



LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

Presbyterian Church

IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Merciful Father, who wills not your children should wander in darkness; pour the light of your Spirit into our minds and hearts, that we may discover what is your holy will, and discern the true from the false, the evil from the good, that we may henceforth walk in all humility in the paths of heavenly wisdom and peace, to the glory of your holy name.

—John Hunter

DECEMBER 8, 2024 • SANCTUARY SERVICE

* Congregation standing as you are able

Order of Worship

Prelude

“Benedictus”
Alec Rowley

Welcome and greetings

Aaron Tolson, pastor of youth ministries

* **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 198**, vv. 1, 4, 6

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates!”

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near, the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heav'n's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

So come, my Sovereign, enter in! Let new and nobler life begin!

Thy Holy Spirit, guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

*text based on Psalm 24, by Georg Weissel, 1642, tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1855; music from Psalmodia
Evangelica, 1789; TRURO*

* **Prayer of adoration**

Call to confession

1 John 1:8–9

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and
purify us from all unrighteousness.

Silent prayers of confession

Assurance of God's pardoning grace

from Colossians 1

God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Christ, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

* Hymn of assurance 194, vv. 1, 3, 4

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Latin antiphons, 12th cent., tr. John Mason Neale, 1851; Plainsong, 13th c., arr. Thomas Helmore, 1856, VENI EMMANUEL

Lighting the candle of peace

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.

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 2:14, 17-18

Advent prayer

Leader: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

All: **O Prince of Peace, even in the midst of the shadows around us, your justice is dawning.**

Leader: Darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples, but the LORD will arise upon you, and nations shall come to your light.

All: **Fill us with wonder at your coming, and let our celebrations in this season spread new hope to a weary world.**

Leader: We long for your return when all will be set right.

All: **By your Spirit, teach us to embody your peace in all areas of our lives as we eagerly await that day, when the sun shall no longer be our light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to us by night. For the LORD will be our everlasting light and our God will be our glory.**

adapted from The Worship Sourcebook and Isaiah 60

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

Offertory

"Blessed Is the Lord"
(Benedictus)

Chancel Choir

Refrain: Benedictus, benedictus, blessed is our Lord.
Benedictus, benedictus, welcome his Incarnate Word.

Chosen first among the priests to serve within the temple walls,
Zacharias stood in awe when he heard the angel call. *Refrain*

"Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will come to raise salvation's horn.
God incarnate, Word made flesh, to a virgin shall be born." *Refrain*

Christ brings light to sin's dark night: our Dayspring, Jesus from on high,
saints and angels sing God's praise. All the earth and heav'ns reply. *Refrain*
*text by R.C. Sproul, based on Luke 1:68-69, and music by Dan Forrest © 2013 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.,
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* 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 Luke 1:39-45

James Stevens

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her 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

“A Joyous Visitation”

Brian Salter, lead pastor

1. The larger context for the road trip (vv. 39-40)
2. The crucial work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 41-42a)
3. The exuberant joy in God’s grace (vv. 42b-45)

Pastoral prayer

*** Hymn of response 213**

“What Child Is This”

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby:
joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

traditional English carol, adapted by William C. Dix, ca. 1865; English melody, 16th c., GREENSLEEVES

* **Benediction**

* **Congregational response**

“Threefold Amen”

Musicians for this week:

Joy Gibbons – choral director

Joshua Knight – organ, piano

ADVENT 2024

CHRISTMAS HYMN SING

nursery available

Sunday, December 8

6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

nursery available at 4:00 p.m. only

Sunday, December 15

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

CHRISTMAS CAROLING*

Sunday, December 22

1:30 p.m. Morning Pointe at Happy Valley

3:15 p.m. Thrive at Brow Wood

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, December 24

LESSONS AND CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

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

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

**register on Realm Connect*

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

COME SING AND WORSHIP this evening at our annual Christmas Hymn Sing in the fellowship hall at 6:00 p.m.

A CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING will be held at the end of each worship service in the sanctuary and fellowship hall today 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.

VIPS, JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON on Thursday, December 12 at 11:30 a.m. Due to the construction on our church property, we have greatly missed being together; we will celebrate at the Fairyland Club with a festive meal. Please reserve your spot by registering on Realm Connect or calling the church office by noon on Monday, December 9. Cost is \$10. *The VIPs is a group of mostly retired adults from Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church and the community who meet monthly for fun and fellowship.*

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TOWARD CHRISTMAS FLOWERS in memory or in honor of a loved one, please do so through Realm Connect by December 12. For more information, please call the church office or email margaretcompton@lmpc.org.

BRING YOUR FAMILY OR SMALL GROUP AND GO CAROLING on Sunday, December 22 at 1:30 p.m. at Morning Pointe at Happy Valley or 3:15 p.m. at Thrive at Brow Wood. Or, come to both! Please register on Realm Connect.

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.

GIVING UPDATE THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2024

Annual Budget: \$5,860,000

2024 Giving YTD: \$4,184,849

Remaining Gifts Needed: \$1,675,151

Outstanding Pledge Balance: \$554,409

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.