



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
DALTON, GEORGIA EST. 1847



Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24, 2024

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Tonight we remember the birth of Jesus. We celebrate and worship because God has come to us, fully present, in the life of Jesus Christ.

What is “Christmas”? It is three words: God in flesh; or four syllables: in-car-na-tion. The Gospel according to John (1:14) tells us, “The Word became flesh and lived among us, ... full of grace and truth.” Christmas proclaims that God has come in flesh, has come “to save us all from Satan’s power.” Christmas celebrates far more than a birthday; Christmas acclaims the advent of messianic salvation. Christ was sent among us in order to save us. ...

What we pay homage to at Christmas, therefore, is that the ultimate fulfillment of God’s saving purpose begins with the birth of Jesus, the messianic Savior. God’s only Son is born among us in order to save the world. This is the message of Christmas.

From the beginning of time, God’s saving purpose has been at work. God has raised up the seed of Abraham, including Moses and Gideon and Samson and John the Baptist. Through all these generations, God has been faithfully at work raising persons to bring us the Davidic Messiah, the messianic King, the Son of the Most High who will ascend the throne of David. Through all of human history, God has been bringing forth Jesus Christ. Now through the birth of the Savior, God’s purpose will be fulfilled. God has acted to save God’s people. The Christ child is born for the saving of the world.

- An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship

The Meaning of Advent: “Advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.

-from the website of the PC(USA)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024

GATHERING AROUND THE WORLD

PRELUDE

Prelude on “Unto Us Is Born a Son”

John S. Dixon
(b. 1957)

Hye Jeong Kwon, organ

Wexford Carol

Irish Carol

Amanda Karge, soloist

*Good people all, this Christmas time, Consider well and bear in mind,
What our good God for us has done, In sending His beloved son.
With Mary holy we should pray to God with love this Christmas Day;
In Bethlehem, upon that morn, There was a blessed Messiah born.*

*Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep, Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God's angels did appear, Which put the shepherds in great fear.
“Prepare and go,” the angels said, To Bethlehem, be not afraid;
For there you'll find, this happy morn, A princely babe, sweet Jesus born.*

*With thankful heart and joyful mind, The shepherds went the babe to find,
And as God's angel had fortold, They did our Savior Christ behold.
Within a manger He was laid, And by His side the virgin maid,
Attending on the Lord of life, Who came on earth to end all strife.*

*There were three wise men from afar Directed by a glorious star,
And on they wandered night and day, Until they came where Jesus lay.
And when they came unto that place, Where our beloved Messiah was,
They humbly cast them at His feet, With gift of gold and incense sweet.*

WELCOME

*LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

(from Isaiah 9:2)

The Jiskoot Family

We light the Christ candle as a sign of the light of Christ.

As the Lord has promised,
the people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;

**those who lived in a land of deep darkness,
on them light has shone.**

THE GREETING

At the sound of the bells, please prepare your heart and mind for worship.

*Where you see this notation, please rise in body or in spirit.

INTROIT

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

arr. Claude L. Bass

(b. 1935)

*Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love! These are gifts you bring from above,
Jesus, Emmanuel, come to be light of your hope, reflected in me.*

Amen.

*UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Bjorn Jiskoot

Eternal God, from the tabernacle of heaven to the poverty of a stable, your radiant light shines forth in a tiny baby wrapped in rags; such humble Love astounds us. In Jesus you have become one with us that we might become one with you. Open our hearts to joyfully receive his love that he may be born in us, and we in him, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*HYMN 132

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

In Dulci Jubilo

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(A time of silent prayer and meditation.)

Almighty God, we confess that our hearts have not been open to all that you have revealed to us in the Nativity of your Son. You sent Christ to be born as a helpless Child, and yet we have not attended to the suffering of children. You chose humble Mary to be mother of our Lord Jesus, and yet we have not attended to the struggles of women. The holy family could find no room in Bethlehem but a stable, and yet we have not attended to the cry of the homeless. You announced your birth to lowly shepherds, yet we ignore those who tend our farms and fields.

Forgive our lack of attention, and free us for joyful compassion, that we may know Christ in serving others. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

THE KYRIE

Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us

Kyrie Eleison



Lord, have mer - cy up - on us; Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Hymn 132 Note:

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called “macaronic,” the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

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ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

NRSVUE

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Meaning of

Advent:

“Advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.

-from the website of
the PC(USA)

ANTHEM

Who Would Send a Baby?

Mary Kay Beall

(b. 1943)

Hayden Poe, soloist

Who would send a baby to heal a world in pain?

Who would send a baby, a tiny child?

When the world is crying for the Promised One,

Who would send His only Son?

Who would send a baby to light a world with love?

Who would send a baby, a tiny child?

When the world is hoping for the Promised One,

Who would send His only Son?

Who would send a manger to cradle a King?

Who would send angels to sing?

Who would hang a star in the sky above

To shine on the gift of His infinite love?

Who would send a baby to bless a world with peace?

Who would send a baby, a tiny child?

When the world is yearning for the Promised One,

Who would send a baby?

Who would send His only begotten Son?

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

NRSVUE

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

“The Glory of the Lord Shone”

Rev. Nicole Jiskoot

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*HYMN 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

“The Nicene Creed”

We believe in one God, The Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again; in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE OFFERING

www.firstpresdalton.org/giving/

OFFERTORY

O Come, All Ye Faithful

arr. Charles Szczepanek

Hye Jeong Kwon, piano

Hymn 119 Note:

Brought together in the mid-19th century, the text and tune of this familiar carol began in quite different forms. The text had ten stanzas and began, “Hark, how all the welkin rings.” The tune was created for a festival celebrating Gutenberg’s introduction of moveable type.

Offering Note:

Copy and paste the link under the offering onto your browser to easily submit your online offering.

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Old 100th

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.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe. You formed us in your image and set us in this world to love and serve you. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the celestial choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Angels We Have Heard on High

Gloria

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some ti - dings be which in - spire your heaven - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex-cel-sis De-o! Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o!

You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed in Jesus Christ, your Son. You sent him into this world to bring freedom to the captives of sin, and to establish justice for the oppressed. He came among us as one of us, taking the lot of the poor, sharing human suffering, dying an unjust death.

We rejoice that in his dying and rising again, you set before us the sure promise of new life, the certain hope of a heavenly home where we will sit at table with Christ our host. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION

We invite you to come forward for communion via the nearest accessible main aisle and return to your seat the way you came. Communion is served by intinction. Take a piece of bread held by one elder, dip it in the cup held by another, and then, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Gluten-free elements are available from the left aisle.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & 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.

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

Hymn 144 Note:

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

***HYMN 144**

In the Bleak Midwinter

Cranham

(We invite all to light a candle as we sing. The unlit candle should be dipped to the flame to avoid wax spills. Please extinguish your candle at the end of the hymn.)

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***CONGREGATIONAL HYMN RESPONSE 134**

Joy to the World

Antioch

Stanzas 1,2 and 4

POSTLUDE

(Candles may be deposited in the Narthex after the service.)

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

WORSHIP

Date	Liturgist	Ushers	Flowers
12/24	Bjorn Jiskoot	TBD	The Flower Team
12/29	Jean Lowrey	Joanne Lewis	The Flower Team

CHILDREN

Date	Nursery	Joy Makers	Faith Builders
12/29	Kathryn Sellers	Will not meet	Will not meet
1/5	Priscilla Brown	Rob & Michelle Lively	Jean Lowrey & Priscilla Brown

MONTHLY

Communion (January 5)		Congregational Care		Little Free Pantry Pal	
Prep	Carol Houston	December	Susan Bisson	December	Peggy Rollins & Alice Ensley
Servers	Rev. Nicole Jiskoot, Kathy Bridges, Laura Allgood & Kaye Clark	January	Sue Neelly	January	Eric & Lena Haugen

Hymn 134 Note:

While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it “The Messiah’s coming and kingdom.” So “the Lord” here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

PRAYERS

For Healing and Comfort for our Members:

Verutzka Soza, who is recovering at home from outpatient surgery;
Jenny Crawford, who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease;
Bob Hubbs, who will be receiving some long-awaited medical treatment;
Janice Sims, who was diagnosed with Macular degeneration;
Charles Allgood, as he battles lung cancer;

Ongoing Concerns for our Members:

Nancy Rhine, in assisted living located near her daughter;
Stan Crawford, multiple health challenges including spinal stenosis;

For Friends of First Presbyterian, Dalton

Dana Easley, friend of Sherri Stafford and many in our congregation, for unspoken prayers - may God bless her and keep her in his tender care;
The family and friends of Rita Norville, step-mother of Nancy Hallsworth, as they mourn her passing on Saturday, December 7, 2024;
The family and friends of Rick King, brother-in-law of Jean Lowrey, as they mourn - Rick passed away suddenly in his home on Friday evening, November 29, 2024;
For the family of Juan Manuel Cavazos, friend of Janice Sims, as they mourn his death;
Linda Leslie, friend of Sue Spivey, who is battling Pancreatic Cancer;
Patsy Townsend, friend of Janice Sims, who is at home recovering from walking Pneumonia;
Randall Dockins, Jr., friend of Janice Sims, who is at home recovering from open heart surgery;
Jerry, friend of Pam Partain, who is undergoing chemotherapy;
Becky Hansberry, daughter of Kaye Clark, who is receiving chemotherapy treatment for lung cancer at Emory in Atlanta.
Those affected by Hurricane Helene and Milton, especially the friends, families, and loved ones who are close to our hearts, as well as those whom we cannot name, but whose needs are known well by God;
Paula Morrow, friend of Sarah McCown and of the church, whose Leukemia has relapsed and is awaiting a plan for a bone marrow transplant;
Margaret Spivey, sister-in-law of Sue Spivey and Aunt of Kathy Bridges, who is receiving radiation treatment for breast cancer
Mark A. Spivey, brother-in-law to Sue Spivey, who was hospitalized in Norfolk, VA following a fall and a stroke;
Martha Bracey Henson, cousin of Mary Hubbs, who continues to receive treatment for a brain tumor;
Emily Bringardner, friend of Kathy Bridges and Sue Spivey, who has returned home and is having physical therapy for her hip surgery. Her Parkinson problems continue;
The peace of Israel and Palestine and the well-being of Ukraine;
The families of victims of substance abuse;
Kathy Householder, friend of Debbie and Mary Dennard, who is home from Mexico and doing well;
Arden Brown, son of Amanda and Chris Brown, as they seek a cure for DMD;
Caregivers and aging parents.

Praises and Continuing Prayers!

Janice Sims, who received positive results from her heart catheter procedure.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service
with candlelight
5:30 p.m.

Grateful Heart AA Mtg
8:00 p.m.

December 24-January 1

Church Office Closed

Thursday, December 26

Knitting Group
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Friday, December 27

Grateful Heart AA Mtg
8:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 29

Fellowship
10:00 a.m.

Worship

10:30 a.m.

Monday, December 30

No Morning Prayers or
Lunch Bunch

Tuesday, December 31

Grateful Heart AA Mtg
8:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 2

Presbyterians at the Pub
5:00 p.m.

Friday, January 3

Grateful Heart AA Mtg
8:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 5

Sunday School
9:15 a.m.

Fellowship

10:00 a.m.

Worship

10:30 a.m.

Take Down the Greens
11:30 a.m.

Monday, January 6

Morning Prayers
11:30 a.m.

The Lunch Bunch
noon

Tuesday, January 7

Saturday Sacks
10:30 a.m.

Grateful Heart AA Mtg
8:00 p.m.



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