



# NORTHMINSTER

## *Presbyterian Church*

...making disciples, growing in faith together and serving others in Christ

December 31, 2023

First Sunday after Christmas

10:30am

### GATHERING

Chimes

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Prelude

Opening Prayer

Call to Worship – based on Luke 2:22-40

As Simeon and Anna of old worshipped in the temple,  
**so we gather on the last day of the year to worship God.**

They lived lives of prayerful expectation,  
**watching and waiting for the Lord's promises to be fulfilled.**

And so today we echo Simeon's prayer:

**Now, O Lord, you are blessing your servants with peace.**

These eyes of ours have seen your salvation,  
**which you made ready in the presence of all peoples:**  
a light for revelation to the nations,  
**and glory for your promised people.**

\*Hymn #148

*Mary and Joseph Came to the Temple*

Mary and Joseph came to the temple brought the boy Jesus, offered him there.  
People were waiting wanting to greet him; long had they sought him, solace for care.

Anna had prayed there, widowed, long waiting, worshiping God by day and by night.  
Now she is praising, filled with elation: here is God's promise, Christ is her light.

Simeon sings now: God proffers blessing, brilliantly gilding dawn of his day.  
Light in the darkness, never extinguished, Light of all nations, light up our way.

## CONFESSING

Call to Confession

Prayers of Confession

**God of such grace and truth,  
in Jesus Christ you came among us  
as light shining in all darkness.**

**We confess that we have not always welcomed that light,  
or trusted good news to be so good.  
We have closed our eyes to your glory in our midst,  
expecting little, and hoping for less.**

**Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope,  
so that we may know the fullness of your grace,  
and live in the powerful truth of Christ as Lord.**

**Hear our prayers ...**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Scripture – Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Response to Forgiveness #134

*Joy to the World*

verses 1 and 3

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.

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.

Affirmation of Faith – Brief Statement of Faith

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

**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.**

\*Passing the Peace

Announcements and Invitations

Prayers of Intercession, the Lord's Prayer

Gathering of our Offerings

Offertory Music

\*Response — Doxology #606

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God for all that love has done, Creator, Christ, and Spirit one! Alleluia! O Praise God! Alleluia!

## LISTENING

\*Prayers of Thanksgiving and for Illumination

Scripture — Luke 2:22-40

Hymn #263 (remain seated)

*All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!*

All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; bring forth the royal diadem,  
and crown him Lord of all! Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all!

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, ye ransomed from the fall, hail him who saves you by his grace,  
and crown him Lord of all! Hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all!

Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball to him all majesty ascribe,  
and crown him Lord of all! To him all majesty ascribe, and crown him Lord of all!

O that with yonder sacred throng we at his feet may fall! We'll join the everlasting song,  
and crown him Lord of all! We'll join the everlasting song, and crown him Lord of all!

Sermon — “These eyes of mine have seen your salvation”

\*Hymn #451

*Open My Eyes, That I May See*

Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me.  
Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my eyes; illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth thou sendest clear.  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear.  
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my ears; illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere.  
Open my heart, and let me prepare love with thy children thus to share.  
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my heart; illumine me, Spirit divine!

## DEPARTING

\*Charge and Benediction

\*Sung Response

May the Lord, Mighty God, bless and keep you forever.  
Grant you peace; perfect peace, courage in every endeavor.  
Lift up your eyes and see His face and His grace forever.  
May the Lord, Mighty God, bless and keep you forever.

Postlude



## Information & Announcements

### Welcome to our guests!

Whether you are sharing in the worship of God with us for the first time, visiting with family or friends, or returning for a visit to your home church, we welcome you today in the name of Jesus. Please share some contact information with us so we can follow up with you and make a place for you in our weekly fellowship. You may email our church office at [admin@northminstermacon.org](mailto:admin@northminstermacon.org).

### PRAYER CONCERNS

If you have a need or a request for prayer, please contact the church office.

Current Member Concerns: Ann R. Smith; Jane Prentice; Ann Hall; Jane Ebey; Frank & Evelyn Clark; Nancy Miles; Annette Hutto - Current Friends and Family Concerns: Margaret Yawn; Donna Carole Kitchens; Joel Jones; Nelda Crow; Sara Walcott; Laurie King (Diboll); John & Louise Sallstrom; Betty Shuford - Military Personnel Prayer List: Austin Riley; Joshua Sulkers; Isaac Falkenstine (Bonnie Diboll's grandson); Nicholas Sanchez (Kathy McCord's godson)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Lunch – December 31<sup>st</sup>

Today your personnel committee will be hosting lunch immediately following the service. We hope you can join us as we fellowship on this last day of 2023!

### Sunday Study Continues in 2024

Beginning January 7<sup>th</sup>, we will start three 6-week sessions of multi-generational Sunday studies! These sessions will be led by some of the amazing faculty of Mercer's Department of Religion. The first, Christian Ethics as Faithful Innovation, will be led by Paul Lewis. The second series, Lent for Everyone, will be led by Brian Whitfield. The third series, Do Pharaohs Still Exist, will be led by Janell Johnson. We hope you will plan to come. We'll be gathering at 9:00 with a light continental breakfast. Childcare will be provided for our youngest members, and we're hard at work on more plans for children and youth.

### Christian Ethics as Faithful Innovation – Sunday Study

Paul Lewis will be leading our first six-weeks of Sunday Study beginning January 7<sup>th</sup>. Paul has been a professor in the School of Religion at Mercer since 2002 with a specialty in Theological Ethics. We'll share more biographical details later. If you would like a copy of the book that Paul will be using in this study, please indicate this on your blue response sheet and we will order them as a group. Each hard-copy book is \$18 and the ebook is \$9. The link to information about the book can be found at <https://www.helwys.com/sh-books/faithful-innovation>. The book is certainly not required for this study, but is simply being made available for those interested.

### Elder Installation and Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 14, we will install our 2024 elders and hold a congregational meeting after worship to approve pastor Ralph's 2024 Terms of Call.

### NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our calling at Northminster is to make disciples, to grow in faith together, and to serve others in Christ.

CONGREGATION: Ministers of the Good News; SESSION of Ruling Elders: Kari Alderman; Jeff Denny; Barbara Fatkin; Nita McCord; Jinny McDuffie; Ray Mosely; Michael Napier; Donna Shuford; Minor Vernon; Genny Whitaker

RALPH HAWKINS, Pastor and Teaching Elder PAUL EVANS, Parish Associate GUNNER CHANCEY, Director of Music  
KAREN JONES, Clerk of Session JENNIFER WHITEHEAD, Ministry Assistant

**Office hours this week:** 9:00-3:00 Tuesday-Thursday; 7:00-1:00 Sunday

Jennifer Cell: 478-318-7911

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