



# LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

## *Presbyterian Church*

### IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*What star is this, which beams so bright, more lovely than the noontday light?  
'Tis sent to announce a newborn king, glad tidings of our God to bring.  
'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed, "From Jacob shall a star proceed";  
and lo! the eastern sages stand to read in heaven the Lord's command.  
While outward signs the star displays, an inward light the Lord conveys  
and urges them, with tender might, to seek the giver of the light. —Charles Coffin*

DECEMBER 29, 2024 • SANCTUARY SERVICE

\* Congregation standing as you are able

# Order of Worship

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## Prelude

“A Rose E'er Blooming”  
*arr. Evelyn R. Larter*

## Welcome and greetings

Derek Halvorson, ruling elder

## \* Call to worship

based on Daniel 2:20-23

Leader: Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.

All: He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them.  
He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.  
He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness,  
and light dwells with him. We thank and praise you, O God of our  
fathers.

## \* Hymn of praise 195

“Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come”

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: let men their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.  
*text based on Psalm 98, Isaac Watts, 1719; music by George F. Handel, 1742*

## \* Prayer of adoration

**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 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 law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 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 Colossians 1:19-22

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. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

**\* Hymn of assurance**

“A Great and Mighty Wonder”

A great and mighty wonder, a full and holy cure!  
The virgin bears the infant with virgin honor pure.

*Refrain:* Repeat the hymn again! “To God on high be glory,  
and peace on earth to men.”

The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high!  
And cherubim sing anthems to shepherds from the sky. *Refrain*

Since all he comes to ransom, by all be he adored,  
the infant born in Bethl’em, the Savior and the Lord. *Refrain*  
*text by St. Germanus, ca. 734, tr. J. M. Neale, 1862; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1609, ES IST EIN ROS*

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

**Offertory**

“Brightest and Best”

Chancel Choir

Hail the bless’d morn, see the great Mediator  
down from the regions of glory descend!  
Shepherds go worship the babe in the manger,  
lo, for his guard the bright angels attend.

*Refrain:* Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,  
dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.  
Star in the East, the horizon adorning,  
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining;  
low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall.  
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,  
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all. *Refrain*

Shall we not yield him, in costly devotion,  
odours of Edom and off’rings divine,  
gems of the mountains and pearls of the ocean,  
myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine? *Refrain*  
*text by Reginald Heber, 1811; music from Southern Harmony, 1835, arr. Shawn Kirchner, 2016*

**\* 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 Matthew 2:1-12**

Jim Richter

<sup>1</sup>Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup>“‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup>After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Prayer of preparation for the study of God’s Word**

**Sermon**

“Responding to the Birth of Christ the King”

Frank Hitchings, senior associate pastor

The story of the wise men shows us three possible responses to the birth of Christ the King:

1. Hostility to the King (vv. 1-3, 7-8, 12)
2. Indifference to the King (vv. 4-6)
3. Joyful worship of the King (vv. 1-2, 9-11)

**Pastoral prayer**

**\* Hymn of response 226, vv. 1, 2, 3, 4**

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;  
as with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;  
so, most gracious God, may we evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly cradle-bed,  
there to bend the knee before him whom heav'n and earth adore;  
so may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at that cradle rude and bare;  
so may we with holy joy, pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day keep us in the narrow way;  
and when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.  
*text by William Chatterton Dix, 1860; music by Conrad Kocher, 1838; arr. by William H. Monk, 1861, DIX*

**\* Benediction**

**\* Congregational response**

“Threefold Amen”

**\* Postlude**

“Sussex Carol”

*(words for meditation may be found in your hymnal, #227)*

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**Musicians for this week:**

**Joy Gibbons** – choral director  
**Rebecca James** – violin

**Maddie Lee** – piano

## WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**THE CHURCH OFFICE** will be closed on January 1 for New Year's Day.

**LMPC'S MOTHER'S DAY OUT PROGRAM** needs a teacher's aide and substitutes, starting in January. These are paid positions, for Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Please contact MDO Director Megan DeMoss, [megan@lmpc.org](mailto:megan@lmpc.org), for more information.

**WOMEN'S WINTER SUPPERS:** These fellowship dinners, hosted in individual homes, are a great opportunity to connect with women across various ages and stages of life. Invite your friends and neighbors to dinner on Tuesday, January 21 at 6:00 p.m. Please register on Realm Connect by January 16. If you are interested in hosting, please email Caroline Scruggs at [caroline@lmpc.org](mailto:caroline@lmpc.org).

**INTRO TO LMPC** adult membership classes will be held January 24-26. If interested, please find details and register on Realm Connect by January 10.

**OUR 2025 WORLD MISSIONS CONFERENCE**, "In Joyful Partnership: Philippians 1:3-11," will be held Sunday, February 9 through Wednesday, February 12. Please mark your calendars and plan to participate; we will have events for all ages as we welcome guests from Central Asia.

**LMPC HAS A JOB OPENING** for the position of Facilities Manager. See the job description at [lmpc.org/jobs](http://lmpc.org/jobs) and direct all inquiries to [margaretlowery@lmpc.org](mailto:margaretlowery@lmpc.org).

*To find out more about happenings at LMPC, visit [lmpc.org/events](http://lmpc.org/events).*

### GIVING UPDATE THROUGH DECEMBER 19, 2024

**Annual Budget:** \$5,860,000

**2024 Giving YTD:** \$4,616,715

**Remaining Gifts Needed:** \$1,243,285

**Outstanding Pledge Balance:** \$136,267

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](http://lmpc.org/give).