



MOUNT VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 2022 • 5:30PM

† *For those who are able, please stand.*

GATHERING

GATHERING MUSIC

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”
arr. Mark Hayes

Donna Maini

RINGING OF THE BELLS

† **PROCESSIONAL HYMN #41**

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!

Refrain

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given; word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing! (*refrain*)

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all
Glory in the highest! (*refrain*)

WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

INTROIT

“Still, Still, Still”
arr. Norman Luboff (1917-1987)

Austrian Carol

† **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

MVPC Children's Ministry Families

ONE: Tonight, we come following the decree of Augustus,

ALL: **To the place where we belong.**

ONE: Joseph took his family to Bethlehem, the place of his descendants.

ALL: **Many of us gather here this night taking the same path, returning to the familiar, returning to our families, and wondering about a miracle.**

ONE: Let us witness the miracle in the manger this night.

ALL: **Let us light the Christ candle and worship God incarnate!**

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 the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time, behold Him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel. (*refrain*)
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die.
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. (*refrain*)

† PRAYER FOR ETERNAL LIGHT

Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt

Eternal God, this season you have led us to seek the light of hope, peace, joy, and love through characters like Gabriel, Joseph, and Mary. Tonight you lead us to the one we have anticipated, the light of the world, Jesus Christ. The humility we witness at the manger foreshadows a life that this light represents. May we who gather embody and share the light of Christ.

We come to share the hope of Christ to the hopeless who cry out as well as those who keep their pain quiet.

We come to seek the peace of Christ in a world that too often uses all forms of violence - physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional - as a means to an end.

We come to find the joy of Christ, offering gladness and belonging to those who have not been included. Reveal to them, and to us all, that each is a child of your creation.

We come to experience the love of Christ, the love that dwells within each of us. Let us be the beloved community that lives out our humanity and our faith boldly, yet brokenly, calling continually to seek your wholeness.

May all be calm and bright not only this night, but every night. Through the new life we find in you we offer this prayer ... (*silent confession*) ... Amen.

† ASSURANCE OF LIGHT

ONE: ...In the name of Jesus Christ, may the light shine through us.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

† RESPONSE #23

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

GLORIA

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo; Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Each Sunday prior to Christmas, we light 4 Advent candles which recognize as virtues Jesus embodied. They are hope, peace, joy, and love. Tonight, we celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season by lighting the Christ candle.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Toney-Schmitt

All children 5th grade and younger are invited to come forward for storytelling and prayer.

PARADE OF THE ANIMALS

HYMN #53 (see insert)

What Child is This?"

GREENSLEEVES

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Abernethy

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-7

HOMILY

Characters of Christmas: Jesus Christ

RESPONSE

+ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from the Brief Statement of Faith)

Rev. Abernethy

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. Amen.

+ HYMN #40

"Joy to the World!"

ANTIOCH

Joy to the world, the Lord is come: let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns: let us our 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.

This season our sermon series has focused on the different characters that surround the Christmas story. Tomorrow we will meet the shepherds, and next Sunday the Magi, as we celebrate Epiphany.

Presbyterians "confess" their faith, meaning we proclaim what we believe. This affirmation was written in the 1980's when the Presbyterian Church reunified following 120+ years of being divided due to the Civil War. Appropriately, it speaks to the character of Christ.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Shari Freeman

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.

OFFERTORY

"O Holy Night"
arr. John Rutter

Charles Hart, Tenor

† DOXOLOGY

Tune of "What Child is This"
(Please wait for the Pastor and Choir to stand.)

These gifts we joyfully bring to you,
to fill the world with meaning;
our hearts and minds are longing for
the life of which you are dreaming.
This, this our gift we bring,
our lives we share, your praise we sing;
show us your vision, Lord,
for hope, and peace, and caring.

† PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

John Hibbard

SENDING

† SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Ushers will come to the end of each row to light candles. Once your candle has been lit,
please share the light with the person next to you.

† CLOSING HYMN #60

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and Child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!"

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

† BENEDICTION

Rev. Barrett Abernethy

POSTLUDE

"Joy to the World"
arr. Norman Johnson

Donna Maini

Leading Today's Worship Service
Rev. Barrett Abernethy, Senior Pastor
Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt, Associate Pastor
Matthias Young, Director of Worship
Donna Maini, Accompanist
Shari Freeman, Seminary Intern

Brass Quartet
John Arnold - trumpet
David Stoutamire - trumpet
Sean Mack - trombone
John Hibbard - tuba

We are located at:
471 Mount Vernon Hwy., NE
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
mvpchurch.org



Our mailing address is:
P.O. Box 76051
Sandy Springs, GA 30358

MVPC Announcements....



WWW.MVPCHURCH.ORG

Welcome! We are glad to worship with you today!

Visitors & Membership: Please go to our website: mvpchurch.org, contact our church office at 404.255.2211, or speak with one of our pastors after the service. If you are interested in joining MVP Church, please stop at the **Welcome Table in the Narthex** and pick up a visitor bag where someone will be there to greet you.

Upcoming Services:



January 1, 2023

"Characters of Christmas: The Wise Men", Chalking of the Door, Matthew 2:1-12, Shari Freeman

January 8

"Terrific Texts: Identity", Matthew 3:13-17, Rev. Barrett Abernethy



Christmas Eve Offering will be going to Family Promise of Fulton/DeKalb.

Christmas Decorations: We will take down Christmas decorations on Monday, Jan. 2 at 10am. All are invited.

Senior Adults: Mystery Matinee Event and clues to a Spring Seniors' Day Trip (Sat. March 25), Saturday, January 28 at 1:00pm in Session Room. Popcorn and drink provided. Sign ups for the March 25 Day Trip (3 stops in a 15 seat van) will be at the Mystery Matinee Event.



Presbyterian Women: On January 10 the **Day Circle** and the **Sunday Circle** will meet together and study lesson 5, *Sabbath and Servitude*, in the Bible study guide, *Celebrating Sabbath*.

Church Office Will Be Closed Monday, December 26; Tuesday, December 27; Monday, January 2.



December 24/25, 2022



Make sure to follow us
on social media to stay
up to date!

Giving



Ministry Team Cards: are available to be picked up in the Narthex.

The MVPC Members' Gift of Wisdom: Winter issue will be available in January.

Conversation (Adult Sunday School): Discovery meets in the Chapel and is using the book "The Present Word". Crossroads meets in the Session Room and is studying "Mere Christianity" by C. S. Lewis. Contact Rev. Isaac Toney-Schmitt for more information.



Stephen Ministry: Christmas, though so full of joy for many, can magnify sadness and discontent for others. If you or a friend find yourselves in despondency, please call Stephen Ministry so we can walk with you through a difficult time. Contact a pastor or Pat Bartee, Stephen Leader, to utilize one of our skilled & trained Stephen Ministers.

MVP Foundation: Thank you for a successful "\$22K for 2022" matching campaign! Because of your benevolence, the MVP Foundation will be able to continue to generously support our various mission partners such as our Youth Group, Los Niños, CAC, as well as the Intern Program here at MVPC.



Do you feel a need for prayer? Have our Prayer Vine pray for you! Email your requests to pbartee@yahoo.com or call the church office at 404.255.2211.

Prayer Concerns: Bob Addison, Mrs. JB, James Ballew, Craig Mackie, Eliana, Alistair & Karen Morine, Irene Nelson, Deborah Phillips, Elaine Rawlings, Wilma Schmidt, Rob Southard, and people of Ukraine and Zambia.

Memorial Service for Lou Baine is planned for Sunday, January 8 at 1:00pm. The family is providing a light lunch after worship. All are welcome to stay for lunch.

Congratulations on the birth of Graham Allan Malcolm on December 9, 2022 to Robyn & Geoff Malcom. Proud grandparents are Allan & Martha Baitcher. The rose on the communion table is in his honor.

It's not too late to turn in your Pledge Card! We have many ways to turn it in: mail it, put it in offering plate on Sunday, drop it off at the church office, email it to Yvonne@mvpchurch.org, call Yvonne (404.255.2211 ext. 216), or complete online @ mvpchurch.org. As of December 15, we have received 74 pledge cards for \$421,275.

Attendance: 12/18 Worship 116
Online 31

Please sign the Friendship Pad and pass it down the pew as you greet your neighbor!

Financial Update

December 15-22	Actual	Actual YTD	2022 Budget
Pledge Member Giving	\$16,830	\$ 489,761	\$449,000
Member Giving Non-Pledge	\$ 0	\$ 44,720	\$ 60,000
Non Member Giving & Loose Offering	\$ 317	\$ 7,813	\$ 10,000
Total	\$17,147	\$ 542,294	\$ 519,000

If you have any announcements that you would like to appear in the *Happenings* or *Good News*, please email them to debbie@mvpchurch.org