GATHERING

Silent Meditation
In all of these ways, the stranger of public life becomes the spiritual guide of our private life. Through the stranger our view of self, of world, of God is deepened and expanded. Through the stranger we are given a chance to find ourselves. And through the stranger, God finds us and offers us the gift of wholeness in the midst of our estranged life, a gift of God and of the public life.

– Parker Palmer, The Company of Strangers

God gives justice to orphans and widows. God shows love to the foreigners living among you providing them food and clothing. You must also show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

– Deuteronomy 10:18-19

Gathering Music
“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”
“The First Noel”

Welcome
Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ, MPBC welcomes all of God’s children into the life of the Church regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical limitation, educational background, or economic situation.

All children are invited to remain in worship today.

Call to Worship
Leader: The word comes forth from the mouth of God!
A new name shatters Caesar’s rod!

People: Let us hear our new name,
let us turn to the light,
let us build a new earth,
let us celebrate new life!

Leader: Let Simeon lift God’s children to heaven!
Let Anna reveal the name God has given!

All: Let us hear our new name,
let us turn to the light,
let us build a new earth,
let us celebrate new life!

*Please stand in body or in spirit.
**Prayer of Confession**

O God, you have come to us in a child.  
As we prepare our hearts to welcome you more fully, we know we stumble.  
Forgive us when our hectic lives hide your presence;  
when the memory of tinsel of Christmas means more to us than your truth;  
when our hearts of stone resist the pain and brokenness around us;  
when we care more about what gifts we received  
than the damage we do to your creation and to your children.  
Have mercy on us, healing God, so we might tear down the walls  
we have built to keep your love away  
and seek your justice for our human family. Amen.

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

**Leader:** Friends, hear this good news. Truly, God can do what we cannot.  
**People:** In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free.

**Passing of the Peace**

**Leader:** As beloved children of God, let us not be strangers to one another but family in Christ.  
Please stand and greet each other with the peace of Christ.

*All are invited to stand and share the peace of Christ with one another.*

**HEARING AND PROCLAIMING THE WORD**

**The Gospel Reading**  
Luke 2:22-40 (NRSV)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”  

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”  

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.
**Congregational Song**

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!”

See page 6.

In Dulci Jubilo

**The Sermon**

“Welcoming God the Foreigner”

The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell

**The Musical Reflection**

“Trumpet Child”

Jazz Ensemble

Linford Detweiler (b. 1964)

The trumpet child will blow his horn,  
will blast the sky till it’s reborn;  
with Gabriel's power and Satchmo's grace,  
he will surprise the human race.

The trumpet he will use to blow  
is being fashioned out of fire;  
the mouthpiece is a glowing coal  
the bell a burst of wild desire.

The trumpet child will riff on love,  
Thelonious notes from up above;  
he'll improvise a kingdom come  
accompanied by a different drum.

The trumpet child will banquet here  
until the lost are truly found;  
a thousand days, a thousand years  
nobody knows for sure how long.

The rich forget about their gold;  
the meek and mild are strangely bold;  
the lion lies beside the lamb  
and licks a murderer's outstretched hand.

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

**Prayers for the People**

**The Lord's Prayer**

Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

**Sharing of Gifts**

*Please place gifts and member/guest cards in the basket as it is passed.*

(Gifts of loose cash in December support the work of Med Assist, a nonprofit pharmacy program providing access to life-saving prescription medications, patient support, advocacy and related services to poor, vulnerable, and uninsured North Carolina residents.)

**Offertory Music**

“Reprisal: Trumpet Child”
*The Doxology
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures, here below. Alleluia. Alleluia!
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts.
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

**Lasst uns Erfreuen**

Praise the Lord from whom all blessings flow.
Praise the Lord, all creatures, here below. Alleluia. Alleluia!
Praise the Lord above, ye heavenly hosts.
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

**SENDING**

Prayer of Dedication

*Closing Song
“Hark! The herald angels sing”

The Benediction

Sending Forth Song
“Auld Lang Syne”

See page 7.
*Mendelssohn

Ways to Pledge and Give
- **Pledge online** at www.myersparkbaptist.org/make-a-pledge
- **Give online** with your debit or credit card at www.myersparkbaptist.org/online-giving
- **Automatic bank drafts** through myMPBC or by calling the Finance Office at 704.334.7232 x116
- **Text your gift**: see our website for instructions or call the Church office
- **Write a check**
- **Call Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman**, Church Administrator, at 704.334.7232 x116
Go, Tell It On The Mountain

American folk hymn
Adapt. John W. Work II (1872–1925)

Refrain: Unison

Go, tell it on the mountain, O-ver the hills and ev-ery-where,

Go, tell it on the moun-tain That Je-sus Christ is born.

 Harmony

1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O’er si-lent flocks by night,
2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo! a-bove the earth
3. Down in a low-ly man-ger The hum-ble Christ was born,

Be-hold through-out the heav-ens There shone a ho-ly light.
Rang out the an-gel cho-rus That hailed our Sav-ior’s birth.
And God sent us sal-va-tion That bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Words from The Book of Hymns © 1964, 1966 by The Board of Publication of The United Methodist Church, Inc.
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO 66777855

Medieval Latin
Trans. John Mason Neale, 1853; alt.

14th century German melody
Harm. John Stainer, 1867

1. Good Christian Friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow,
Christ is born to-day!

2. Good Christian Friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss;
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian Friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all,
Christ was born to save!

Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today:
Ox and ass before Him bow,
And He is in the manger now.
He has opened heaven's door,
And we are blest for evermore.

Now ye hear of endless bliss;
Jesus Christ was born for this!
Now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all,
To gain the everlasting hall.

Christ is born to-day!
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save!
1. Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!

Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.

Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail the incarnate Deity,
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that we no more may die,

With the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.

Refrain
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”
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.

Ministers

As priests to one another, all members of the congregation are ministers. Some are called out for particular places of service:

The Reverend W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister
Frances L. Morrison, Minister of Music
The Reverend Joseph D. Aldrich, Associate Minister
The Reverend Chrissy Tatum Williamson, Associate Minister
The Reverend Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator
The Reverend Carrie Veal, Minister of Children and Community Life
John Richardson, Organist
Charlotte Judge, Associate Director of Music
Allen Davis, Director of Youth Ministry
Jenny Yopp, Director of the Cornwell Center
Belinda Geuss, Director of Through-The-Week School