office will undergo training in the new year. The final election to office will take place in April 2024.

JOIN US FOR A CHRISTMAS CONCERT for our Sunday Evening Gathering today at either 4:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary, where the Chancel Choir will lead us in worship. Nursery is provided at 4:00 p.m. only. Don't miss the prelude of instrumental seasonal music beginning 10 minutes before each concert.

IF YOUR FAMILY OR SMALL GROUP WOULD ENJOY CAROLING on December 17 to LMPC members who cannot join us for Christmas services, please register through Realm Connect or email Paula, paula@lmpc.org, by today.

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, CHRISTMAS EVE, our morning worship services are moved to the following times: 3:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. Please join us for one of these Lord's Day worship services in the sanctuary. The 5:00 p.m. service will be livestreamed.

THE NEXT INTRO TO LMPC CLASS will be held January 19–21. We will meet Friday from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Sunday during the Sunday school hour at 11:00 a.m. If you are an adult who wants to join the church, or you would like to learn about what we believe, this class is for you. Register on Realm Connect by January 8.

To find out more about happenings at LMPC, visit lmpc.org/events.

IN MEMORIAM
Mercy Crea Thomas
Born asleep December 4, 2023

ADVENT 2023

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 10

4:00 and 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

nursery available at 4:00 p.m. only

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Sunday, December 17

5:00 p.m. in the community (Register on Realm Connect.)

CHRISTMAS EVE*

Sunday, December 24

LESSONS AND CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

3:00, 5:00, and 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

nursery available at 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. only

**Please join us for one of these Lord's Day worship services; our morning services have been moved to these times.*

GIVING UPDATE THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2023

Annual Budget: \$5,641,820

Giving YTD: \$3,917,934

Remaining Gifts Needed: \$1,723,886 (31% of budget)

Outstanding Pledge Balance: \$140,515

Unpledged Giving Need: \$1,583,371

We're grateful for the generosity at LMPC so far this year. As we are currently behind last year's giving, please consider contributing toward the 2023 budget if you haven't yet this year. You can find multiple ways to give to LMPC at lmpc.org/give.