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
   “God Rest Ye Merry, Citizens”

Call to Worship
   Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

Lighting of the Candle of Joy
   Connor Choka

Opening Song
   “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

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.

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

Anthem
   “Jesus, the Light of the World”

Gospel Reading – John 1:6-14; 19-28 (NRSV)
   Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman
   There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

   This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said.

   Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you
are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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
“I Wonder As I Wander”

Sermon
“Rejoicing in Truth”

Musical Reflection
“Some Children See Him”

Church at Prayer

Closing Song
“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Benediction

Leading worship today with Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell, Senior Minister, are 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, and the Jazz Ensemble:
Sean Higgins, piano
Greg Jarrell, saxophone
Mike Gudbaur, bass
Ocie Davis, drums
Dawn Anthony, vocals

◊
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
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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
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