



CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO
Zechariah



DECEMBER 4, 2022

Welcome to Mercy Presbyterian Church

Thank you for joining us in worship today. If you are visiting with us, we are delighted that you have chosen to be with us and our desire is to be a blessing to you. Our prayer is that God will transform our lives and enable us to live for His glory and the good of the world. We would love to get to know you better and answer any questions you may have. Please share your information with us by emailing us at church@mercydallas.com.

Our Worship

You will notice that we follow a thoughtful and connected rhythm in our worship, called liturgy. The order of our worship reflects the work of the gospel in our hearts. In worship, we come together to tell the story of the gospel by the structure of our worship, the content of our worship, and the way that we worship.

Parents of Young Children

We believe the church is for all people, young and old, and want Mercy to be a church where children are seen, heard, and loved. We invite you to involve your children in our service, help them understand what is going on, sing the songs with you, and participate in worship. Children learn how to worship by imitating you. We say and sing parts of our worship service every week in order to help our young children to participate. Children's bulletins with coloring activities are available by the door to the sanctuary. Nursery is also available for babies and toddlers.

Series Overview | Advent 2022

Advent means the arrival of a notable person or event. In the season of Advent, we remember what the arrival of God in the flesh meant and why it is worth celebrating. This year, Mercy will consider the significance of the first Christmas from the perspective of those who lived through the first Christmas - those who were there for the most important advent in the history of the world: Mary, Zechariah, the angels, and Simeon and Anna. Join us for this celebration of the first coming of Jesus so that we may together look forward to his second coming.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Second Sunday of Advent | December 4, 2022

REFLECTION

"Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world."

- C.S. Lewis

"Jesus was God and man in one person, that God and man might be happy together again."

- George Whitefield

INVOCATION | *We pray for God's presence, power and blessing in worship*

CALL TO WORSHIP | *God invites us into His presence to worship Him*

Luke 1:68-74

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people

And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;

To show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,

The oath that he swore to our father Abraham to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear.

HYMN OF ADORATION | *We sing praises to God*

Angels We Have Heard on High

Traditional French carol, 18th c. | Public Domain

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo.

See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

ADVENT DOXOLOGY | *(Glory Words) We praise the Triune God*

O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.
We'll praise Your name forever, we'll praise your name forever.
We'll praise Your name forever, Christ the Lord.

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION | *We acknowledge our sin and ask for God's grace*

Almighty God, since you delay with much patience the punishments that we deserve and invite on a daily basis, grant that we may not indulge ourselves but carefully consider how often and in how many different ways we have kindled your anger against us. May we learn humbly to present ourselves to you for pardon, and with true repentance seek your mercy. With all our heart we desire to submit ourselves to you, whether you discipline us, or according to your infinite goodness, forgive us. Let our condition be blessed, not by flattering ourselves in our apathy, but by finding you to be our kind and bountiful Father, reconciled to us in your only-begotten Son. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDONING GRACE | *God forgives our sins and gives us grace*

Isaiah 12:2-3

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

HYMN OF ADVENT | *We celebrate God's gift of grace*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Latin text, translated by J.M. Neal | 15th c. French Franciscan Processional | Public Domain

O come o come, Immanuel and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel! Shall come to thee O Israel.

O come thou rod of Jesse free, thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of hell Thy people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel! Shall come to thee O Israel.

O come thou dayspring come and cheer, Our spirits by Thine advent here
And drive away the shades of night, and pierce the clouds and bring us light
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel! Shall come to thee O Israel.

O come desire of nations bind, all people in one heart and mind
Bid envy strife and quarrels cease, fill all the world with heaven's peace
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel! Shall come to thee O Israel.

MERCY MOMENT

CONFESSION OF FAITH | *We confess what we believe*

The Heidelberg Catechism | Q67 & 68

Are both the word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

Yes! In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us and by the holy sacraments confirms that our entire salvation rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.

How many sacraments did Christ institute in the New Testament?

Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER | *We lift up our requests to God*

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.

HYMN OF PREPARATION | *We prepare our hearts to hear God's Word*

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Words by Edmund H. Sears | Music by Richard S. Willis | Public Domain

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

CHILDREN'S CHURCH DISMISSAL | *Children 4 years old through 2nd grade*

Zechariah's Prophecy

- ⁶⁷ And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied,
saying,
- ⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people
- ⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,
- ⁷⁰ as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
- ⁷¹ that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
- ⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
- ⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
- ⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
- ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
- ⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
- ⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
- ⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us[a] from on high
- ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
- ⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the
wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON NOTES

INTERLUDE

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER | *The family meal of Christians*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, making us in your image. We praise you for your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, who by His death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for His people. Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

PRAYER

Gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, according to our Savior's word, may share in victory and eternal life.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Hallelujah! Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast. Hallelujah!

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

PARTAKING OF THE ELEMENTS

The Lord's Supper, also called Communion or the Eucharist, is the family meal of Christians. We invite followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who have believed the good news, have repented of their sins, and are baptized members in good standing in the Lord's Church. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer. We hope that this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with His people, the Church.

Please consider offering your tithes as a physical act of worship by placing your offering in the tithe box located at the entrance to the sanctuary.

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer for Awakening

Lord Jesus, I have heard from the Bible for years, and have been in church for years, but very little of this seems real to me. Please show me the reality of what you are saying. Unnerve me with the badness of the bad news. Enthrall me with the goodness of the good news. Make what is familiar seem new. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Covenant Children

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me the opportunity to grow up in a Christian family where I am surrounded by the good news of the gospel. Help me to grow in my understanding of who you are and what you have done for me on the cross. Help me learn what it means for me to turn from my sins and trust in you alone for my salvation. Teach me what it means to follow you as one of your disciples. Amen.

Prayer for Those Struggling Against Sin

Lord Jesus, give me the ability to see in you the fulfillment of all my needs and desires, and help me to turn from every false source of satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely to me, and run with perseverance the race that you have set before me, looking only to you, the author and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Words by James Montgomery | Music by Henry Smart | Public Domain

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth.
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King!

Shepherds in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night;
God with man is now residing
Yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King!

Sages leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar,
Seek the great desire of nations
Ye have seen His natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King!

Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord descending
In His temple shall appear.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King!

All creation join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son;
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal three in one.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ the newborn King!

GLORIA PATRI | *(Glory to the Father) We praise the Triune God*

Gloria, in excelsis Deo.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.

BENEDICTION | *God sends us out into the world with His blessing*

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

DISMISSAL | *God sends us out into the world*

Let us go forth to serve the world as those who love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Thanks be to God!**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In verse 69, Zechariah celebrates that God has raised up a horn of salvation. What kind of salvation did Zechariah expect?
2. Consider verse 76. John was called to go and prepare the way of the Lord - to give knowledge of the salvation Jesus brings. How did he do that? How was his message unique? Does John's way of communicating the gospel inform your own?
3. Consider verse 78. God forgives sin because of his tender mercy. How have you known God's tender mercy?
4. Consider verse 79. The gospel is light that pierces the darkness and guides our feet into the way of peace. How has the gospel illuminated your darkness? How has it guided your feet into the way of peace?
5. How does this passage shape your understanding of Christmas this year?

CALENDAR

Sunday, December 4

Second Sunday of Advent

Tuesday, December 6

6:30 - 7:30am

Men's Bible Study | Cindi's Dallas

Sunday, December 11

Third Sunday of Advent

9 - 9:45am

Elementary Sunday School | Room 120

11:20 - 11:40am

Children's Chorus Rehearsal | PK4 - 5th grade

6pm

Lessons + Carols

No Youth Group

Tuesday, December 13

6:30 - 7:30am

Men's Bible Study | Cindi's Dallas

Sunday, December 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service | The Chapel

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day

No Elementary Sunday School

No Youth Group

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Winter Crates for Ukraine

As winter rapidly approaches in Ukraine, the team in Poland has identified a new shipping opportunity, without the need for couriers. Mercy has committed to filling four crates for the pilot shipment leaving Dallas on December 8th. You can find a link to the most current list of needed items in the weekly email. Bring any items from the list to Mercy next Sunday, December 4th. Continue to be in prayer for those facing extreme hardship this winter and for those ministering the Gospel there.

Lessons + Carols

Mercy's annual Lessons + Carols will be Sunday, December 11th at 6pm. This family service celebrates the birth of the Prince of Peace with readings from scripture and carols. Children ages 4- 5th grade will sing the opening carol for this service and will rehearse for 20 minutes following the Sunday morning service on 12/11. Nursery for ages 0-3 will be available. Questions? Contact Jessica at jessica@mercydallas.com

Mercy Children

Nursery is available weekly for infants (Nursery Room). Sunday School is available for toddlers during the service. Children (4 years-2nd Grade) are dismissed from the service during the sermon for Children's Church. Elementary Sunday School (3rd-5th Grade) meets at 9am on 2nd & 4th Sundays. A Mother's Room is available during the service if you need a space to feed or calm a little one. The office to the north of the sanctuary is a private space set with comfortable chairs and a changing station. If you have any questions or would like to get involved with our children's ministry, please email Emily Freeman (emily@mercydallas.com).

Youth Group

Youth Group meets 2nd & 4th Sunday evenings at rotating homes. The schedule will be listed on the calendar in the bulletin and online. The 4th Sunday of each month, youth have the opportunity to serve as part of the Set Up or Welcome Team as a group, though they are welcome to serve any week alongside their families. For more information about the youth ministry and schedule, contact Josh and Hannah Patch at youth@mercydallas.com.

Women's Ministry

Our study of Genesis will continue on January 10th/11th. Contact Joanna Dawson (women@mercydallas.com) with any questions regarding the women's ministry at Mercy.

Men's Ministry

Mercy Men meet Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30am at Cindi's Deli in Dallas (on Central between Forest and Royal). December 13th will be the last meeting of the semester.

Serve at Mercy

Sunday morning volunteers are critical to the work and worship of Mercy. Contact Jessica at jessica@mercydallas.com for more information or to sign up.

CONNECTING

Community Groups

Community Groups are a vital part of Mercy’s ministry and worship. If you are interested in joining a community group, please contact Jessica at jessica@mercydallas.com.

Weekly Update

Our weekly email newsletter is the primary way we communicate announcements, information about church life, and details about upcoming events. Email church@mercydallas.com if you would like to receive weekly emails.

Prayer Requests

If you have a private matter that the session could be praying for, please email their private email at session@mercydallas.com. They would love the opportunity to lift your needs before the Lord.

Giving

If you would like to give to the work and worship of Mercy Presbyterian Church, you can do so in three ways:

- Place checks or cash in the offering box located by the door as you exit the sanctuary on Sundays.
- Give online at www.mercydallas.churchcenter.com/giving/to/general
- Mail a check to Mercy Presbyterian, P.O. Box 670035, Dallas, TX 75230

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MINISTRY STAFF

Interim Pastor

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