



CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO
The Angels



DECEMBER 11, 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

The Third Sunday of Advent | December 11, 2022

REFLECTION

"Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home."

- G. K. Chesterton

"God goes to those who have time to hear him—and so on this cloudless night he went to simple shepherds."

- Max Lucado

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

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

Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;

**And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

**On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold
it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**

As With Gladness Men of Old

Words by W. Chatterton Dix | Music by Conrad Kocher | Public Domain

As with gladness men of old,
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.

As with joyful steps they sped
To that lowly cradle bed,
There to bend the knee before
Him whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet,
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare,
At that cradle rude and bare;
So may we with holy joy,
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our Heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, every day,
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright,
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down;
There for ever may we sing,
Alleluias to our King.

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*

Lord, I have betrayed you by following my own way. I have denied you by fearing to follow yours. And I have mocked you by not taking your death seriously. Lord, I am lost. Let your forgiveness find me. Hold me in your strong arms and give me your new life. Live in me and with me day by day, that together we may make a world that is new. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

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

Psalm 28:6-7

Blessed be the Lord! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

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

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Words by Phillip Brooks | English Folk Tune | Public Domain

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

For Christ is born of Mary,
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.

O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to all the earth.

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 Immanuel!

MERCY MOMENT - possible

CONFESSION OF FAITH | *We confess what we believe*

The Heidelberg Catechism | Q69

How does holy baptism remind and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross benefits you personally?

In this way: Christ instituted this outward washing and with it promised that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly his blood and his Spirit wash away my soul's impurity, that is, all my sins.

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*

Away in a Manger

Anonymous | Traditional English Carol | Public Domain

**Hymn of the Month | Teaching our children great hymns of our faith*

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed;
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing the Baby awakes;
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love You, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky;
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus I ask You to stay
Close by me forever and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children, in Your tender care;
And fit us for heaven to live with You there.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

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

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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.

COMMUNION HYMN | *We celebrate the family meal of Christians*

O Holy Night

Words by Placide Cappeau | Music by Adolphe Adam | Public Domain

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope- the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the Wise Men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our Friend.
He knows our need— to our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King, before Him lowly bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

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*

2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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. What role did a shepherd play in the ancient world? Why did angels appear to shepherds?
2. How is the incarnation “good news of great joy” for you?
3. The announcement of the Messiah is often accompanied by some kind of announcement of peace. We do not live in a very peaceful world. How do you understand peace as it is associated with the incarnation?
4. News of the incarnation demanded action. The shepherds immediately went to Bethlehem to see what had been announced. How does the gospel change the course of your life?
5. In your Christmas celebration, how do you reclaim the wonder and joy of the first Christmas?

CALENDAR

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 | The Chapel

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

6pm

Christmas Eve Service | The Chapel

Sunday, December 25

Christmas Day

No Elementary Sunday School

No Youth Group

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lessons + Carols

Mercy's annual Lessons + Carols will be Sunday, December 11 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). We are studying Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*. 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.

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.

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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