



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

January 5, 2025, Epiphany

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

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. Epiphany, the last of the 12 days of Christmas, is the day that 3 traveling scholars, following a star, arrived to greet a newborn child. God's revelation (epiphany) to them and us gives this day its name.

GATHERING

CHIMES

SILENT PRAYER

We enter God's presence in silence.

* OPENING SONG

Come Follow Me

Glory to God #693

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CALL

A Measuring Worm

by Richard Wilbur, read by Jan Cribbs

This yellow striped green
Caterpillar, climbing up
The steep window screen,
Constantly (for lack
Of a full set of legs) keeps
Humping up his back.
It's as if he sent
By a sort of semaphore
Dark omegas meant
To warn of Last Things.
Although he doesn't know it,
He will soon have wings,
And I, too, don't know
Toward what undreamt condition
Inch by inch I go

For Those Who Have Far to Travel
Blessing for Epiphany

by Jan Richardson, read by Ellen Gadberry

If you could see
the journey whole
you might never
undertake it;
might never dare
the first step
that propels you
from the place
you have known
toward the place
you know not.
Call it
one of the mercies
of the road:
that we see it
only by stages
as it opens
before us,
as it comes into
our keeping
step by
single step.
There is nothing
for it
but to go
and by our going
take the vows
the pilgrim takes:
to be faithful to
the next step;
to rely on more
than the map;
to heed the signposts
of intuition and dream;
to follow the star
that only you
will recognize;

to keep an open eye
for the wonders that
attend the path;
to press on
beyond distractions
beyond fatigue
beyond what would
tempt you
from the way.
There are vows
that only you
will know;
the secret promises
for your particular path
and the new ones
you will need to make
when the road
is revealed
by turns
you could not
have foreseen.
Keep them, break them,
make them again:
each promise becomes
part of the path;
each choice creates
the road
that will take you
to the place
where at last
you will kneel
to offer the gift
most needed—
the gift that only you
can give—
before turning to go
home by
another way.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

DISCOVERY

The Secret

by Denise Levertov, read by Dee Raeside

Two girls discover
the secret of life
in a sudden line of poetry.

I, who don't know the

secret, wrote the line. They
told me
(through a third person)
they had found it,
but not what it was,
not even what line it was.

No doubt by now, more than a week later,
they have forgotten the secret,
the line, the name of the poem. I love them
for finding what
I can't find,

and for loving me
for the line I wrote,
and for forgetting it
so that

a thousand times, till death
finds them, they may
discover it again in other
lines, in other happenings.

And for wanting to know it,
for assuming there is such a secret, yes,
for that
most of all.

Brilliant Night, January 7, 2015

by Sarah Erickson, read by Sarah Erickson

Go outside. Go.
Now.
Go into this frigid night,
look up, and maybe
the moon
will wink at you
through ice-jeweled
pine boughs.
As you catch your breath,
you understand.
The dazzling wonder of creation
is far from over.

Children are invited to come forward to sit in front, with or without their adult.

WORD IN WORSHIP FOR CHILDREN

Rev. Dr. Erin Reed Cooper

Children in Pre-K – 3rd grade are invited to go to Worship & Wonder in the 2nd floor Education Hall. They will return to celebrate Communion. Children may also remain in worship.

God

by Brian Doyle, read by Alice Hickcox

By purest chance I was out in our street when the kindergarten
Bus mumbled past going slow and I looked up just as all seven
Kids on my side of the bus looked at me and I grinned and they
Lit up and all this crap about God being dead and where is God
And who owns God and who hears God better than whom is the
Most egregiously stupid crap imaginable because if you want to

See God and have God see you and have this mutual perception
Be completely untrammelled by blather and greed and comment,
Go stand in the street as the kindergarten bus murmurs past. I'm
Not kidding and this is not a metaphor. I am completely serious.
Everyone babbles about God but I saw God this morning just as
The bus slowed down for the stop on Maple Street. God was six
Girls and one boy with a bright green and purple stegosaurus hat.
Of course God would wear a brilliantly colored tall dinosaur hat!
If you were the Imagination that dreamed up everything that ever
Was in this blistering perfect terrible world, wouldn't you wear a
Hat celebrating some of the wildest most amazing developments?

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

RESISTANCE

The Talking Day

by Michael Klein, read by Rick Neale

Some lunatic with a gun killed some people at an immigration center in Binghamton, New York. Liz Rosenberg and her family live up there and David, her husband, teaches in the middle school which is close to all the action (the way, in any smallish town, everything is close to all the action). I called Liz to see if everyone was all right and she was in her car driving to the elementary school to pick up Lily, her young daughter she brought back from China a few years ago. Lily was fine, but Liz wanted to move her outside the question of how to make sense of the broken pieces of "someone" with a gun walking into a public space and then firing. There's something called (I learned from a news report the day of the shootings at Virginia Tech) The Talking Day which refers to the day immediately following the day when something wildly violent happens. No one quite grasps the reality of the situation and everyone spends that first day talking about what happened and reliving it as language—not so much to understand the violence but to make a kind of recording of it: talking about it, letting go of it, putting it down. And so I imagine it must be with Liz and Lily and David in Binghamton, New York today: letting "something" go. Liz is in her car after having just picked up Lily at school and driving back home through a town that suddenly makes no sense and she is telling the story about what happened when a young man walked into a building with a gun. And for Lily, who's had a pretty serene, un-violent United States time so far and whose endless joy has made her an adorable chatterbox, tomorrow could be her first talking day. Or, if not tomorrow, some other day. We live in a talking day world.

Better Days Ahead

by Sherrill Terry, read by Sherrill Terry

"Better Days Ahead" screams
a mural in Red White and Blue
arresting our walk along the birdsong path.

In our age, we must still
Rage Against the Machine.
We have a madman who wishes to be King (bereft of myrrh.)
We cut a “fish eye” at each other.
It’s our choice: reflect, reject?
Sing and pray with great hope?

Sprites shimmer in the light.
Our hearts and heads together
will save us.

Our mural will pray:
“We Are Marvelous Creatures”
Let us be fearless.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

WISDOM

An Old Story

by Tracy K. Smith, read by Carol Tveit

We were made to understand it would be
Terrible. Every small want, every niggling urge,
Every hate swollen to a kind of epic wind.

Livid, the land, and ravaged, like a rageful
Dream. The worst in us having taken over
And broken the rest utterly down.

A long age
Passed. When at last we knew how little
Would survive us—how little we had mended

Or built that was not now lost—something
Large and old awoke. And then our singing
Brought on a different manner of weather.

Then animals long believed gone crept down
From trees. We took new stock of one another.
We wept to be reminded of such color.

Praise the Rain

by Joy Harjo, read by Melissa Tidwell

Praise the rain; the seagull dive
The curl of plant, the raven talk—
Praise the hurt, the house slack
The stand of trees, the dignity—
Praise the dark, the moon cradle
The sky fall, the bear sleep—
Praise the mist, the warrior name
The earth eclipse, the fired leap—
Praise the backwards, upward sky
The baby cry, the spirit food—
Praise canoe, the fish rush
The hole for frog, the upside-down—
Praise the day, the cloud cup
The mind flat, forget it all—

Praise crazy. Praise sad.
Praise the path on which we're led.
Praise the roads on earth and water.
Praise the eater and the eaten.
Praise beginnings; praise the end.
Praise the song and praise the singer.

Praise the rain; it brings more rain.
Praise the rain; it brings more rain.

COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the Word spoken to create the universe.

Blessed are you in the darkness and the light.

Blessed are you for your presence in every age.

Blessed are you as you call the young and the old.

Blessed are you for the gift of wisdom.

Blessed are you for your son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

With this bread and cup
we remember Jesus at the river, on the road
in the wilderness, on the cross.
We remember our new birth in his resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

Loving God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your wisdom.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION & SHARING OF BREAD & CUP

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Loving God, we thank you for feeding us with poetry and music and with this spiritual food of your presence. Continue to nourish us that we may follow your way and flourish as your people, we pray in Christ, Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Come Live in the Light

Glory to God #749

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

NOTES ON WORSHIP TODAY:

Today's Offering

Our Change-for-Change contributions in January support **Presbyterians for a Better Georgia** (PBG). PBG is a voluntary partnership of Presbyterian congregations who work together on public policy advocacy at the Georgia statehouse, focusing on ending homelessness, increasing affordable housing, and expanding access to physical and mental healthcare. To participate in PBG, visit www.p4bg.org.

To give by text, text 'NDPC C4C' \$20 (or any amount) to 73256. You may also **use the QR Code**. Scan the code, enter the amount of your gift, and in the dropdown menu called "Fund," find "Change for Change." **To give cash**, leave an offering in the plate on your way out today. Thank you for supporting NDPC!



Today's worship service was curated by the Rev. Melissa Tidwell, NDPC clergy affiliate.

Today's guest musician is LuAnn Latzanich.

Images of the Day: ?

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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*
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