

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN Church of Nashville

December 25, 2023 | 11:00 a.m. in the Chapel

Christmas Day

WORDS OF PREPARATION

*"On this side of eternity, Christmas is still a promise. Yes, the Savior has come,
and with him peace on earth, but the story is not finished. Yes, there is peace in our hearts,
but we long for peace in our world."*

—Joni Eareckson Tada

ORDER OF WORSHIP

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Good Christian friends, rejoice! Today your Lord comes in love and power, in grace and truth, offering hope and peace.

All: Christ is born today! Alleluia!

Leader: This promised one, mighty, though small, is our hope, our strength, and our life.

All: Christ is born to save! Alleluia!

Leader: In hope, let us worship God.

All: Alleluia! Amen.

*†OPENING HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
MENDELSSOHN

**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!"
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.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**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.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

Leader: All glory to you, great God, for the gift of your Son, Jesus, light in the darkness and hope of the world, whom you sent to save us. With singing angels let us praise your name and tell the earth his story, that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down, receiving your love through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

FIRST LESSON | Hebrews 1:1–4 (page 1001)

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Today we celebrate that Jesus, our Lord, came to earth as a human, just like us but without sin. He came so that we who sin may be freed from sin. With the peace that comes from knowing Jesus came, let us confess our sins and be forgiven.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, you sent a star to guide the Magi to the child Jesus. We confess that we have not followed the light of your Word. We have not searched for signs of your love in the world or trusted your good news to be good. We have failed to praise your Son's birth and refused his peace on earth. We have expected little and hoped for less. Forgive our doubt and renew in us all fine desires, that we may watch and wait and once more hear the glad story of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

A moment for silent confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: I bring good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. In Christ, we are forgiven!

All: Thanks be to God!

*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*RESPONSE OF GRATITUDE

Go, Tell It on the Mountain
GO TELL IT

Refrain

***Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!***

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain***

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

***PROFESSION OF OUR CHURCH'S FAITH | John 1:1–5; 9–14**

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
All: He was in the beginning with God.
Leader: All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.
All: What has come into being him was life, and the life was the light of all people.
Leader: The light shines in the darkness,
All: And the darkness did not overcome it.
Leader: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
All: He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.
Leader: He came to what was his own,
All: And his own people did not accept him.
Leader: But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,
All: Who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.
Leader: And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
All: And we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

*Whether you are a longtime member or a guest, please mark your presence
by signing the friendship pad and greet those seated near you as you pass it along.*

‡BLESSING OF THE YOUNG DISCIPLES | Happy Birthday Jesus!

SCRIPTURE READING | Luke 2:8–20 (page 857)

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Pastor: The Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON

The Joy of Christmas

Elijah Moore

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Communion at First Presbyterian Church is offered to all baptized Christians and will be served today by intinction. When your row is called, come forward, take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup, and receive both elements together. All bread is gluten free and the cup is juice.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE 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.

*CLOSING HYMN

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 earth, the Savior reigns! Let all 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.**

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

** Those who are able, please stand.*

† Latecomers may be seated.
