The Worship of God
Christmas Family Service
23 December 2018
Eleven o’clock in the morning

Inspired by the bold and boundless hospitality of Jesus, we are “open to all,” which means we welcome and accept all people into the life of our Church without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic status, political affiliation, physical or mental capacity, or religious belief. We believe that God’s call is given to all people, and we embrace the Spirit that continues to cross boundaries in order to unite the world.

The Silent Meditation
The inescapable fact remains that Christmas symbolizes hope even at a moment when hope seems utterly fantastic. The raw materials of the Christmas mood are a newborn baby, a family, friendly animals, and labor. An endless process of new births is the perpetual answer of life to the fact of death. It proclaims that life keeps coming on, keeps seeking to fulfill itself, keeps affirming the margin of hope in the presence of desolation, pestilence, and despair... welling up out of the depths of vast vitality, there is something at work that is more authentic than the formal discursive design of the human mind. As long as this is true ultimately, despair about the human race is groundless.

– Howard Thurman, The Mood of Christmas

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Humanity never is, but always to be blest.

– Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man

The Music of Christmas
The Youth Instrumental Ensemble

The Call to Worship and Passing of the Peace
Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

*The Procession and Opening of the Bible
“Hark! The herald angels sing”

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the Incarnate Deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

*The Prayer of Invocation

*Please rise in body or in spirit.
The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Leader: A trumpet blares through the silent night!
A new song heralds the coming light!

People: Let us sing the new song,
let us turn to the light,
let us build a new earth,
let us celebrate new life!

Leader: Let the sea’s deep rumble make the sky tremble!
Let the field’s high chanting make the clouds dance!

All: Let us sing the new song,
let us turn to the light,
let us build a new earth,
let us celebrate new life!

(Lighting the Christ Candle)

People: (singing) Regent Square

Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o’er all the earth;
ye who sang creation’s story,
now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn King!

The Anthem

The Chapel Choir

“Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia,
for in your life and in mine is shining the glory of God.

Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia,
for your life and mine unite in the love of our God.

Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia,
for your life and mine will always bear witness to God.

The Preschool - 1st Grade Children

“Dance and Sing”

The Preschool - 1st Grade Children

Sang the rooster on that morn, hey, the Prince of Peace is born.
Lift your head, get out of bed, singing a song of Joy.

Dance and sing, dance and sing praises to the newborn King,
Dance and sing, dance and sing to the Holy Boy.

Sang the chickadee on that morn . . .

Sang the white dove on that morn, Christ, the Prince of Peace is born.

Each and every Christmas morn . . .

Christ is born, Merry Christmas, Joy.

During the singing of the carol, children are invited to come forward, choose a figurine from one of the baskets and place their figurines in the Crèche, then go to the chancel steps for the story.
*The Carol

“O little town of Bethlehem”

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.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
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!

The Christmas Story

The Reverend Carrie Veal

*The Singing of Carols

Children may return to their seats during the singing of the carols.

“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

“O come all ye faithful”

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

“Joy to the world”

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

The Meditation

The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell

The Church at Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

Our God, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

The Offering

*Mobile giving* is available – see page 8.
The Music at the Offering
“The Music at the Offering
“Psalm 19”

The Youth Instrumental Ensemble

*The Doxology

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o’er the plains.
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria

The Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV adapted)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the trampling warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Protector, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

Leader: For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Lighting of the Candles

*The Carol with Candlelight

“Silent night, holy night!”

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin mother and child! Holy infant so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing. Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

*The Christmas Benediction

Extinguished candles can be left in baskets at the exits as you leave.

The Postlude

“Improvisation on Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella”

John Richardson
Leading worship this morning with The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister, are The Reverend Carrie Veal, Minister of Children and Community Life, The Reverend Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator, and Katie Hambrick, Children’s Ministry Intern.

Leading worship through music with the Chapel Choir, the Youth Instrumental Ensemble, participants from K-1st Grades, Preschool, and Through-the-Week School, are Charlotte C. Judge, Associate Director of Music, John Richardson, Pianist, Erinn Frechette, Flutist, and Emily Urbanek, Pianist.

The Youth Instrumental Ensemble:
Adam Cranford, Trumpet
Anna Judge, Trumpet
Charlie O’Dulio, Trumpet
Robert Starling, Trumpet
Brian Ratledge, French Horn
Jackson Magas, Trombone
Ian Hull, Baritone
Nate Lueders, Tuba

The acolytes are Elliott Campbell, William Campbell and Megan Merritt.

Helping with the offering this morning are Benny Bingham, Brady Hagerman, Jack Maltarich, Matt Maltarich, Steven Krusinski, and Chandler Krusinski, members of the MPBC Children’s Ministry.

The sound and video technician is Van Wilson.

The poinsettias on the altar are given by Mr. W. Frank Dowd, Jr. and family and Mrs. Roddey Dowd, Sr. and family to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. Frank Dowd, Sally Carson Dowd and Roddey Dowd, Sr.

The Season of Advent and Christmas 2018
You are invited to attend our other worship offerings:

Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve
The Music of Christmas with Organ, Harp and Flute | 5:30pm in the Sanctuary
Candlelight Worship with Communion | 6:00p in the Sanctuary
Nativity Tableau with Communion | 7:30-8:00p “drop in” in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 30
Jazz in the Round | 11:00a in Heaton Hall

Sunday, January 6, 2019
Epiphany Sunday Worship with Communion | 11:00a in the Sanctuary
THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Why do we worship?
Worship at Myers Park Baptist is the gathering of a diverse, intergenerational, ecumenical community of faith, celebrating God’s active and timeless presence in the world. In worship, God re-forms our hearts, minds and bodies, and ignites our imaginations with sacred stories—stories that invite us to question, explore mystery, express joy and grief, and deepen our faith. We worship to learn how to develop caring, empowering relationships with each other, and to stay centered in God as the world swirls around us. We worship to be inspired and prepared to exemplify the compassion and justice of Jesus in our church family and in the world. Through worship, God frees and transforms us in heart, mind and body, so we can make a difference within ourselves, in our relationships and in our community.

How do we worship?
Focusing on God, worship at Myers Park Baptist unfolds consistently with the Isaiah 6 scriptural model: praise, confession, pardon, calling to respond, commitment and sending out. All our worship services are built on this ancient structural form, regardless of worship style, venue or theme. Communal practices within worship — radical hospitality, confession and assurance of pardon, passing the peace, silence and listening, spirited hymn singing, presentations of gifts, and active participation in Communion—transform worshipers into newness with God and one another. Themes for services, based on lectionary scriptures, annually portray the narrative arc of God’s redeeming love for humankind.
**MOBILE GIVING**

You can now text your contributions and offerings to MPBC! It is secure, simple, and efficient:

- Start a new text message to phone number 73256.
- In the message of the text, enter 1900Q, a space, and the amount you want to give (i.e., 1900Q 100).
- The system will return a message to you; click on the link provided and follow instructions.
- You will then receive a receipt to confirm your gift was received. It is that simple!
- Next time, since your setup is already done – just text “1900Q, a space, then amount you wish to give” to 73256.

Questions? Contact Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator, at 704.334.7232 x116 or lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org
Welcome. We’re glad you’re here.

If you are our guest, we’d love to hear from you! Please share with us a little about who you are:

- text “guest” to 474747 OR
- fill out a guest card located in the pew rack. Simply return the guest card in the offering plates during worship as your gift to us.

If you would like to learn more about us, stop by the Welcome Table in the Narthex after worship to speak with one of our members or ministers.

WEEKLY NEWS

December 24-30, 2018

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Monday, December 24
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Prelude begins at 5:30 and Worship at 6:00p | Sanctuary
This beautiful service offers beloved carols, along with music by organ, harp, flute, Chancel Choir, and soloist Todd Geer singing "O Holy Night." Rev. Ben Boswell will preach "The Joy of Being Scattered." And we will celebrate Communion. The service will end in candlelight as we all sing "Silent Night."

Monday, December 24
Nativity Tableau | 7:30 - 8:00p | Sanctuary
Following the Candlelight Service, we will celebrate and say farewell to the long tradition of our Nativity Tableau. As part of the celebration, we will offer a professional family photograph of all Church families and community families who have made attendance at the Tableau a Christmas Eve tradition. Photographs will be taken by John Bambach, in the Chapel from 7:30 - 8:00p. Families will receive their photograph through email so that you may duplicate in whatever size and quantity you wish. Families will also receive an updated Christmas Eve Nativity Tableau booklet listing participating Holy Families over the past sixty-five years.

Sunday, December 30
Jazz Worship in the Round | 11:00a | Heaton Hall
Charlotte area jazz musicians with vocalist, Toni Tupponce, will lead us in worship singing favorite Christmas carols as well as offering the beautiful Linford Detweiler song "Trumpet Child". Rev. Ben Boswell will be preaching "The Incarnate God."
Stewardship | Empower Church | Finish Strong
Help us finish 2018 strong! Our Church and hearts are set on fire by the love of God and what we can accomplish in God's name. We're in this together. Make a contribution today at www.myersparkbaptist.org/online-giving.

2018 Donations
As the year comes to a close, please note the following deadlines for donations: cash received by noon on December 31 will be credited on 2018 contribution statements; checks postmarked by December 31, 2018 and received by January 5, 2019 will be credited on 2018 contribution statements; and stock gifts received by our advisor by 3:00p on December 31 will be credited in 2018.

FEATURES

Our Stephen Ministry is Here for You
During the holidays, the stress of the season can bring back memories that are not always pleasant. Memories of many types of losses can cause diverse emotions, from sadness to anger. Unfortunately, our emotions sometimes take us places we do not want to go as we feel we are not in control of our lives. At times like this, a listening, nonjudgmental, confidential ear may be exactly what you need. Consider being matched with a Stephen Minister. We have 12 newly trained Stephen Ministers ready to help. If this sounds like something you might consider, please contact Joe Aldrich at jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org or 704.334.7232 x 113.

Advent Podcast Series | Incarnate
This week Chrissy and Ben hit the fast-forward button to cover three chapters in one (45-minute-ish) episode. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in Frost's book are full of sociological and theological gems that lead us down paths of conversation from labor movement to military training, to elbow learning. Doesn't that sound fun?! Listen to Episode 3 >

Midweek Meditation with the Pastor
Wednesdays | January 9, 16, 23, 30, February 6, and 13 | 11:30a | Library
Inhale, exhale. Our lives rest in the balance of these two simple words. Even more, the act of breathing is filled with sacred significance. Come catch your
breath at the all-campus Midweek Meditation launching Wednesdays in January from 11:30 until noon in the Library. Guided by the Rev. Ben Boswell with support from Lisa Cashion and Julie Marr of SoulStudio, this dedicated time will begin with a word, poem, or insight pertaining to mindfulness followed by peace, quiet, calm, clarity, and quite possibly, a transformed life. Register through myMPBC or by contacting Carol Cedar in the Church Office (ccedar@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x 100). Register now >

Awakening the Body Series | The Perfect Body
Wednesday, January 9 | 6:30-8:00p | Heaton Hall
How many of us made some kind of resolution this year to lose weight, to eat healthier, or to exercise? In this season of body-based resolutions and newfound commitments, we will learn about all of the external forces at work in our lives that put pressure on us to have bodies that look and function a certain way. From media to sexual and gender normativity, there are so many expectations on all of our bodies, it’s hard to keep up! At this gathering we’ll name some of those stress-inducing forces in our lives and learn some spiritual practices that might help us cope under the societal pressure of perfection. Bethany Johnson will lead our discussion.

New Adult Faith Formation Class: Faith Development
Begins Sunday, January 6 | 9:45-10:45a | Room 250
This class is for those who want the opportunity to examine their personal faith system in community with others. The five-month discussion class will explore these main areas: 1) Developing a Personal Theology: which explores such questions as: Do you believe in God? What is the nature of a human’s relationship to God? Who was Jesus? What is God’s sense of power and control in the world? Why is there evil? What is grace? 2) How can the Bible be a faith resource? 3) The Spiritual Life: what is the value of silence and meditation? Why is corporate worship important? What can I expect to happen when I pray? How do I develop a faith journal? and 4) Missions: How do I act on my faith? The class is facilitated by Jon and Teddi Benson with some individual sessions led by the ministerial staff. For more information contact Jon Benson at jonathonbenson6@gmail.com.

New Adult Faith Formation Class: Doorways
Begins Sunday, January 13 | 9:45-10:45a | Shalom Conference Room
This group will go through doors, not into a place, not with right answers, but doorways for you to find a path that you want to investigate and come to know as your personal faith. It starts with exploring your sense - and the sense of others on this exploration with you - of the nature of God, then of the person of Jesus, including the writings and concepts of current theologians. Eventually, we will look at how you continue your "pathway" and where it might be leading you. Many Sundays we will face the truly unexpected and it will give us new space and freedom to see even Christianity in a new way. This class will be led by Beth Walters.

COMMUNITY

Hang Out With the Pastor
Monday, January 7 | 5:00 - 6:00p | The Common Market Southend
Hang Outs will continue into the new year on the first Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at a new location - The Common Market in SouthEnd. The address is 235 W. Tremont Avenue. Here are some things we want you to know: bring the family. Bring your appetite or just come and hang out! There is something for everyone. This is a casual way to find connection.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Training
Thursday, January 24 - Saturday, January 26
You are invited to a training on the resource OWL (Our Whole Lives). This first series will cover ages kindergarten through high school seniors. We will offer training on the Adult Resource at a later date. Clergy from the UCC Church, the co-author of OWL, will be our facilitators. This comprehensive training will provide the information you will need to lead this class for our children and youth. And best of all, it is FREE. You must be able to commit to all three days. To learn more and to register, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal (cveal@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x118). Carrie is excited for this opportunity and would love for you to join her on this journey

MLK National Holiday Celebration
Beginning January 15, 2019
Join members of MPBC and the Charlotte community to celebrate of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. Rev. Ben Boswell will be speaking at the wreath-laying ceremony at Marshall Park on Tuesday, January 15 at noon. Then, come march in the MLK Holiday Parade on Saturday, January 19, 10:00-noon. Contact Ryan LaPrade (ralaprade@gmail.com) to sign up to march with the MPBC team.
View the full list of MLK events here >

Navigating MPBC
Beginning January 27, 2019
If you are a guest who would like to learn more about our Church or are interested in membership, Navigating is the class for you. Contact Rev. Carrie Veal (cveal@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x118) to learn more.

Reserve a Niche in the Columbarium Expansion
All niches in the existing Columbarium have been reserved, and the Ministry of Facilities Management is in the process of planning for an expansion. You can see the plan drawing in Heaton Hall Foyer. We are gathering interest and need before we commit to moving forward. If you would be interested in reserving a space in the Columbarium expansion, please contact Leigh Anne Hagerman (704.334.7232 x 116 or lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org).

CHILDREN

Children's Ministry Teacher Training - Part 2
Sunday, January 6 | 8:30 - 9:45a
In this session, we will cover how to teach preschoolers and elementary age children. We will also talk about well-being in the classroom and how you can feel ready for anything that comes your way. Please RSVP here for this training. We will provide childcare and serve a continental breakfast and coffee. To learn more, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal.

Through-The-Week School 2019-2020 Registration
Opens Monday, January 7
Come play with us at Through-the-Week School for the 2019-2020 school year! Registration opens for ages 1-5 on January 7. To find out more about TTWS and to register, visit www.throughtheweekpreschool.com. Questions? Contact Belinda Geuss at bgeuss@myersparkbaptist.org.

Music Together Registration
Winter Session Runs January 9 - March 9
Wednesdays, 4:00p & 5:00p | Saturdays, 10:00a & 11:00a
Are you curious about what you can do to nurture the musical growth of your child, regardless of your own musical ability? Did you know that all children are musical? This is the essential Music Together® class for children from birth through age four. Each 45-minute class follows the recommendations of the latest child development research. Classes welcome a variety of ages to foster natural, family-style learning. As a member of MPBC, you receive a 50% discount on tuition for classes (at the MPBC location only). Tuition includes 9 weeks of classes, a CD, a beautifully illustrated family songbook, and access to the songs through the Hello, Everybody app. Questions? Contact Lucy Chapman at lucybelle22@gmail.com. Register here >

Parent Workshop: Children and Anxiety
Thursday, January 10 | 7:00-9:00p | Cornwell Conference Center
Dr. Michele Mannering will lead a parenting workshop discussing how anxiety and stress manifest in the behavior of young children. She will help parents gauge the spectrum of childhood worry and offer strategies to manage anxiety at home. This workshop, sponsored by Through-The-Week School and the Children's Ministry will give parents the chance to learn and connect. Childcare will be provided at no cost. To learn more and to sign up, please contact Rev. Carrie Veal.

YOUTH

Kanuga 2019 | January 18-20
Music, laughter, and snow! This January, youth in grades 6-12 will retreat to the Kanuga Conference Center in the North Carolina mountains. Join us for this wonderful weekend of fellowship and community as we share and learn together while having fun. We will have small and large group sessions with free time throughout. We leave Friday, January 18 and return on Sunday around noon. Sign up through myMPBC.
Apply for MPBC Scholarships Beginning January 1!
Giving scholarship funds to students at MPBC is one way that we are living into our calling as a community of God. It is our hope that through these gifts we are able to share with our college students while remaining connected, involved, and invested in their lives as they discover more fully who God has created them to be in this world. Details about the following scholarships can be found on our website at www.myersparkbaptist.org/forms: The Weathers Scholarship Fund and the Howard Webb Family Fund and a Scholarship given by a long-time member in honor of Betty Jo Hamrick. Applications can be found online or by emailing Allen at adavis@myersparkbaptist.org. Applications are due by April 1.

Discipleship
Discipleship Class is for youth who have completed 7th grade and who join together on a journey of faith leading to a decision about baptism and membership in our Church. Contact Allen Davis for more information (adavis@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x112)
ON-GOING OPPORTUNITIES

OUTREACH

Room In The Inn
Every Saturday December-March we open our doors to our neighbors who are homeless. Volunteer for RITI Now >

Oatmeal and Staples Food Drive
We are collecting through January 15 in support of Charlotte's homeless shelters and hurricane relief. Make a monetary donation >

Music Ministry

Choirs For All Ages
Adult Chancel Choir meets Thursdays, 7:00-9:00p and Sundays at 10:15a. Contact Fran Morrison.

Youth Choir meets Sundays, 5:00-6:00p. Resumes January 6. Contact Charlotte Judge.

Children's Choirs meet Wednesdays, 5:00-6:45p. Resume January 9. Contact Charlotte Judge.

Coffee Chat for parents meets in the Parlor on Wednesdays while children are in choir. Contact Carrie Veal.

Youth Instrumental Ensemble meets Sundays, 6:00-7:00p. Resumes January 6. Contact Charlotte Judge.

New Classes Starting January 6
Start the new year by joining a faith formation class. Full list of Faith Formation Classes > We have two new classes (details above):

Faith Development - For those who want to examine their personal faith system. Led by Jon and Teddi Benson.

Doorways - Focusing on opening doors to pathways to finding faith. Led by Beth Walters.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

For children birth - twelfth grade. With trained paid staff and volunteers, we want every child to know that they are prepared for and cared for each time they are on our campus.

Faith Formation Classes meet Sundays, 9:45-10:45a. Resume January 6. Contact Carrie Veal (children) or Allen Davis (youth).

Children's Worship on Sundays, 11:15a-noon. Children leave from worship to go to the Sanctuary Basement Room 3. Contact Carrie Veal.

Youth Fellowship meets Sundays, 3:30-5:00p in the Youth Hall. Resumes January 6. Contact Allen Davis.

SCHEDULE

Looking for Our Schedule of Activities and Meetings?
An always-current calendar is available on our website, through myMPBC, and on the ChurchLife App (find out how to get the app here).
Access our online calendar now >
Our Covenant

We, the members of the Myers Park Baptist Church, are a people on a journey of faith. By God’s grace we are experiencing God’s love through Jesus Christ and in the community of the faithful. We are discovering in this experience our freedom to become new creatures and our responsibility to be faithful stewards of our lives and of this world.

We will be open to all new light, strengthened by God and each other in our faith. We will sustain a critical examination of Scripture, belief and ritual as interpreters of God’s active presence in the world. We will accept controversy as a reality of life together and an opportunity for growth toward maturity. We covenant to be a community of God’s new creation and affirm that we are open to all and closed to none.

We covenant to nurture this Church as a community of faith and as an instrument for reconciliation in this world: by worship, by Christian education, by the dedication of our personal and material resources and by all the other ways we express the significance of our lives with God and one another.

We covenant together to be priests celebrating God’s presence in community and in the world, believing we are participants in God’s kingdom on earth.