



seeking sanctuary

Fourth Sunday of Advent



THE DOWNTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 19, 2021

Hearing assistance devices are available. *Please ask a greeter for a receiver.*

(*) indicates the congregation will stand if able

Gathering in God's Name

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Chorale Prelude on *Savior of the Nations, Come* Dieterich Buxtehude

(Please meditate silently during the Opening Voluntary.)

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We are seeking—

P: **deeper faith,**
a place to belong,
the feeling that God is here in this room.

L: We are seeking—

P: **joy that overflows,**
the movement of the Spirit,
a hand to hold, when alone in the dark.

L: We are seeking—

P: **the freedom to be,**
the courage to love,
the conviction to act in the face of injustice.

L: We are seeking, but here in this space,

P: **We are found.**

L: Take a deep breath. This is your sanctuary.

P: **God is here. We are found. Amen.**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Mburu Family

God's love is like an open door.

God's love is the streetlight that guides us home.

God's love is a warm bed to fall into.

God's love is a table with room for you.

God's love is a crackling fireplace.

God's love is the sun that streams through the windows.

God's love is the roof over our heads and the floor beneath our feet.

God's love is a home for you and me, for neighbors and strangers, for family and friends, for enemies and partners.

God's love is a home for all.

Today we light the candle of love to remind us of this truth.

May it burn brightly in this space and even brighter in our hearts.

Amen.

***OPENING HYMN #100**

"Canticle of the Turning/My Soul Cries with a Joyful Shout"

CALL TO CONFESSION

L: Mary's world turned upside down with the visit of an angel. This is a moment we can relate to, because over the course of the last year and a half, our world has seemed to turn upside down more than once. When those moments come, we hope to respond with grace; but more often than not, fear can get the best of us. So today we turn to God in prayer, asking for God's guidance and grace in the places and moments we need it most in this moment of silence...

Let us pray together now...

P: God of safe spaces, we wish we were more like Mary, who in the face of great change, went and sought help. She did not wait for help to find her; she walked to the shelter she needed. Too often we wait silently for the world to change around us instead of speaking up for the things we need. Forgive us for failing to care for ourselves the way you would care for us. Give us the courage to be more like Mary. God of safe places, we wish we were more like Elizabeth, who greeted Mary with laughter and contagious joy. How many people have crossed our doorstep and how many times have we failed to see them? Give us the courage of Mary, and the grace of Elizabeth. Gratefully we pray, amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: Family of faith, even if we miss the person standing on our doorstep, even if we fail to care for ourselves the way God would care for us, even if we forget and ignore, turn away and shut down, God still loves us. There is nothing we can do to lose God's love.

Rest in this promise:

P: If we get lost, we will be found.

L: If we mess up, we are forgiven.

P: If we withhold love, God is lavish in loving us.

L: We are claimed. We are loved. We are forgiven.

P: Thanks be to God. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: In the spirit of peace and love, let us greet one another.
May the peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you.

Please greet one another with words of peace and reconciliation.

Please return to your seats when the music starts.

*GLORIA PATRI Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen, amen.

Encountering the Living Word of God

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:39-55

L: The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. **P: Glory to you, O Lord.**

PRAYER PRACTICE

Sacred Imagination

SERMON

“Seeking Sanctuary”

Responding to God's Word & Call

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (people read bold)

Holy God, Our prayers are often one lovely act of seeking. We bow our heads, we close our eyes, and we seek— we seek you, we seek belonging, we seek sanctuary. And what is lovely is that we know, deep in our bones, that if we knock, we will find you. So today we pause our seeking to simply give you thanks. Thank you for the Elizabeths in our lives— the ones who have been there when we needed them most, the ones who have blessed us with joy, allowing our happiness to take up space, the ones who have opened the door for us and ushered us in. And thank you not only for the Elizabeths in our lives, but for the strangers who have cared for us, for those older and wiser who paved the way before us, and for individuals who share no relation to us, but love us like family. Our lives are undoubtedly better because of them. Gracious God, we also pray for those without an Elizabeth in their life. We pray for those who do not have a hand to hold in the dark, who do not have a front porch to show up on, or even a porch to call their own. We pray for those in life transitions who carry that fear and anxiety alone, and we pray for all who know loneliness in the face of these hardships.

We pray, too, for...

(the people offer their prayers aloud)

Wrap your arms around these individuals. Circle back, again and again, dwelling tenderly in the wounds of their hearts until healing might be found. Open our eyes so that we might see the need in our own backyard. Thank you for being our safe place. Thank you for always welcoming us home. Now with joy in our hearts, we pray the words you taught us to pray, saying...

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.

COLLECTION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Elizabeth offers her home. She offers her arms. She offers her joy. She offers her affirmation and confidence. Elizabeth offers everything she has when Mary shows up at her door, and it just feels holy, doesn't it? Part of our call as people of faith is to give when and where we can. So today we are invited to be a little more like Elizabeth. Today we are invited to give generously, trusting that God will take these gifts and build a better world here.

To offer your financial support to the ministry and mission of DPC:

- Place your offering in one of our designated offering locations.
- Use our mobile app by texting "dpchurch" to 73256.
- Visit www.dpchurch.com and click "Online and Mobile Giving".

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"O Sing With Joy"

Luise Mueller

O sing with joy the Saviour's coming is at hand; his grace is over every land.

Alleluia.

Rejoice our Lord appears and every heart is lifted high, rejoice, rejoice, his advent nears, rejoice our Lord is nigh.

Alleluia, we praise his name, alleluia.

T. W. Menzel

*DOXOLOGY #606 "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION (*unison*)

Good and gracious God, We give these gifts for the seekers. We give these gifts for those who need sanctuary. We give these gifts for those who build sanctuaries. We give these gifts for those who have lost sanctuary, and for those who find sanctuary all over the place. Use these gifts to bring us closer to home. With joy and hope in our hearts we pray, amen.

Invitations & Announcements

*Closing Hymn #158 “Born in the Night, Mary’s Child”

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

L: As you leave this service, your service begins:
Comfort the homesick.
Open your doors to others.
Seek sanctuary.
Be brave enough to go home by another way.
And remember that here in God’s house, all are welcomed—
so come back soon.
In the name of our Foundation— Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—
go in peace.
And may all God’s people say.
P: **Alleluia, Amen.**

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

Chorale Prelude on *Savior of the Nations, Come* Andreas Nicolaus Vetter
(Please remain seated during the closing voluntary.)

<p><i>Flowers for today’s service were donated by Irene and Ridley Wills in memory of Jesse Wills II.</i></p>

100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Canticle of the Turning

Em C D

1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
 3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -

Em C D Em

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -

G D Em C Em

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.

G D

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the

Em C D Em

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread; ev - ery
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46-55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.

name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the
 fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the
 dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Born in the Night, Mary's Child 158

- 1 Born in the night, Mar-y's Child, a long way from your home;
- 2 Clear shin-ing light, Mar-y's Child, your face lights up our way;
- 3 Truth of our life, Mar-y's Child, you tell us God is good;
- 4 Hope of the world, Mar-y's Child, you're com-ing soon to reign;

com - ing in need, Mar - y's Child, born in a bor - rowed room.
 Light of the world, Mar - y's Child, dawn on our dark - ened day.
 yes, it is true, Mar - y's Child, shown on your cross of wood.
 King of the earth, Mar - y's Child, walk in our streets a - gain.



**Note on “Close to Home”
Advent—Epiphany Series by A Sanctified Art**

“When something hits close to home, it affects us deeply. During the Advent and Christmas season, we journey through scriptures and rituals that are tender, heavy with emotion, and vulnerable. We carry the memories and truths of this season close to our hearts. The *Close to Home* theme acknowledges the ‘already but not yet’ tension of our faith: Emmanuel is with us, and yet, God’s promised day—our everlasting home—is not fully realized. It names our deep longing for God to come close to us.

The Advent and Christmas scriptures are rich with home metaphors and imagery. In these scriptures, home is both physical and metaphorical, something we seek and something we are called to build. In many ways, these scriptures are like blueprints—detailing the dreams of a God who makes a home with us. Ultimately, God is our home and resting place. God draws near and makes a home on earth; sacred ground is all around us.

This Advent, may we be comforted by the One who dwells intimately with us. May we expand safety and sanctuary for everyone wandering far from home. May we come home—wherever home is found—to live fully with joy, hope, and courage.”



DPC 2021 Christmas Services Schedule

Christmas Eve

Sanctuary Candlelight Service 6:00pm

Christmas Day

Chapel Service 10:00am

December 26th

Sunday Worship 11:00am

(26th will be streamed via Facebook only)

Please join us in worship!



10 Ways to Connect with The Downtown Presbyterian Church

1. Join us for Sunday Worship.

We have resumed in-person worship each Sunday at 11am. (*except for 12/26, which will be virtual only.*) Childcare is available during worship. We'd love to welcome you to DPC! Bring a friend and check us out!

2. Subscribe to the DPC newsletter & e-votion.

To get subscribed, email info@dpchurch.com. Each Monday we email an event-centric newsletter with committee updates, church activities, and more. The e-votion that is sent out on Fridays is your guide to the upcoming Sunday service, along with the weekly prayer list.

3. Like us on Facebook.

From our Facebook page, you can view services live on Sundays at 11am or catch up on previous services at your convenience. We also post announcements and share events for our Outreach Partner Organizations and more! Unfortunately, there are currently 2 Facebook pages for DPC. We are working on fixing the issue, but for now *double check you've got the right page when tagging DPC.*

4. Save your bulletins.

Your church bulletin is more than an order of worship. In the back of each week's bulletin, we have a list of upcoming events and activities. There's even a QR code you can scan that directs you to the digital calendar of upcoming events.

5. Grab a monthly calendar from the narthex.

We created a special paper calendar noting everything happening at DPC this month. Pick one up to stick on your fridge or take a pic to have on your phone. Committee meetings, special events, and worship services - it's all there on one handy page!

6. Bookmark our website - www.dpchurch.com.

We are working hard to get our website updated and revised to better meet the needs of the congregation. For starters, we are sprucing up the homepage & beefing up the calendar.

7. Get involved by volunteering or joining a committee.

We have a quick volunteer interest form on our webpage to help connect you with a committee, mission, ministry, or preferred area of service at DPC.

8. Utilize the DPC Directory.

Make sure your information is up to date in our new online membership directory. It's a handy resource for calling or sending letters to your church family members! For more information, or to get started, email info@dpchurch.com.

9. Follow @dpcnashville on Instagram and subscribe to our Youtube channel.

While we don't post on these accounts quite as regularly, these social media channels are still a great way to stay connected to DPC.

10. Check out The Browsing Room Gallery.



The Browsing Room is where we exhibit work curated by our Artists-in-Residence. It's open during the first Saturday of the month as part of the First-Bank First Saturday Art Crawl, and each Sunday morning. For extra credit, consider following @browsingroomgallery which is the Instagram account for DPC's art gallery.



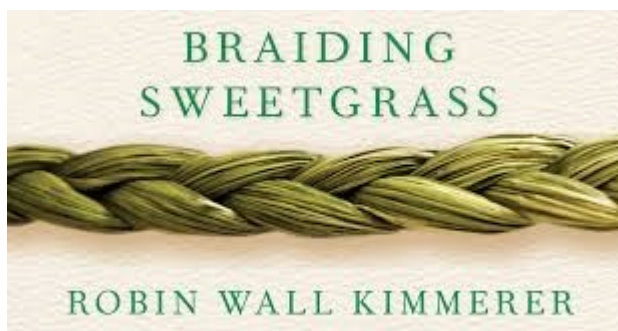
MERRY CHRISTMAS

To our church family:

*Scan here to view DPC's online calendar
& learn more about what we've got planned!*



Copies of the December
Calendar are available in
the narthex.



DPC Book Club: *Braiding Sweetgrass*
by Robin Wall Kimmerer

DPC's book club will meet on **Thursday, January 6th** at 6:30 p.m. via zoom.
We will be discussing *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Nursery Care Available for Sunday Worship

We are thankful to have nursery care available for Sunday mornings. Nursery care will be provided during the worship service for children through age 5. The nursery is located on the 2nd floor and is ready to welcome the youngest of DPC attendees.

Current Worship Procedures

For our full set of procedures please visit www.dpchurch.com under Events/ Covid Safety.

- To help encourage everyone to make full use of our wonderful sanctuary, we have roped off rows where we ask you not to sit. We hope this will help encourage more social distancing.
- When sitting in a socially distanced pew, you can remove your mask.
- If you are singing or moving about the sanctuary, we request that you wear a mask.
- If you are not yet vaccinated, we request that you wear a mask any time you are inside the church.
- Nursery workers will wear masks to help protect our youngest church attendees.

OUR MISSION

Gathering in the heart of Nashville, we are a community of disciples of Jesus Christ. We seek the welfare of the city as we seek the kingdom of God.

We are an historic church working to be a welcoming and inclusive congregation. Together we actively share God's grace and love through worship, education and service, and through being an active voice in promoting justice and peace in our community and the world.

OUR VALUES AND ETHOS

- Belief in God's love and in Christ's ministry
- The desire to welcome and embrace everyone. No exceptions.
- Service to God, service to our neighbors
- God's gift of creativity

SESSION 2021

Class of 2021

Jim Hoobler
David Maddox

Class of 2022

Erin Bell
Tom Byl
Jake Byl

Class of 2023

Tom Wills
Samera Zavaro
Leslee Hughes

THE CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Larissa Romero, Pastor
Dena Swoner, Office Manager
Paulino Jarquin, Maintenance Manager
Dr. William Taylor, Director of Music

Parking

Parking for Sunday worship is in the SP+ garage at **147 4th Ave. N.**

You must come down 4th from Church Street. Parking in this garage is complimentary from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Parking vouchers are necessary to exit the garage without having to pay. To get one, just ask one of our greeters.