THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Christmas Eve
The Nativity of our Lord

24 December 2016

Myers Park Baptist Church
Charlotte, North Carolina
THE WORSHIP OF GOD
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD - CHRISTMAS EVE
24 DECEMBER 2016 AT SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS BEFORE GOD

Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus, we welcome and affirm all people into the life of the Church regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical limitation, educational background, economic situation, or religious belief.

Gluten-free communion wafers are available in the Narthex.

THE SILENT MEDITATION

Where refugees seek deliverance that never comes
And the heart consumes itself as if it would live,
Where children age before their time
And life wears down the edges of the mind,
Where the old man sits with mind grown cold,
While bones and sinew, blood and cell, go slowly down to death,
Where fear companions each day's life,
And Perfect Love seems long delayed...
Christmas is waiting to be born:
In you, in me, and in all humanity.

 Howard Thurman, The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations

THE MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS (5:30 p.m.)
Carols for Harp and Organ Betsey Sesler, harp

THE CALL TO WORSHIP
Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

At this time, everyone is invited to sign the friendship register found at the end of each pew. If you are our guest this evening, we welcome you especially and ask that you include your address, phone number, and email. If you have not yet done so, please silence your cell phone. The Nativity Tableau will begin shortly after the conclusion of this service.

*THE PROCESSION AND OPENING OF THE BIBLE
“Hark! The herald angels sing”
Mendelssohn

*THE COLLECT
Leader: Let us pray.
People: O God, you have caused this holy night to shine
with the brightness of true light:
grant that this same light enkindled in our hearts
may shine forth in our lives. Amen.

*THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE
George and Bobbie Campbell,
Malcolm and Lauren Campbell
with McLean, Elliott and William

Leader: We have celebrated God’s gifts of hope, peace, joy and love,
looking to Christ who comes to us as God’s greatest gift.
People: We celebrate that God comes to us in human form,
bringing light to all the world.

* Those who wish may stand.  + The ushers will seat those who are waiting.
Leader: May every knee bow before the newborn Savior.
With the angels, may every tongue sing:
People: “Glory to God in the highest.”
Leader: Let us light the Christ Candle.

(Lighting the Christ Candle.)

People: (singing)
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 KYRIE ELEISON (Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.)

THE INVITATION TO SILENT CONFESSION

THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of grace,
We kneel before your manger knowing that we are broken people
in need of your love and mercy.
We admit that we have sinned against you in our words and in our thoughts.
We confess that we have sinned against one another
in what we have done and in what we have left undone.

In your grace, forgive us.
In your mercy, restore us.
Move us beyond our failures and help us to begin anew.
Amen.

THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Ancient words of greeting and forgiveness may be used when Passing the Peace to those around you, saying either: “The peace of God be with you” or “The peace of Christ be with you.” The response may be: “And also with you.”
THE WORD OF GOD IS PROCLAIMED AND HEARD

THE SOLO

“While Shepherds Watched” from Run, Ye Shepherds, To the Light

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
a star shone high above.
Ye were first to see the light:
for yours is a joy, a joy full of love.
How joyful, ye shepherds this glorious night,
ye were first to see the light.
Oh, how glorious is this night.

Charlotte Judge, soprano

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV adapted)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Leader: The story of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

*THE HYMN

“Joy to the world! The Lord is come”

THE CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

“Good News for All Lives”

The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell

Number 110 Antioch


THE CONGREGATION RESPONDS TO GOD’S WORD

THE SOLO

“O Holy Night”

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining, truly he taught us to love one another;
it is the night of our dear Savior’s birth; his law is love and his gospel is peace;
long lay the world in sin and error pining chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
’til he appeared and the soul felt his worth, and in his name all oppression shall cease,
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn! let all within us praise his holy name!
fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine! O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Adolphe Adam

(1803-1856)

Todd Geer, tenor

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

The offering will benefit the Sunshine Fund (The Church Benevolence Fund).

THE ANTHEM

“Before the Marvel of This Night”

Before the marvel of this night, adoring, fold your wings and bow,
then tear the sky apart with light, and with your news the world endow.
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace, that fear and death and sorrow cease:
sing peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace!

Awake the sleeping world with song, this is the day the Lord has made.
Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splendor come arrayed.
Give earth a glimpse of heav’nly bliss, a teasing taste of what they miss:
sing bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss!

The love that we have always known, our constant joy and endless light,
now to the loveless world be shown, now break upon its deathly night.
Into one song compress the love that rules our universe above:
sing love, sing love, sing God is love, sing love, sing God is love!

The Chancel Choir

Marvel

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

All are welcome at this Table. It is open to all who seek to follow Jesus. There are no requirements
of creed, denominational affiliation or age. Come, bring all the faith you have to this table of grace.

You are invited to come forward to receive Communion as indicated by ushers. Two stations near the Transepts will serve
the outer two aisles. Two central stations will serve the center aisle. The individual small cups contain juice;
the large chalice contains wine. Before returning to your seat, please deposit empty juice cups in one of the baskets.
If you prefer to receive Communion at your seat, please indicate by raising your hand so a deacon may serve you.

Gluten-free communion wafers are available in the Narthex.

THE INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father/Mother, 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 WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

THE MUSIC AT COMMUNION
Instrumental Christmas Selections

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
We give you thanks, O God, that you have come to us through Jesus the Christ, both in the midst of time and history, and in the timeless presence of Christ’s spirit as we receive the gifts of bread and wine. Send us out into the world rejoicing, enabled to share your love with all people we meet; through the grace of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

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 . . . . 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 Father, 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. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Leader: The story of God for the people of God.
People: Thanks be to God.

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

*THE CAROL WITH LIGHTS
“Silent night, holy night!” Stille Nacht

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! Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing: Alleluia.
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

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

The congregation extinguishes their candles.  
The ushers will receive your candles as you leave.

THE CLOSING VOLUNTARY

“Joy to the World”  

setting by Craig Phillips  
(b. 1961)

The Nativity Tableau will begin shortly after the conclusion of this service.  
The Holy Family is portrayed by Keith Young and Anna-Catherine Fowler with Sawyer.  
Shepherds and Magi will be portrayed by members of the Youth Ministry.

Leading worship this evening with The Reverend Mr. W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister,  
are The Reverend Mr. Joseph D. Aldrich, Associate Minister,  
Mariah B. Currin, Director of New Member Ministry,  
Cher Lindblom, Director of Outreach,  
The Reverend Mr. Barry Z. Metzger, Church Administrator,  
The Reverend Ms. Carrie Veal, Minister of Children,  
and The Reverend Ms. Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Minister of Faith Formation.

The Chancel Choir leads worship through music with  
Frances L. Morrison, Minister of Music,  
and Dr. Matthew Manwarren, Organist.

The acolytes are members of the Myers Park Baptist Church Youth Ministry.

The sound technician is Eric Roberts.  
The webcast technician is John Bambach.

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

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The cover artwork is  
THE MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH 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.

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THE MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH
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MINISTERS
As priests to one another, all members of the congregation are ministers. Some are called out for particular places of service:

THE REVEREND MR. W. BENJAMIN BOSWELL, Senior Minister
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