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
“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”  
Felix Mendelssohn, arr. Mark O’Connor

Call to Worship
Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

Carol
“O Come, All Ye Faithful”  
John Francis Wade, arr. Mark O’Connor

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
“We Three Kings”  
John Henry Hopkins Jr., arr. Mark O’Connor

Gospel Reading – Matthew 2:1-12 (RSV adapted)
Rev. Carrie Veal

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the Magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.
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
“The Three Kings”
Chancel Ensemble
Healey Willan (1880-1968)

Sermon
“Searching for Life”
Rev. Dr. Benjamin Boswell

Sharing Our Gifts
Rev. Leigh Anne Hagerman

Gifts to “Loose Plate Offering” will benefit the Ministry of Outreach partners.

Anthem
“The Work of Christmas”
Chancel Ensemble
Dan Forrest (b. 1978)

Church at Prayer
Rev. Carrie Veal

Postlude
“Good King Wenceslas”
John Mason Neale and Thomas Helmore, arr. Mark O’Connor

Benediction
Rev. Dr. W. Benjamin Boswell

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 Worship and Music,
John Richardson, Organ,
Mark O’Connor, Guitar, Mandolin, Violin,
Maggie O’Connor, Cello, Violin, Vocals,
and the Chancel Ensemble.
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 | cjudge@myersparkbaptist.org

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

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

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