



METROCREST

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Responding to God's Inexpressible Gift

**Holy Communion
Second Sunday of Advent
December 10, 2023**

Welcome!

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;
To all who mourn and long for comfort;
To all who struggle and desire victory;
To all who sin and need a Savior;
To all who are strangers and want fellowship;
And to whoever will come –

*This church opens wide her doors and offers her welcome
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

God Calls Us To Worship

Welcome

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle

Call to Worship - Psalm 89:1-5

Leader: I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.

Unison: For I said, Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness.

Leader: You have said, I have made a covenant with My chosen one; I have sworn to David My servant:

Unison: "I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations."

Leader: Let the heavens praise Your wonders, O LORD, Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

We Respond To God's Call

Opening Hymn - "Once in Royal David's City"

Trinity Hymnal #225

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all.
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

And through all His wondrous childhood
He would honor and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden
In whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
Where like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

Acknowledging God's Presence

Seasonal Theme - "Responding to God's Inexpressible Gift"

Theme Verse - 2 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!

Hymn - "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Trinity Hymnal #201

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

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.

We Confess Our Sins

Call to Confession - 1 Corinthians 4:5b - Adapted

When the Lord comes, He will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore in the light of Christ, let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

Prayer of Confession

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name. Amen.

Please take a moment for personal reflection and confession.

Assurance of Pardon - 1 John 2:1-2 - Adapted

Leader: If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Unison: Thanks be to God.

Hymn - "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Trinity Hymnal #193

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood,

He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six-winged seraph;
Cherubim, with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

We Profess Our Faith And Pray

Affirmation of Faith - 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, true God of true God, begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father. By Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven; He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried. The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Greeting

Hymn - "Who Would Have Dreamed"

On a starlit hillside, shepherds watched their sheep
Slowly, David's city drifted off to sleep
But to this little town of no great renown
The Lord had a promise to keep.

Prophets had foretold it, a mighty King would come
Long awaited Ruler, God's Anointed One
But the Sovereign of all looked helpless and small
As God gave the world His own Son.

(Refrain)

And who would have dreamed or ever foreseen
That we could hold God in our hands?
The Giver of Life is born in the night
Revealing God's glorious plan
To save the world.

Wondrous gift of heaven, the Father sends the Son
Planned from time eternal, moved by holy love
He will carry our curse and death He'll reverse
So we can be daughters and sons. **(Refrain)**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is
the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

We Receive God's Word

Reading God's Word - 2 Corinthians 8:16-24

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Unison: Thanks be to God.

Understanding and Applying God's Word

Pastor Bill Lovell

"The Glory of the Lord"

Sermon Series - "Responding to God's Inexpressible Gift"

We Commune At God's Table

Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Unison: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

Unison: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Unison: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Therefore, with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Unison: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts: Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Glory to You, O Lord, most high.

Words of Institution

Holy Communion

Please come forward as directed, and wait to consume the elements until all have been served. Please place used cups in the receptacles as you leave.

Prayer after Holy Communion

We Respond To God's Grace

Closing Hymn - "As With Gladness Men of Old"

Trinity Hymnal #226

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.

In the heav'nly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down;
There forever may we sing
Alleluias to our King.

God Sends Us Out With His Blessing

Closing Blessing - 2 Corinthians 13:11,14

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full reconciliation, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

"Once in Royal David's City" Words by Cecil Frances Alexander, Music by Conrad Kocher, arr. By William H. Monk. **"O Little Town of Bethlehem"** Words by Phillips Brooks, Music by Lewis H. Redner. **"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"** Words adapted by Gerard Moultrie, Melody arr. By Ralph Vaughan Williams. **"Who Would Have Dreamed"** Words and music by Jason Hansen and Bob Kauflin. © 2014 Sovereign Grace Praise (BMI). Sovereign Grace Music, a division of Sovereign Grace Churches. All rights reserved. **"As with Gladness Men of Old"** Words by William Chatterton Dix, Music by Conrad Kocher, arr. by William H. Monk. CCLI License #451603.

Sermon Text

English Standard Version - 2 Corinthians 8:16-24

16 But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going[a] to you of his own accord. 18 With him we are sending[b] the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. 19 And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. 20 We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, 21 for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man. 22 And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers[c] of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

Sermon Notes

2 Corinthians 8:16-24

Pastor Bill Lovell

"The Glory of the Lord"

Introduction

The Glory of the Lord...in Asking

The Glory of the Lord...in Responding

"The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic God's giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves." ~ Nicholas of Myra

Church Life Notes

Today - December 10, 2023

1. **Second Sunday of Advent:** Advent is the first season of the church year, a time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ and His Second Coming in glory. This year our worship theme throughout Advent will be "Responding to God's Inexpressible Gift."
2. **Holy Communion:** We will share the Lord's Supper this morning.
3. **Serving Today:** This morning's scheduled Liturgy Leader is John Fowler. Our scheduled Prayer Leader is Larry Perry. The Metrocrest Advent Singers will lead us in singing today's first hymn. We are also blessed to be joined by numerous guest musicians.
4. **Giving Online:** To access our secure online giving portal, you may use the QR code on the back of the bulletin.
5. **Christmas Pageant & Party:** Everyone is invited to our Christmas Pageant tonight at 4:30pm in the church where our youngest members will reenact the story of the birth of Jesus. Bring a plate of seasonal goodies, and stay afterward for the MPC Christmas Party. There may be a little setup after this morning's service.
6. **MPC Youth Ministry:** Tonight, our large group meeting for middle and high school youth will meet from 6:00-8:00pm after our Christmas Pageant & Party.
7. **Interested in MPC's Care Ministry?** We need help looking after our church members, especially those who are sick and shut-in. If you enjoy this kind of work, please join us today after church for a brief planning meeting in Room D-01.

Upcoming Activities & Events

8. **Christmas at Metrocrest:** We will gather for the Fourth Sunday of Advent on Sunday morning, December 24, at 10:15am. We will gather that evening for our Christmas Eve Service at 6:00pm. We have not scheduled a service on Christmas Day.
9. **MPC Sunday School:** In observance of Christmas and New Year's, there will be no Sunday School Classes for Children, Youth, or Adults on Sunday, December 24 or 31.
10. **Interested in Joining MPC:** Join our new members class on Saturday, December 16, from 9:00am-12:00pm at the church.
11. **Hymn Sing:** Everyone is invited to a Christmas hymn sing at the home of Madeleine and Caleb Esmond on Tuesday, December 19, from 7:00-9:00pm, at 616 Woodland Street, Denton, TX 76209. RSVP to caleb.esmond@gmail.com.
12. **Upcoming Adult Class:** Please plan now to participate in our upcoming Adult Sunday School Class – "The Gospel According to Isaiah" – led by Will Grover, **beginning January 7**, at 9:00am.

13. **Annual Congregational Meeting:** We are set to meet on Sunday, January 28, following the 10:15 service, to elect new officers and reflect on God's faithfulness to us.

News & Needs

14. **Life Change** for December will support the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund, which assists needy, retired, and disabled pastors, missionaries, church lay workers, their widows, and children.
15. **Prayer Ministry:** Help us keep our prayer requests current and up-to-date by letting us know **via email** when we can remove or revise requests on Realm and on the list in the Sunday bulletin.
16. **End-of-Year Giving:** Please remember that donations to MPC must be postmarked or received in the church office by Sunday, December 31, in order to be receipted for Tax Year 2023.
17. **Officer Nominations:** Starting next Sunday, we will be inviting nominations for the Session, the Board of Deacons, and the Board of Trustees. Watch the Lobby for Nomination Forms.

High Fives & Thanks

18. **Ornament Exchange:** High Fives to MPC Women for this year's Ornament Exchange. Big thanks to Margaret Marrs for hosting.

Prayer Requests

19. **For The World:**
- **Armed Conflicts** - For God's mercy on the suffering people in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and Yemen.
20. **For Our Church's Mission and Ministry:**
- **Hearts Full of Praise** - For God to fill our hearts with praise and gratitude as we respond to His inexpressible gift in Christ.
 - **Church Finances** - For God's gracious provision.
21. **For One Another:**
- **Marriages** - For God's blessing on all those married or getting married.
 - **Health Issues** - For God's blessing on Yvonne Alford (Bill Lovell's friend), Connie Bielefeld (Margaret Marrs' grandmother), Kathy Carruth (Rick Carruth's mom), Steve Collinsworth, Krystal Hays (Bill & Shona Camp's neighbor), Maurane Huckaby, Jim Huckaby (Colton Huckaby's grandfather), Suzanne Larsen, Cherry Leslie, Ashley Marble, Jeannie Marion (Mike Marion's stepmother), Lauren Muckleroy (friend of Scott Marrs), Kristen Novak (Steve & Liz Wallin's daughter), Larry Perry, Ron Revell, Laura Stein (Sharon Greisser's niece), David Wamsley, Marlene Wamsley, Lori Winn, and Norm Winn; and also for God's blessing on Madeleine Esmond, expectant mommy due in January.

Welcome to Metrocrest! Please take a few moments to leave your contact information with Pastor Bill or a member of the Welcome Team. We would love to know that you worshipped with us today and share more information about our church.



How can we pray for you? MPC is a praying church! You can share your prayer requests with us by (1) using one of the cards found in the lobby; or (2) pointing your smartphone camera at this QR code to access a digital card. Please indicate whether your request is private or public. You may also request to pray with an Elder.

Do you want to make a donation? To fund MPC's mission and ministry, we depend on God's provision through you. If you'd like to make a donation this morning, you can do so by (1) placing it in the collection basket during the Offertory; or (2) pointing your smartphone camera at this QR code to access our secure online giving portal.



Thank you for your financial support! At MPC, we aim for financial transparency. Here's where we stand several months into this fiscal year (July-June): Last week's giving - \$11,026; our weekly giving goal - \$7,885; our actual giving to-date - \$152,548; and our projected giving to-date - \$181,346. We know these are difficult times for everyone. Please be as generous as you can in your personal stewardship, and *please pray for God's faithful provision.*



Let's get connected! MPC uses an app called Realm to allow you to update your personal information, communicate with groups and teams, follow church announcements, look up members, manage online giving, and join events. To get started, contact us through the church office at info@metrocrestchurch.org!

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The Session (Elders)
John Fowler
Paul Hartgrove
Larry Perry

The Board of Deacons
Dalton Dallas
Will Grover