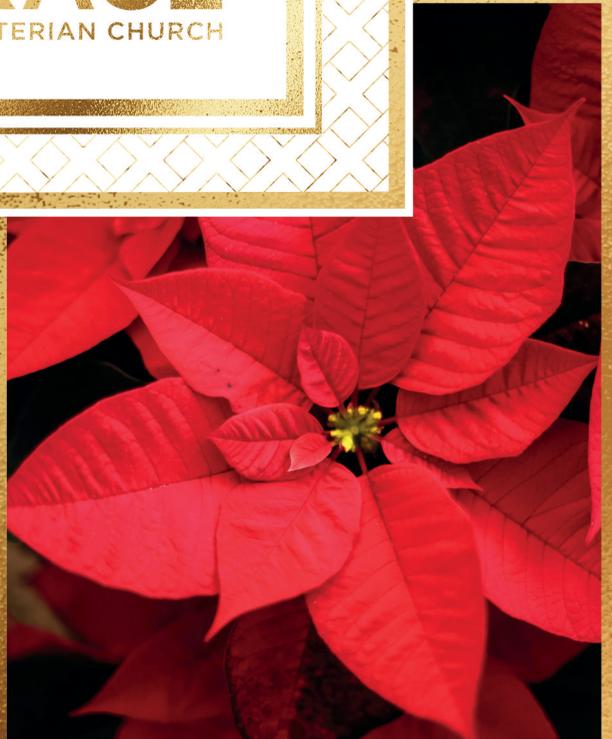


GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, December 21, 2025

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Greeting and Blessing*

Responsive Reading*

Psalm 85 (p. 814 in the *Trinity Hymnal*)

You showed favor to your land, O LORD;

you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.

You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.

Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations?

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.

I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints—
but let them not return to folly.

Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.

The LORD will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.

* *Congregation is requested to stand, if able.*

The pastor will read the plain text; the congregation will read the bold text.

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love. Amen.

Congregational Confession of Sin

Leader: Almighty God, we are reminded this morning of your divine purpose for the incarnation: that in the fullness of time, you sent forth your Son, born of woman, born under the law, to save us from our sins.

All: We confess that though you have blessed us with eternal riches in Christ, we have preferred the ways of this world. We have rebelled against your wisdom and sought after foolishness. We have rejected your fatherly commands and have done what is right in our own eyes.

Leader: Forgive us, we pray, and cleanse us from our sins. Work in us by your Word and Spirit, and give us both the desire and the power to do what pleases you.

All: We ask all this through the merit and mediation of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Private Confession of Our Sins

Assurance of Forgiveness

Matthew 1:20-21

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

ADORATION AND PRAISE

First Reading*

Luke 2:22-38

Congregational Response

(music is printed on p. 12)

Song of Simeon

Now may your servant, Lord,
According to your Word,
Depart in exaltation.
My peace shall be serene,
For now my eyes have seen
Your wonderful salvation.

O Lord, you did prepare
For people ev'rywhere
A Light for revelation,
And radiant glory shall
The gloom of death dispel
For Israel, your nation. Amen.

Confession of Faith

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 21. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one Person forever.

Q. 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Stewardship ❖

Doxology*

Hymn 732

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Lord's Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

❖ *Tithes and offerings may be placed in the box at the entrance to the sanctuary or given online through our church's website.*

THE WORD AND SACRAMENT

Second Reading*

Matthew 2:13-23

Congregational Response

Hymn 203

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King." Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon

Pastor Ben Muresan

“The Biggest Story”
Matthew 2:13-23

GOD’S BLESSING ON HIS PEOPLE

Hymn of Thanksgiving*

Hymn 201

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav’n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel. Amen.

Benediction*

Congregational Benediction Response*

Hymn 218

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Shepherds in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant Light:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen his natal star:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son;
Evermore your voices raising
To th'eternal Three in One:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King. Amen.*

HOME WORSHIP GUIDE

The daily reading schedule follows the One Year Bible Reading Plan.

Monday, December 22

Scripture: Zechariah 2:1 - 3:10; Revelation 13:1-18; Psalm 141:1-10; Prov. 30:18-20

Catechism: The Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 31

Pray for: Our federal, state, and local government leaders.

Tuesday, December 23

Scripture: Zechariah 4:1 - 5:11; Revelation 14:1-20; Psalm 142:1-7; Proverbs 30:21-23

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 36

Pray for: Our military, police, fire, and medical personnel.

Wednesday, December 24

Scripture: Zechariah 6:1 - 7:14; Revelation 15:1-8; Psalm 143:1-12; Proverbs 30:24-28

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 37

Pray for: Our covenant children and Christian military chaplains.

The churches in Bhutan and persecuted Christians.

Thursday, December 25

Scripture: Zechariah 8:1-23; Revelation 16:1-21; Psalm 144:1-15; Proverbs 30:29-31

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 38

Pray for: Our Elders, Deacons, Women's Ministry, & the PCA.

Friday, December 26

Scripture: Zechariah 9:1-17; Revelation 17:1-18; Psalm 145:1-21; Proverbs 30:32

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 39

Pray for: Our members who have ongoing health care needs.

The Shepherd's Church Plant in Riverside and the Manrique Family.

Saturday, December 27

Scripture: Zechariah 10:1 - 11:17; Revelation 18:1-24; Psalm 146:1-10; Proverbs 30:33

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 40

Pray for: The preaching and for our Sunday School teachers.

Sunday, December 28

Scripture: Zechariah 12:1 - 13:9; Revelation 19:1-21; Psalm 147:1-20; Proverbs 31:1-7

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 41

Pray for: Our worship this morning.

MISSIONS CORNER

Pray for our missionaries. Their prayer requests are sent out through the Prayer Chain and their newsletters are published in Grace Notes as they become available.

Ray & Michele Call in the Dominican Republic

Dave Eby in Uganda

Christ Bible Institute in Japan

The Shepherd's Church in Riverside

LORD'S DAY DEVOTION AND QUESTIONS

Matthew 2:13-23 seems like a passage that does not fit with what most people think about Christmas. This time of year is usually associated with joy, happiness, and peace. However, in this passage, Matthew describes how a jealous, evil king sought to kill Jesus during his childhood and through it all, God protected Jesus and his family. While this passage might seem disconnected from what we think about during Christmastime, in reality it perfectly describes why Jesus needed to come to earth. Christ came to a world plunged in the darkness of sin in order to rescue his people for eternity. He did not come to a perfect world filled with perfect people, but to a world that was hostile to him and to the gospel. Through his redemptive work, he ransomed a people for himself and has secured eternal life for them. The good news of the gospel is that if we believe in Christ, our hope is secure, now and forever.

1. What is the “biggest story”? If you were talking to an unbeliever who did not know the Bible, how would you summarize the story of redemption?
2. What does Genesis 3:14-15 reveal about Christ’s mission?
3. Read Matthew 2:13-23. How does this passage reveal the doctrine of total depravity? How does this passage reveal God’s providence?
4. According to Ephesians 1:4, what does it mean to be chosen “in Christ”?
5. According to what Jesus said in John 6:40, how can you find greater comfort in your assurance of salvation?
6. What does John mean when he says “we shall be like” Jesus (1 John 3:2)? How does this show the joyful culmination of the “biggest story”?

Song of Simeon

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1. Now may your ser - vant, Lord, ac - cord - ing to your Word,
 2. O Lord, you did pre - pare for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where

de - part in ex - al - ta - tion. My peace shall be se - rene,
 a Light for rev - e - la - tion, and ra - diant glo - ry shall

for now my eyes have seen your won - der - ful sal - va - tion.
 the gloom of death dis - pel for Is - ra - el, your na - tion.

Luke 2:29–32
 Dewey Westra, 1931; alt.

NUNC DIMITTIS 6.6.7.D.
 Louis Bourgeois, 1551
 Harm. Claude Goudimel, 1564



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