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 with Announcements
“Carol of the Bells”

Pantasia Steel Band
Mykola Leontovych (1877-1921)

Call to Worship
Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

Lighting of the Candle of Peace
Brandon Richardson and Marty Dennis

Opening Song
“The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy”

Pantasia Steel Band
West Indian Traditional

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.

Gospel Reading - Mark 1:1-8 (NRSV)
Marina Luckhoo

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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.

Anthem
“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Pantasia Steel Band
Gloria Shayne (1923-2008)

Sermon
“Preparing for Peace”
Rev. Dr. Benjamin Boswell
Anthem
“Mary’s Boy Child”
Pantasia Steel Band
Jester Harrison (1901-2000)

Sharing Our Gifts
Tucker Pearsall
Gifts to “Loose Plate Offering” will benefit the Ministry of Outreach partners.

Church at Prayer
Marina Luckhoo

Benediction
Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

Postlude
“God Rest Ye Merry, Citizens”
Pantasia Steel Band
CAROL

Leading worship today with Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister, are Rev. Carrie Veal, Minister of Children and Community Life, Marina Luckhoo, Pastoral Intern and Tucker Pearsall, Incoming Chair of Deacons.

Leading worship through music are Dr. Matt Caine, Minister of Music and Worship, Nitara Reaves, vocalist and the Pantasia Steel Band: Kimberly Roberts, steel drum and percussion Greg Jansen, steel drum Patty Boggs, drum set

♦
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

Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell
Senior Minister | bboswell@myersparkbaptist.org

Dr. Matt Caine
Minister of Music and Worship | mcaine@myersparkbaptist.org

Rev. Joseph D. Aldrich
Associate Minister | jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org

Rev. Mia M. McClain
Associate Minister | mmclain@myersparkbaptist.org

Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman
Church Administrator | lhagerman@myersparkbaptist.org

Rev. Carrie Veal
Minister of Children and Community Life | cveal@myersparkbaptist.org

John Richardson
Organist | jrichardson@myersparkbaptist.org

Charlotte C. Judge
Associate Director of Music | cjjudge@myersparkbaptist.org

Allen Davis
Director of Youth Ministry | adavis@myersparkbaptist.org

Pamela Handon
Director of the Cornwall Center | phandon@cornwallcenter.org

Belinda Geuss
Director of Through-The-Week School | bgeuss@myersparkbaptist.org