

# PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## *Order of Worship*

DECEMBER 24, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

*Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day*

*arr. John Rutter*

CALL TO WORSHIP\*

*Isaiah 9.2,6*

Minister: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

**All: Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.**

Minister: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder;

**All: And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND ADORATION\*

CAROL\*

*Once In Royal David's City* | No. 225  
*Stanzas 1, 2, 4 and 5*

IRBY

Once in royal David's city stood lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall:  
With the poor and mean and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;  
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above,  
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,  
We shall see him, but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;  
When, like stars his children crowned, all in white shall wait around.

FIRST READING

***Isaiah 40:1-5***

*The Lord promises redemption for His people.*

<sup>1</sup> Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

ANTHEM

**Comfort, Comfort**

*Genevan Psalter, 1551  
arr. John Ferguson*

“Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!” so says our God.  
Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow’s load.  
To God’s people now proclaim that His pardon waits for them!  
Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever.

For the herald’s voice is crying in the desert far and near,  
Calling us to true repentance, since the kingdom now is here.  
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!  
Let the valleys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!  
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign!  
For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token that God’s word is never broken.

SECOND READING

**Micah 5:2-5a**

*The prophet foretells the birth in Bethlehem.*

<sup>2</sup> “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” <sup>3</sup> Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. <sup>4</sup> He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And he will be our peace.

CAROL

**O Little Town of Bethlehem** | No. 201  
*Stanzas 1, 3, 4*

*St. Louis*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv’n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav’n.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

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!

THIRD READING

**Luke 1:26-38**

*The angel Gabriel visits Mary.*

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail." <sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

CAROL

*Angels' Carol*

*John Rutter*

Have you heard the sound of the angel voices  
Ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?  
Have you seen the star shining out so brightly  
As a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here?  
Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven  
To the humble shepherds who have waited long?

*Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!*  
Hear the angels sing their joyful song.

He is come in peace in the winter's stillness,  
Like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night;  
He is come in joy like the sun at morning  
Filling all the world with radiance and with light.  
He is come in love as the child of Mary;  
In a simple stable we have seen his birth:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!*  
Hear the angels singing "Peace on earth."

He will bring new light to a world in darkness,  
Like a bright star shining in the skies above;  
He will bring new hope to the waiting nations  
When he comes to reign in purity and love.  
Let the earth rejoice at the Savior's coming;  
Let the heavens answer with the joyful morn:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!*  
Hear the angels singing "Christ is born."

FOURTH READING

**Luke 2.1-20**  
*The birth of Jesus Christ*

<sup>1</sup> In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." <sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION *The True Meaning of Christmas*

*Rev. Nate Libby*

SONG

**O Come, All You Unfaithful**

*B. Kauflin and L. Clow*

O come, all you unfaithful. Come, weak and unstable.  
Come, know you are not alone.  
O Come, barren and waiting ones, weary of praying.  
Come, see what your God has done.  
Christ is born, Christ is born. Christ is born for you.

O come, bitter and broken. Come, with fears unspoken.  
Come, taste of His perfect love.  
O come, guilty and hiding ones, there is no need to run.  
See what your God has done.  
Christ is born, Christ is born. Christ is born for you.

He's the Lamb who was given, slain for our pardon.  
His promise is peace for those who believe.

So Come, though you have nothing. Come, He is the offering.  
Come, see what our God has done.  
Christ is born, Christ is born. Christ is born for you.

**FIFTH READING****Galatians 4:1-7**

*Paul explains the freedom arising from the Incarnation.*

<sup>4</sup> What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. <sup>2</sup> The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. <sup>3</sup> So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. <sup>6</sup> Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

**CAROL**

**Silent Night** | No. 210  
Stanzas 1, 3 and 4

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! 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!

**SIXTH READING****John 1:1-14**

*The apostle John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation.*

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**CAROL\***

***Joy to the World*** | No. 195  
*Stanzas 1, 3 and 4*

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.

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.

**BENEDICTION\***

*based on Isaiah 9.2*

Minister: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the  
land of deep darkness a light has dawned. Jesus Christ is born!

## A Christmas Eve Devotional

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,  
who is Christ the Lord — Luke 2.11*

There was that ancient promise made on the threshold of Eden to the first sinners of our race, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head; another promise made to the Father of the faithful that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, and promises uttered by the mouths of prophets and of saints since the world began. Now, the announcement of the angel of the Lord to the shepherds was a declaration that the covenant was fulfilled, that now in the fullness of time God would redeem His word, and the Messiah, who was to be Israel's glory and the world's hope; was now really come. Be glad you heavens, and be joyful O earth, for the Lord has done it, and in mercy has He visited His people. The Lord has not suffered His word to fail, but has fulfilled to His people His promises.

In some senses, our Lord Jesus Christ is more man than Adam. Adam was not born; Adam never had to struggle through the risks and weaknesses of infancy; he knew not the littlenesses of childhood—he was full grown at once. Father Adam could not sympathize with me as a baby and a child. But how manlike is Jesus! He is cradled with us in the manger; He does not begin with us in mid-life, as Adam, but He accompanies us in the pains and feebleness and infirmities of infancy, and He continues with us even to the grave. Beloved, this is such sweet comfort. — Charles Spurgeon

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<b>David Rea</b>	<i>Pastor</i>	214.270.1221   david.rea@providencedallas.com
<b>Chris Bennett</b>	<i>Pastor to Young Adults</i>	214.270.1227   chris.bennett@providencedallas.com
<b>Nate Libby</b>	<i>Youth Pastor</i>	214.270.1224   nate.libby@providencedallas.com
<b>Alyson Averitt</b>	<i>Women's Ministry</i>	214.270.1223   alyson.averitt@providencedallas.com
<b>Kristi Breed</b>	<i>Children's Ministry</i>	214.270.1221   childrensministry@providencedallas.com
<b>Allyson Crow</b>	<i>Ministry Coordinator</i>	214.270.1221   office@providencedallas.com
<b>Dorothy Edwards</b>	<i>Church Accountant</i>	214.270.1221   dorothy.edwards@providencedallas.com
<b>Jonathan Smith</b>	<i>Worship Coordinator</i>	214.270.1221   jsmith@cplalaw.com
<b>Jill Smith</b>	<i>Pianist</i>	214.270.1221   jillnjonathan1@sbcglobal.net
<b>Dave Clelland</b>	<i>Minister in Residence</i>	214.270.1221   david.clelland@sbcglobal.net

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**PROVIDENCE**  
*Presbyterian Church*

### **Ruling Elders**

Graham Averitt	Jeff Crow	Tom McCabe
Wes Boyd	John Heath	
Michael Breed	Joshua Kipp	

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