



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

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

December 29, 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 SONGS

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

Glory to God #142

CHIMES

SILENT PRAYER

We enter God's presence in silence.

Through the four Sundays of Advent, we built a manger. This container, intended to feed animals and made from found objects, becomes a container for precious things: the dreams of ancient prophets, the longing of the human heart, "the hopes and fears of all the years," and on Christmas, God with us.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Jaime Jones-Wormley, liturgist

Loving God,
fresh to the world
and hardly a breath taken,
yet already your light
is changing everything.

* OPENING SONG

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Glory to God #119

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

MEDITATION

Not soon, as late as the approach of my ninetieth year,
I felt a door opening in me and I entered
the clarity of early morning.

One after another my former lives were departing,
like ships, together with their sorrow.

And the countries, cities, gardens, the bays of seas
assigned to my brush came closer,
ready now to be described better than they were before.

I was not separated from people,
grief and pity joined us.

We forget—I kept saying—that we are all children of the King.

For where we come from there is no division
into Yes and No, into is, was, and will be.

We were miserable, we used no more than a hundredth part
of the gift we received for our long journey.

Moments from yesterday and from centuries ago—
a sword blow, the painting of eyelashes before a mirror
of polished metal, a lethal musket shot, a caravel
staving its hull against a reef—they dwell in us,
waiting for a fulfillment.

I knew, always, that I would be a worker in the vineyard,
as are all men and women living at the same time,
whether they are aware of it or not.

- “Late Ripeness” from *Second Space: New Poems* by Czeslaw Milosz.
Translated by the author and Robert Hass. Copyright © 2004

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

Joy to the World

Glory to God #134

* 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 2:21-38

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Rev. David Lewicki

DEDICATION

* SONG

Go Tell It On the Mountain

Glory to God #136

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Tsz Nok Christopher Ng

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

Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace

Glory to God #545

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.**

-The Work of Christmas, by Howard Thurman

POSTLUDE

Good King Wenceslas

arr. L. Shackley

NOTES ON WORSHIP TODAY:

Images of the Day: Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–1669), *Simeon in the Temple*, 1669. Oil on canvas, 98.5 × 79.5 cm. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Sweden. Probably Rembrandt's last painting, Simeon in the Temple was found unfinished on an easel in his studio when he died. Meditation: source: *Creative Commons*

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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. 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.

Videos of previous worship services are available at 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, maryanona@ndpc.org, or 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*

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