



LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Open wide your door to the one who comes. Open your soul, throw open the depths of your heart to see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, the sweetness of grace.

Open your heart and run to meet the Sun of eternal light that illuminates all men.

—Ambrose

DECEMBER 1, 2024 • SANCTUARY SERVICE

* Congregation standing as you are able

Order of Worship

Prelude

Prelude on “Prepare the Way, O Zion”
Paul Fey

Welcome and greetings

Chad Middlebrooks, pastor of discipleship

* **Call to worship**

from Psalm 33

Leader: Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

All: **For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.**

Leader: Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

All: **We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.**

* **Hymn of praise**

“God Has Spoken by His Prophets”

God has spoken by the prophets, spoken the unchanging Word;
each from age to age proclaiming God, the One, the righteous Lord!
'Mid the world's despair and turmoil, one firm anchor holding fast:
God eternal reigns forever, God the first and God the last.

God has spoken by Christ Jesus, Christ, the everlasting Son,
brightness of the Father's glory, with the Father ever One;
spoken by the Word Incarnate, God of God, ere time began;
Light of Light, to earth descending, Man, revealing God to man.

God is speaking by his Spirit, speaking to the hearts of men;
in the age-long Word declaring God's own message now as then.
Through the rise and fall of nations one sure faith is standing fast:
God abides, his word unchanging, God the first and God the last.
text by George W. Briggs, 1952; music by Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824, ODE TO JOY

* Prayer of adoration

Lighting the candle of hope

from Isaiah 40 and Jeremiah 33

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for. "Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land, and he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness."

Advent prayer

Leader: Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever present with us by your Spirit, we rejoice in hope at your coming.

All: **You, LORD, are our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear?**

Leader: Remove all that hinders us from worshiping you in spirit and truth this season, and make us ready for your return.

All: **You, LORD, are our stronghold; of whom shall we be afraid?**

Leader: Give us a glimpse now, during this season, of the glory that we will someday see in full when all will be made new through Christ, our Lord and our Light.

All: **We believe that we shall see your goodness, O LORD, in the land of the living. We wait for you; give us strength, and fill us with courage as we wait for you! Amen.**

adapted from The Worship Sourcebook and Psalm 27

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

To thee my heart I offer, O Christ-child sweet and dear;
 upon thy love relying, be thou ever near.
 O take my heart and give me thine, and may it be forever mine,
 O Jesus, holy, undefiled, my Savior meek and mild.

What brought thee to the manger, O Christ-child sweet and dear?
 Thy love for me, a stranger, be thou ever near.
 O Lord, how great thy perfect love that reaches from the heav'ns above.
 Thy love for us, by sin defiled, that made thee, God, a child.

Let me be thine forever, O Christ-child sweet and dear;
 uphold me with thy mercy, be thou ever near.
 Thy hand bestows thy gifts to me and all I have, I offer thee!
 My heart, my soul, and all I own, let these be thine alone.

text anonymous, 1653; music by Elaine Hagenberg © 2020 Beckenhorst Press, Inc., CCLI Lic. #152036

* **Gloria Patri 735**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen, amen.**

* **Prayer of dedication and thanksgiving**

* **Scripture reading from Luke 1:26–38**

Amos Oster

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God."

³⁸And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of preparation for the study of God’s Word

Sermon

“Advent: The Story of God’s Grace”

Wil Nettleton, pastor of mission & worship

1. The reality of God’s grace (vv. 26–29)
 - Grace works in unexpected places.
 - Grace works through unlikely people.
2. The response to God’s grace (vv. 30–38)
 - Believing God’s Word in the midst of legitimate questions
 - Entrusting ourselves to God in spite of incomplete knowledge

Pastoral prayer

This morning we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. This celebration is a sacred time during which God’s people enjoy communion with him and unity with each other. We believe that the Lord’s Supper is meant for the body of Christ as a gathered, corporate reality and not merely for personal or individual edification. For this reason, the livestream is ending at the conclusion of the sermon and will not include the celebration of the sacrament.

Musicians for this week:

Joy Gibbons – choral director

Joshua Knight – organ

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

DO YOU NEED PRAYER? Each Sunday, elders are available to pray with you between services at 10:30 a.m. in room E-200, located in the children's education wing. An usher can direct you if you need assistance.

ALL WOMEN OF LMPC are invited to celebrate the Christmas season together at Canopy on Tuesday, December 3 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Snacks will be provided and drinks will be available for purchase. No registration is required.

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL FAMILY NIGHT Christmas event on Wednesday, December 4 at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. We will enjoy a pizza dinner and then play bingo! Please register on Realm Connect; regular Wednesday dinner prices apply.

A CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING will be held at the end of each worship service in the sanctuary and fellowship hall on Sunday, December 8, to complete three important matters of church business:

- Approval of a slate of nominees for the offices of elder and deacon for the class of 2028 . Those men approved to stand for office will undergo training in the new year. The final election to office will take place in April 2025.
- Election of a member-at-large to serve as a director on the board of LMPC, Inc. for a four-year term.
- Consideration of a change of status for Wil Nettleton to Associate Pastor at LMPC, on the recommendation of the Session.

THE NEXT INTRO TO LMPC CLASS will be held January 24-26. 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 10.

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

ADVENT SERMON SERIES: THE WONDER OF INCARNATION

Charles Spurgeon beautifully notes, "Though creation may be a majestic organ of praise, it cannot reach the compass of the golden canticle—Incarnation! There is more in that than in creation, more melody in Jesus in the manger, than there is in worlds on worlds rolling their grandeur round the throne of the Most High." This advent and Christmas, we will look at beginning chapters of both Luke and Matthew to discover the never-ending wonder of the Incarnation. It is simply the greatest news. As John Wesley said with his final words, "The best of all is, God is with us."

ADVENT 2024

CHRISTMAS HYMN SING

Sunday, December 8

6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall

nursery available

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 15

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

nursery available at 4:00 p.m. only

CHRISTMAS EVE*

Tuesday, 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

GIVING UPDATE THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2024

Annual Budget: \$5,860,000

2024 Giving YTD: \$3,793,263

Remaining Gifts Needed: \$2,066,737

Outstanding Pledge Balance: \$739,411

We're grateful for the generosity at LMPC so far in 2024. As we near the end of the year, please consider how you might contribute towards our mission of glorifying God by growing in grace and giving our lives away on the mountain, in the city, and around the world. Find ways to give at lmpc.org/give.