

KIRK IN THE HILLS  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS  
DECEMBER 26, 2021



*It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.*

— Mahatma Gandhi



## How did you let people know what you wanted for Christmas?

When I was a kid, some wrote notes to Santa and others made lists and posted them on the refrigerator. I can picture children on the phone to Grammy or Grampa, rattling off their hopes for a Cabbage Patch doll or a G.I Joe.

How did you do it?

In my family, it was a bit of a tradition to sit around on Thanksgiving Day with all of the department store inserts from the morning's paper and draw circles around the gifts that we hoped to find under the tree a month later. When we were done with those, we moved on to take on the thick Sears catalog with the marker of our choice.

How did you do it?

How did you let people know what you wanted for Christmas - as a child? How did you let people know these days? Did you send some texts? An amazon wishlist? One of my children went to great lengths to create a powerpoint. I'll let you guess which one.

As we ponder the true meaning of the season, perhaps it is good to turn to God's wishlist too. He has been sharing it from the beginning of time. Do you remember the first thing God ever says?

"Let there be light!"

And, even though "there was light," I get the sense that he never lost the hope for having more.

Light has always been at the top of his list.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come!" Isaiah tells us. The prophet is encouraging the community returning from exile to be directed by God's greatest desire - light.

"You are the light of the world," Jesus will, one day, implore us when he preaches the Sermon on the Mount.

And today, as we celebrate this great day of hope and generosity, offering gratitude for whatever we received from our lists, let us remember what God wants for Christmas. He didn't tell us by a phone call, or a letter, or even through a Sears catalog.

How did he do it?

He sent us the greatest light of all. He sent us the light that, as the Gospel of John puts it, was in the beginning. He sent us the light that shines in the darkness and the darkness has not ever overcome it.

Jesus is God's son and our savior, but he is also God's Christmas list sent from him in heaven to Earth to us.

May his generosity to us be echoed in our generosity to him.

Let there be light.

Pastor Nate

# THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

10:00 a.m., Sanctuary

*for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. —Matthew 2:6*

## THE GATHERING

### CARILLON

### OPENING VOLUNTARY

\* *Please rise in body or spirit at the ringing of the tower bell.*

### \* CALL TO WORSHIP

All God's people—  
Boys and girls, women, men:  
Come and worship!  
Shepherds, Magi, saints, and angels:  
Come and worship! Come and worship!  
All who need the Savior, all who long for comfort:  
Come and worship, come and worship Christ, the newborn King!

### \* HYMN 143

**Angels, from the Realms of Glory**

*Regent Square*

### \* OPENING PRAYER

Be near us, Lord Jesus, we ask you to stay  
close by us forever and love us, we pray.  
**Immanuel, we invite you to draw near and dwell with us.**  
Surround us with your tender, caring presence,  
that what we say and do in worship  
might prepare us to live forever with you in heaven.  
**In your powerful name we pray. Amen**

### \* HYMN 115

**Away in a Manger**

*Mueller*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

*Lenora River Kerr*

## PRESENTATION

### \* THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

#### PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

#### THE BAPTISM

#### WELCOME OF THE NEWLY BAPTIZED

With joy and thanksgiving  
we welcome you into Christ's church  
to share with us in his ministry,  
for we are all one in Christ.

#### CAROLS AND HYMNS OF THE SEASON

*We will sing several carols and hymns from Glory to God.*

#### WORD WITH THE CHILDREN

*Children will remain in the sanctuary today.*

\* HYMN 110

Love Has Come

*Bring a Torch*

#### PRAYER

#### 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.

#### THE THANKSGIVING

#### PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*Our giving is an offering to God. All offerings, whether made in the worship service or outside of it, are part of our worship of God and are used to support the Kirk's ministry here and in other parts of the world.*

\* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

#### OFFERTORY

\* DOXOLOGY

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

## THE WORD

### CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

*St. Louis*

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.

### SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-8

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### SERMON

**Hometowns: The Palace in Herodium**

Rev. Kelsey Sorge

## THE SENDING

### CAROLS AND HYMNS OF THE SEASON

### CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

*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 . . . .**

*We hope that you experience a strong sense of welcome and home this morning! We invite everyone to offer greetings and peace at the close of the service. If you are new to the Kirk, we hope you will visit us at our Connect station in the cloister. Enjoy coffee and fellowship in Heritage Hall following the 10:00 a.m. service.*

## WORSHIP NOTES



## Notes on worship and music

“At Christmas, we remember and celebrate the nativity of Christ and the mystery of the incarnation. Whereas during Advent we anticipate the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, at Christmas we identify with the angels who proclaimed, ‘Glory to God in the highest’; with the shepherds, who were afraid but nevertheless offered worship; and with Mary, who pondered the meaning of these events in her heart (Luke 2:13-20).”

Today’s worship continues our celebration of Christmas as well as looking forward to the upcoming Epiphany of the Lord (traditionally celebrated January 6 by the Western church). Our congregational singing will focus the season of Christmas but also offer a glimpse of Epiphany hymns and songs.

We begin our Gathering with the Call to Worship which uses the refrain “Come and worship, come and worship Christ, the newborn King” which we will then sing as part of *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*. Our opening prayer uses phrases from the carol *Away in a Manger*. Following the baptism, we will sing several hymns, both familiar and unfamiliar, from *Glory to God*, giving us the opportunity to enjoy that which we already know and consider traditional as well as singing praise to God with “a new song” as we explore other expressions that might be new to many of us.

We will repeat a hymn from our 8:30 and 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services which might have been a new text to many. The text, written in 1996, is sung to the tune of the French Christmas carol *Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella*. We celebrate “Love is the gift of Christmas” with our singing.

Worship concludes with the first stanza of *Joy to the World*. “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.”

Additional information will be shared about other Christmas carols, hymns, and songs as we sing them this morning.

**Stephen Ministers** are available for personal, confidential prayer in Melrose Chapel (to the left, when facing forward in the sanctuary) immediately following service each Sunday. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer please contact Nancy Lau at 248-835-6691.



## About today's cover art

*Adoration of the Three Kings - Landscape detail* | Gentile da Fabriano | Public Domain

At the end of a long journey, the Magi arrive before the newly born Messiah, guided by a star, and they kneel before the Holy Family, offering their precious gifts. This detail of the *Adoration of the Three Kings* by Gentile da Fabriano focuses on some of the landscape of the journey. The tempera on wood dates to 1423 and shows extraordinary technical skills typical of the Renaissance.

**The annual congregational meeting will take place in the sanctuary after the 10am service on Sunday, January 9, 2022.** This meeting is called to elect the class of 2024 officers for the Session, the Deacons and the Board of Trustees; to approve updated church Bylaws; to approve the Pastor’s Terms of Call; and to dissolve the pastoral relationship with the Rev. Dr. Nathaniel D. Phillips.



*We envision a world where every heart experiences God's transforming love.*



**Membership**

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