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.

Prelude
“It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas”  Robert Reiniger and Meredith Willson, arr. Mark O’Connor

Call to Worship
Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

Carol
“The Holly and the Ivy”  English Traditional Carol, arr. Mark O’Connor

Lighting of the Christ Candle
Carla Hines and Lynn Gallagher

Carol
“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”  Edmund Sears, arr. Mark O’Connor

Opening Hymn
“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”  MENDELSSOHN

Welcome of Our Guests
Rev. Carrie Veal

If you are our guest today, please text “guest” to 474747 so we may offer you our gratitude for joining us today.

Carol
“The First Noel”  English Traditional Carol, John Stainer, arr. Mark O’Connor

Rev. Mia M. McClain

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: 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.

Carol
“The Cherry Tree Carol”
Early 15th Century, arr. Mark O’Connor

Christmas Meditation
“And God said, ‘YES!’”
Rev. Dr. Benjamin Boswell

Anthem
“The Best of Rooms”
Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

Church at Prayer
Rev. Joseph D. Aldrich

Sharing Our Gifts
Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman
Gifts to “Loose Plate Offering” will benefit the Ministry of Outreach partners.

Carol
“O Come, All Ye Faithful”
Chancel Ensemble
ADESTES FIDELES

Musical Interlude
“Appalachia Waltz/Silent Night”
Mark O’Connor/Franz Xaver Gruber and Joseph Mohr
arr. Mark O’Connor

Hebrew Scripture – Isaiah 9:2-9 (NRSV adapted)
Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

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.

Lighting of the Candles

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! 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.

Christmas Benediction

Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

Postlude
“What Child is This?”

Leading worship this evening with Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister,
are Rev. Mia M. McClain, Associate Minister,
Rev. Joseph D. Aldrich, Associate Minister,
Rev. Carrie Veal, Minister of Children and Community Life,
and Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator.

Leading worship through music are
Dr. Matt Caine, Minister of Music and Worship,
The Chancel Ensemble,
John Richardson, Organist,
Mark O’Connor, Guitar, Mandolin, Violin,
and Maggie O’Connor, Cello, Violin and Vocals.

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

HOW TO JOIN MYERS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

Becoming a member of Myers Park Baptist is as easy as filling out a Joining Card. To receive a card or learn more, stop by the Welcome Table in Heaton Hall Foyer.

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 77977.
- In the message of the text, enter giveMPBC (not case-sensitive).
- The system will return a message to you; click on the link provided and follow the instructions.
- You will then receive a receipt to confirm your gift was received. It is that simple!

Questions? Contact Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman, Church Administrator, at 704.334.7232 x116 or lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org
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.

OUR MINISTERS

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