



*We welcome all.*

*North Decatur Presbyterian Church is called by God to be a community of faith and worship, dedicated to Christian education and nurture so that we may go into the world to serve, work for peace and justice, and share God's love with all people.*

611 Medlock Road, Decatur, GA 30033  
[www.ndpc.org](http://www.ndpc.org)

## SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

December 22, 2024

11:00 AM

*An \* means we rise together in body or spirit; **bold text** words are spoken in unison.*

### PREPARATION & ADORATION

*As we prepare for worship, we do so in song. Music makes us "one body"—breathing, moving, and vibrating together. Feel free to stand up or stay seated, listen with your eyes closed, or sing along.*

GATHERING MUSIC

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

Glory to God #123

CHIMES

SILENT PRAYER

*We enter God's presence in silence.*

OPENING SONG

*What Child Is This*

Glory to God #145

*Through the four Sundays of Advent, we build a manger. This container, intended to feed animals and made from found objects, becomes a container for more precious things: the dreams of ancient prophets, the longing of the human spirit, "the hopes and fears of all the years."*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Lin Wormley, liturgist

Holy One,  
the season of Word made flesh is upon us:  
**the Word for the future;**  
**the Word that assures promises;**  
**the Word that creates all that is to be.**  
As we light this candle we pray  
**that we may listen for you, the living Word.**

*(sung refrain, O Come, O Come Emmanuel)*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Visitors are invited to leave your name and contact information by signing the Welcome Pad.*

## MEDITATION

it will not be simple, it will not be long  
it will take little time, it will take all your thought  
it will take all your heart, it will take all your breath  
it will be short, it will not be simple  
it will touch through your ribs, it will take all your heart  
it will not be long, it will occupy your thought  
as a city is occupied, as a bed is occupied  
it will take all your flesh, it will not be simple  
You are coming into us who cannot withstand you  
you are coming into us who never wanted to withstand you  
you are taking parts of us into places never planned  
you are going far away with pieces of our lives  
it will be short, it will take all your breath  
it will not be simple, it will become your will

- Final Notations, by Adrienne Rich, from *The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems 1950-2001* (2002)

## SILENCE

*What do these words provoke within you?*

## REFLECTING ON THE MEDITATION

### \*ASSURANCE OF GRACE

by Bruce Prewer

At the end of a long journey  
for a called people seeking a destiny;  
**at the end of an enforced trek**  
**to a highland town with no room for the poor,**  
at the end of the hard travail  
for a teenage woman sheltering in a shed:  
**came the unspeakable Gift;**  
the wondrous self-emptying, the embodied word, the great folly of God;  
a baby crying in the night  
**who frightened jeweled kings and shook the gates of hell.**

### \*GRATEFUL RESPONSE

While We Are Waiting, Come

Glory to God #92

### \* PASSING THE PEACE

*Share a sign of peace by learning "Peace be with you" in American Sign Language; or, if you choose, shake hands or offer a warm embrace to the Beloveds of God who are seated near you. Children are invited to come forward to sit in front, with or without their adult.*

## PROCLAMATION

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

### SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-45

### RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Rev. David Lewicki

## DEDICATION

ANTHEM

*This Christmastide*  
NDPC Community Choir

Donald Fraser

Green and silver, red and gold,  
And a story born of old.  
Truth and love and hope abide,  
This Christmastide.

Holly, ivy mistletoe,  
And the gently falling snow.  
Truth and love and hope abide,  
This Christmastide.

Children sing of hope and joy  
At the birth of one small boy.  
Truth and love and hope abide,  
This Christmastide.

Let the bells ring loud and clear,  
Ring out now for all to hear.  
Truth and love and hope abide,  
This Christmastide.

Trumpets sound and voices raise  
In an endless stream of praise.  
Truth and love and hope abide  
This Christmastide

Green and silver, red and gold,  
And a story born of old:  
Peace and love and hope abide,  
This Christmastide.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Mary Anona Stoops

**Our [Divine Parent] in heaven, holy is your name, your kin-dom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever.**

## INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP AND CALL FOR OFFERING

*Change-for-Change contributions in December support the Pastors' Discretionary Fund. Part of the origin of this fund at NDPC in the 1970s was to help women access reproductive healthcare when it was not widely available. In the current moment, this function of the fund has become important again. If you know of someone who is prevented from getting access to reproductive care under Georgia law, please reach out to the pastors for help. In addition, we will also consider requests to help undocumented immigrants secure safety for themselves and their families. Donations to the PDF are also used for church and community members experiencing financial emergencies. Text 'NDPC C4C' \$20 (or any amount) to 73256 (or leave an offering in the plate on your way out today).*

\* CLOSING SONG

*The First Nowell*

Glory to God #147

\* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*I Saw Three Ships*

arr. Jason D. Payne

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## NOTES ON WORSHIP TODAY:

**Images of the Day:** *Mary and Elizabeth* by Laurie Gudim. Meditation: *Overshadowed*, 2001, by Patty Wickman (American), Oil on canvas, Ahmanson Collection.

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**Livestream and video** are produced by NDPC volunteers. If you would like to help with our weekly audio and video production, come up to the balcony and introduce yourself to the team.

## WELCOME, VISITORS

We're happy that you've joined us! It takes courage to show up at a new church. Please introduce yourself to those around you as you are comfortable. If you share your email address in the red Welcome Pads, we will send you the weekly NDPC e-newsletter. You can learn more about NDPC's programs at [www.ndpc.org](http://www.ndpc.org). We come from many different backgrounds, traditions, and cultures to worship. Feel free to use language and pronouns for God and for yourself that are authentic to you. After worship, the pastors would love to meet you in person.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

**Children are welcome in worship at NDPC.** The nursery, located off the hallway just outside the sanctuary door, is open for kids 0-3. Kids are free to move around in the narthex, where you can listen to worship with your child, and there are child-friendly quiet activities in the Children's Corner that can be taken back to your seat. The presence of children in worship is a gift, never a disruption.

**Would a large print hymnal, magnifying glass, or hearing assist device help you worship?** Ask an usher and they will gladly assist you. Let us know how we can make worship accessible for you.

**If you would like to** donate flowers, volunteer to serve as an usher or liturgist, or share comments about worship, email [worship@ndpc.org](mailto:worship@ndpc.org).

**Videos of previous worship services** are available at [ndpc.org](http://ndpc.org). **Subscribe to our sermon podcast** through any major podcasting service.

**Revs. David Lewicki, Mary Anona Stoops, and Erin Reed Cooper** are available to meet for pastoral care. Pastoral care is confidential and can be held in-person or virtually. Email [david@ndpc.org](mailto:david@ndpc.org), [maryanona@ndpc.org](mailto:maryanona@ndpc.org), or [erin@ndpc.org](mailto:erin@ndpc.org).

## NDPC STAFF

Rev. David Lewicki, *Pastor*

Rev. Mary Anona Stoops, *Pastor*

Rev. Dr. Erin Reed Cooper, *Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries*

Huu Mai, *Music Director*

Mahsheed Khawary, *Office Administrator*

Javier Sanchez, *Custodian*

Jerel Jefferson, *Music Fellow*

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