



LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*All glory to you, great God, for the gift of your Son,
light in darkness and hope of the world, whom you sent to save us.
With singing angels let us praise your name and tell the earth his story,
that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down.*
— from The Worship Sourcebook

DECEMBER 31, 2023 • SANCTUARY SERVICE • 9:30 AND 11:00 A.M.

WELCOME TO LMPC! *We're so glad you are with us today. Please use the welcome card from the pew rack in front of you to share important information with us; an online form is available by scanning the QR code on the back of the bulletin. As we come together to worship the living God, we ask that you silence all communication devices and refrain from bringing beverages into worship so that we might, in joyful reverence, give our full attention to praising and honoring our God. We encourage you to read the text on the front of the bulletin as we prepare to worship together.*

CHILDCARE: *Children of any age are welcome in our worship services. If you desire to use our nursery for your children ages 0-3, please see one of our ushers for directions. The ushers can also point you to crayons and children's bulletins.*

** Congregation standing as you are able*

Order of Worship

Prelude	Prelude and Harmonizations on "Quem Pastores Laudavere" <i>Paul Fey</i>	
Welcome and greetings	John Mark Scruggs, pastor of congregational care	
Introit	"Of the Father's Love Begotten"	Chancel Choir

Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!

O that birth forever blessed, when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bare the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's Redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heav'n adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'r's, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore!

text by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-413, tr. by John M. Neale and Henry W. Baker; 13th c. Plainsong, arr. Paul Wohlgemuth, 1973, DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

*** Call to worship**

from Psalm 118

Leader: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

All: **Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.**

*** Hymn of praise**

“O Sing of Christ”

O sing of Christ, whose birth made known the kindness of the Lord,
Eternal Word made flesh and bone so we could be restored.
Upon our frail humanity God’s finger chose to trace
the fullness of his deity, the icon of his grace.

Lord Jesus Christ, you deigned to dwell among us here on earth
as God with us, Emmanuel, to bring this holy birth.

Though rich, you willingly became one with our poverty,
that we might share your wealth and name for all eternity!

text by Stephen Starke, 1996; traditional English melody, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906, FOREST GREEN

*** Prayer of adoration**

*** Affirmation of faith**

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Call to confession

from 1 Peter 1 and 2

We have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. Therefore, let us rid ourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, let us crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it we may grow up in our salvation, now that we have tasted that the Lord is good.

Silent prayers of confession

Choral prayer

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Chancel Choir

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel. Amen.
text by Phillips Brooks, 1868; music by Lewis H. Redner, 1868, ST. LOUIS

Assurance of God’s pardoning grace

from Ephesians 2

Leader: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.

All: For it is by grace we have been saved, through faith—and this not from ourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

* Hymn of assurance 241, vv. 1, 4, 5

“Thou Dost Reign on High”

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

Offertory

“Come, Thou Redeemer of the Earth”

Chancel Choir

Come, thou Redeemer of the earth, and manifest thy virgin birth:
let every age adoring fall; such birth befits the God of all.

Begotten of no human will, but of the Spirit, thou art still
the Word of God in flesh arrayed, the promised fruit to man displayed.

Thy cradle here shall glitter bright, and darkness breathe a newer light,
where endless faith shall shine serene, and twilight never intervene.

All praise eternal Son to thee, whose advent sets thy people free,
with whom the Father we adore, and Holy Ghost forevermore.

text by St. Ambrose, 340–397, tr. by J. M. Neale, music arr. Mark Schweizer, PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

*** 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.

*** Prayer of dedication and thanksgiving**

*** Scripture reading from John 3:1-15**

p. 1055 in the pew Bible and text printed in the bulletin

John Mark Scruggs (9:30)

Barby Gifford (11:00)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of preparation for the study of God's Word

Sermon

“Miraculous Births: Us!”

Frank Hitchings, senior associate pastor

Pastoral prayer

*** Hymn of response**

“The First Noël”

The first Noël the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star,
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a King was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all, with one accord,
sing praises to our heavenly Lord
that hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
and with his blood mankind hath bought.
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.

traditional English carol, 17th century

*** Benediction**

* Congregational response

“Threefold Amen”

* Postlude

“For Unto Us a Child Is Born”

arr. W. T. Best

Musicians for this week:

Joy Gibbons – director

Joshua Knight – organ

The rosebud in the service today is for the birth of Amelia Ruth Curtis, born to Kayley and Tucker Curtis on December 15.

John 3:1-15

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

⁷“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

¹³“No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

SERMON NOTES
“Miraculous Births: Us!”
John 3:1-15

1. The absolute necessity of a new birth (vv. 1-6)
2. The extraordinary nature of the new birth (vv. 3-12)
3. The essential fruit of the new birth (vv. 13-15)

Further Up, Further In,
Resources for
Continued Study



TODAY AT LMPC

Sunday, December 31

9:30 a.m.	Worship service.....	sanctuary & fellowship hall
10:30 a.m.	Elders available to pray for your needs.....	Brian Salter's office
11:00 a.m.	Worship service.....	sanctuary & fellowship hall

Additional seating for the sanctuary services is available in the chapel.

For more events this week, visit lmpc.org/events.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE ARE EXTREMELY THANKFUL for your faithful giving this past year; we still need approximately \$950,000 in giving to ensure we can meet all our 2023 financial obligations. Please remember us in your year-end giving so that we might enter into 2024 financially strong.

CHOIRS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS will resume on Wednesdays in January. Chancel Choir will resume meeting on January 3 and children's choirs will resume on January 10. Parents, please register your child(ren) on Realm Connect. Adults, if you are interested in joining Chancel Choir, please email Joy Gibbons, joy@lmpc.org.

WOMEN'S WINTER SUPPER is a great opportunity to connect with women across various ages and stages of life. Join us for a fellowship dinner at an individual home on Thursday, January 18 at 6:00 p.m. Bring your friends, and register on Realm Connect by January 15. Interested in hosting? Contact Caroline Scruggs, caroline@lmpc.org.

WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE TODAY!

We know it can be hard to connect with a new church. We want to help in any way we can. Please scan the QR code below and fill out an online information form. We will follow up with you about next steps. We are here to serve you!



OUR MISSION

*Glorifying God by growing in grace and giving our lives away
on the mountain, in the city, and around the world.*

CONTACT US

Address: 316 North Bragg Avenue
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Worship services with Communion are held on the first Sunday of every month in all morning services and in the evening on the third Sunday of every month. Devices to amplify sound are available. If you would like one, please arrive a few minutes early and ask an usher to assist you.