OPEN TO ALL

MYERS PARK
BAPTIST
CHURCH

Inclusivity | Spirituality | Community | Justice

The Worship of God

SERVICE OF LAMENT AND LOSS

December 18, 2019 | 6:30p
THE COMMUNITY GATHERS BEFORE GOD

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.

Silent Meditation
The American church often avoids lament and when the power of lament is minimized the underlying narrative of suffering that requires lament is lost. The absence of lament in the liturgy of the church results in a loss of memory. Lament allows the church to acknowledge real suffering and plead with God for intervention. Lament recognizes the struggles of life and cries out for justices against existing injustices. The status quo is not to be celebrated but instead must be challenged and changed—and that transformation begins with crying out to God that something is wrong.

– Soon-Chan Rah

Prelude
“Bittersweet”

Amy Orsinger Whitehead, flute; Matt Caine, piano

This service of Lament and Loss is a time when we name those losses that have changed our lives and the people who are no longer with us. We gather together during the Christmas season as a reminder of the joy that is born among us despite our sadness and the light that shines in the midst of our darkness.

Call to Worship
Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

*Opening Sentences
Leader: We light the first candle of Advent,
People: to signal our watch for the coming of Christ,
who will expel the spirit of discontent and bring healing for the nations.
Leader: We light the second candle of Advent,
People: to signal our hope for the renewal of creation,
which will reveal the image of God and restore harmony with nature.
Leader: We light the third candle of Advent,
People: to signal our faith in the triumph of justice,
which will expose the folly of pride and magnify purity of heart.
Leader: We light the fourth candle of Advent,
People: to signal our trust in the promise of God,
who will establish the reign of love on earth and uphold it with righteousness for evermore.

*Opening Hymn
“In the Bleak Midwinter”

(Stanzas 1, 2 and 4)

See page 6.
CRANHAM

*Please stand in body or in spirit.
Meditation on Hope

Wait for the Lord (Sing 2 times.)

(Meditation on Hope)

Meditation on Peace

Wait for the Lord (Sing 2 times.)

(Meditation on Peace)

Meditation on Joy

Wait for the Lord (Sing 2 times.)

(Meditation on Joy)

Meditation on Love

Wait for the Lord (Sing 2 times.)

(Meditation on Love)

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.

Gluten-free wafers are available at the Communion table.
You are invited to come forward to receive Communion at the station on the center aisle.
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 you may be served.
Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord’s Prayer

Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Music at Communion

“Silent Night”  
arr. Chip Davis

Prayer After Communion (unison)

We thank you, O God, for the table of grace which brings all people of earth before your presence.
May we who have been guests at this table grow in love for one another, that through us your light may shine in all the world. Amen.

Lighting of Candles of Lament and Loss

Rev. Carrie Veal

You are invited to come forward to light a candle in remembrance and to name those losses that have changed your life.

*Closing Hymn

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”  
Stanzas 1, 3 and 4  
CAROL

Benediction

Postlude

“Amber”  
Chip Davis

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

Worship through music is provided by Dr. Matt Caine, Minister of Music and Worship, and Amy Orsinger Whitehead, Flutist.

The sound technician is Seph Rackley.
**OUR STEPHEN MINISTRY**

During the holidays, the stress of the season can bring back memories that are not always pleasant. Memories of many types of losses can cause diverse emotions, from sadness to anger. Unfortunately, our emotions sometimes take us places we do not want to go as we feel we are not in control of our lives. At times like this, a listening, nonjudgmental, confidential ear may be exactly what you need. Consider being matched with a Stephen Minister. If this sounds like something you are interested in, please contact Joe Aldrich (jaldrich@myersparkbaptist.org | 704.334.7232 x 113).

**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 the Narthex.

**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 73256.
- In the message of the text, enter 1900Q, a space, and the amount you want to give (i.e., 1900Q 100).
- The system will return a message to you; click on the link provided and follow instructions.
- You will then receive a receipt to confirm your gift was received. It is that simple!
- Next time, since your setup is already done – just text “1900Q, a space, then amount you wish to give” to 73256.

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

1 In the bleak mid-winter, frost-y wind made moan;
   earth stood hard as i-ron, wa-ter like a stone;
   snow had fall-en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
   in the bleak mid-winter, long a-go.

2 Our God, heaven can-not hold him, nor earth sus-tain;
   heaven and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign;
   in the bleak mid-winter a sta-ble place suf-ficed
   the Lord God in-car-nate, Je-sus Christ.

3 An-gels and arch-an-gels may have gath-ered there;
   cher-u-bim and ser-a-phim thronged the air;
   but his moth-er on-ly, in her maid-en bliss,
   I wor-shipped the be-loved with a kiss.

4 What can I give him, poor as I am?
   If I were a shep-herd, I would bring a lamb;
   if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
   yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer’s birthplace in Cheltenham.
It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

CAROL CMD

Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849; alt. Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

1. It came upon the mid-night clear, That glorious song of old,
   From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold:
   “Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heaven’s all-gracious King”:
   The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come, With peaceful wings unfurled,
   And still their heavenly music floats O’er all the weary world:
   Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hovering wing,
   And ever o’er its Babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

3. And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, Whose forms are bending low,
   Who toil along the climbing way With painful steps and slow,
   Look now! for glad and golden hours Come swiftly on the wing:
   O rest beside the weary road, And hear the angels sing.

4. For lo, the days are hastening on, By prophet bards foretold,
   When with the ever-circling years Comes round the age of gold;
   When peace shall o’er all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
   And the whole world give back the song Which now the angels sing.
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. W. Benjamin Boswell
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Dr. Matt Caine
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