



invited Home

Christmas Eve



THE DOWNTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Christmas Eve 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 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice arr. Kevin McChesney

DPC Handbell Choir

(Please meditate silently during the Opening Voluntary.)

WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: An unmarried teenage girl was invited—

P: to carry Christ into this world.

L: An ordinary carpenter was invited—

P: to be a father to a child unlike any other.

L: The shepherds were invited—

P: outcast and isolated, included at the manger.

L: The Magi were invited—

P: foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.

L: And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited—

P: then we can trust that we too are invited.

L: This story is for us.

P: This love is for us.

L: Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home.

P: Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

In God's house, there is hope—

For God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.

In God's house, there is peace—

For all that separates us from God falls away.

In God's house, there is joy—

Because God created music, and coffee, and dance floors, and laughter that is contagious, and endless rounds of peek-a-boos with babies; and if those things have God's fingerprints, then God's house surely exudes joy.

In God's house, there is love— Because God is love, from start to finish, and that love exists for us all. Light the candle of love.
And in the center of our hope,
In the center of our peace,
In the center of our joy,
In the center of our love, is God—who came to this earth to dwell among us.
So tonight we light the Christ candle, for God's love just could not stay away.
Welcome home. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN #132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”**

CALL TO CONFESSION

L: Every Sunday we pray a prayer of confession together. As a kid, I used to think that this was a time to air out all the things I did wrong—all the reasons I was a bad person. However, as I have grown, I have realized—that's not what this is. Instead, this is a small moment for all of us to pause and recognize that we aren't perfect, we are still works in progress, and we want God's help to grow. How powerful is that? Where else in the world does a group of people gather every week and say out loud: “I'm sorry. I want to grow. Help me get there.” So tonight as we pray, remember how powerful this is. This is one small way we accept God's invitation to deeper faith and life-changing love.
Let us pray together now . . .

P: Holy God,
You throw open the door and invite us into relationship, day in and day out. However, instead of running toward you, we dip our toes in the water of this faith. We hold our breath. We play it safe. We struggle to believe that a love so unfettered, so unfiltered, could be for us. As a result, we often deny this worth for ourselves and others. Forgive us for ignoring your invitation to be the people you call us to be. Forgive us for the ways in which we hold back from deeper connection to you or withhold your radical love from others.

(moment of silence)

Open our ears to not only hear your invitation, but to trust that this good news exists even for us. Gratefully we pray, amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: Family of faith,

Even when we fail to trust God's love,
and even when we fail to love others as we should,
God still loves us. That door never closes.

So hear and believe this good news:

P: God invites us into a life of faith. God loves us through every season of life. God forgives us when we lose our way and invites us deeper every step of the way. We are loved, invited, claimed, celebrated, and forgiven. Thanks be to God!

*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.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Encountering the Living Word of God

*Hymn #123 "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear"

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:1-20

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

PRAYER PRACTICE Sacred Imagination

SERMON "Invited into God's Home"

Responding to God's Word & Call

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

Adam Troxler, flute

The Sacrament of Communion

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

God of shepherds and angels,
God of starlight and seekers,
God of mangers and unwed teenage mothers:
It is almost Christmas. It's almost here.
We are close to home.

It feels like we have been waiting so long for this night. Amidst the hustle and bustle of this busy season, we have been waiting for a quiet, a calm, a stillness. We have been waiting for good news that changes us and for the undeniable sense that you are near. So in this moment, surrounded by community, in the presence of candle light and hallelujahs, we bow our heads and give thanks:

Thank you, God, for the places and people that feel like home. Thank you for the hope on the horizon which carries us through. Thank you for moments of worship that break open our hearts. Thank you for the joy of children on this night, which reminds us of love. And thank you for the stars in the sky which remind us of you. We have so much to be grateful for. However, even amidst our prayers of gratitude and joy, we also bring you prayers of concern. For when the music is quiet and the clouds clear, we can finally hear our own thoughts and see sky above us, and that is when there is enough space for hurt to float to the surface.

We lift up prayers this night for:

(the people lift their prayers aloud)

continued

We know we are close to home, God, but we also know we are not home yet and that truth aches in us. So many of us are still seeking, still looking for a place to belong, still searching for a faith that feels like home. We are closer to home, but we're not there yet. We are only truly home when we are with you. So God of starlight and angel choruses, on this Christmas Eve, as you come dwell among us, we pray that you would bring us closer to home. Scoop us up. Draw us in. Build the world you have in mind for us. Hover here. Hear our prayers. Take this grief and pain off of our shoulders and hold our hands as we walk through the dark. It is almost Christmas. It's almost here. We can feel it—we are close to home. So together, with hope in our hearts, we pray the prayer your son 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

Jesus was not born in a real home. He was born into poverty. He was born into simplicity. He was born into a manger in Bethlehem. And despite the little he might have had, Jesus still spent the rest of his days on earth giving to others. Generosity is in the DNA of our faith. We give what we can, not because we should or because scripture says to. We give because we're family. We give because we belong to one another. We give because all are invited into God's house. So let us give our tithes and our offerings now.

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

“And the Inn was Full”

Frances Williams

Mary and Joseph had traveled long, for the way was far o’er a rough terrain.

Mary was weary, and so they sought to rest in an inn in Bethlehem.

“The place is full” the keeper said as he turned away,

“Save for the cot in a stable stall, a place of straw and hay.”

“’Twas there that Mary laid down her head.

When behold the glory ‘round about a wondrous star shone bright as day,
Just o’er the place where Jesus lay.

The heavens rang, the angels sang praises, for Christ, the Lord, was born.

The wise men came, the shepherds too to worship the stranger
in Bethlehem’s manger.

The heavens rang, the angels sang praises, for Christ, the Lord, was born.

Olive A. Rees

*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*)

Gracious God, Your story is one that forever invites us to be our full selves, to take up space, to go where we feel called, and to allow this community to feel like home. So use these gifts to keep building your home here. With gratitude as tall as the ceiling, we pray. Amen.

Invitations & Announcements

*Candlelight Hymn #122 “Silent Night, Holy Night!”

*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 HYMN #134

“Joy to the World”

*Flowers for today's service were donated by
Irene and Ridley Wills in memory of Jesse Wills II.*

132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

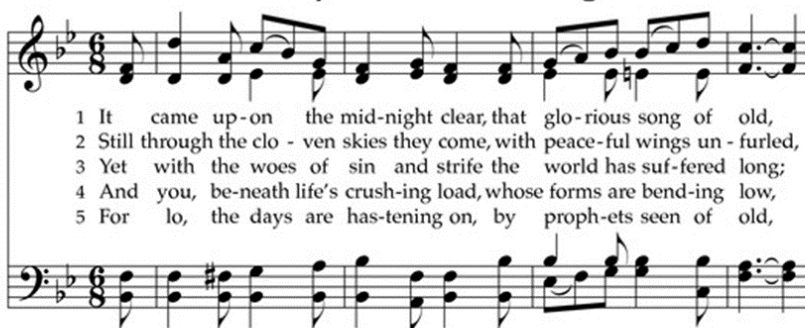
give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

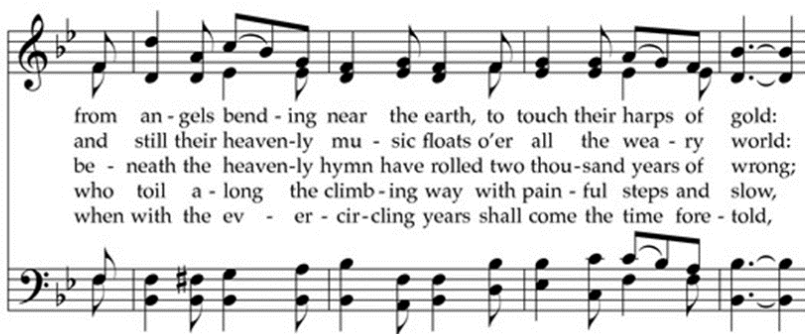
Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

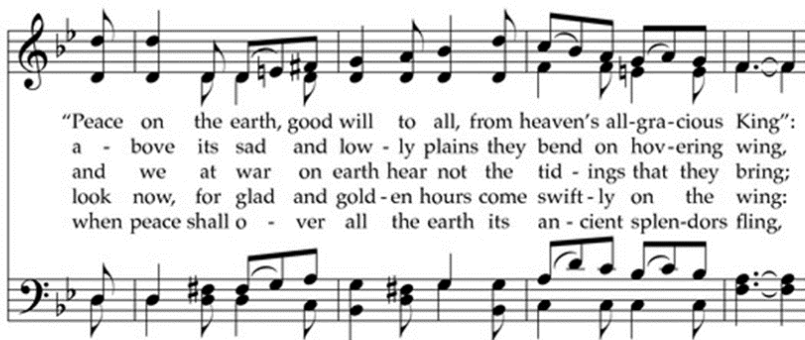
123 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
 2 Still through the clo-ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un-furled,
 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf-fered long;
 4 And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
 5 For lo, the days are has-tening on, by proph-ets seen of old,



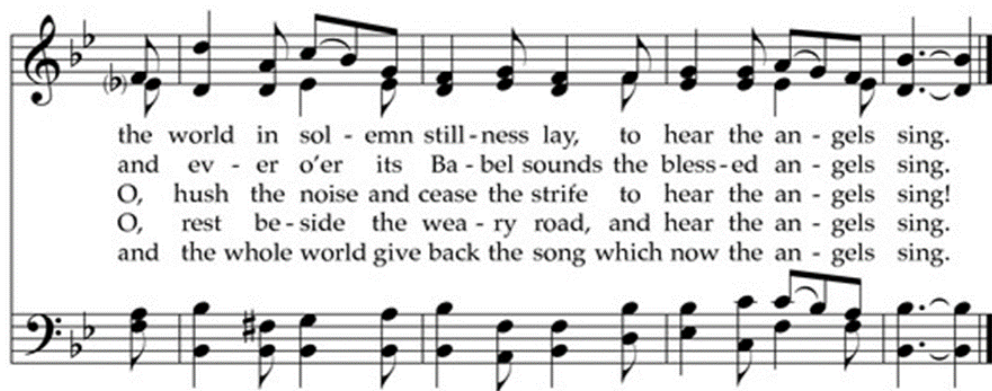
from an-gels bend-ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold;
 and still their heaven-ly mu-sic floats o'er all the wea-ry world;
 be-neath the heaven-ly hymn have rolled two thou-sand years of wrong;
 who toil a-long the climb-ing way with pain-ful steps and slow,
 when with the ev-er-cir-cling years shall come the time fore-told,



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gra-cious King":
 a-bove its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hov-ering wing,
 and we at war on earth hear not the tid-ings that they bring;
 look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing:
 when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,

The "it" of the first line of this text by a Unitarian minister does not refer to the birth of Jesus, but to "that glorious song of old," the angelic tidings of peace on earth. The restored third stanza laments how often the noise of human strife has obscured that message.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH



the world in sol - emn still - ness lay, to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the an - gels sing!
 O, rest be - side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing.
 and the whole world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Silent Night, Holy Night! 122

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
 4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
 glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
 ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

GERMAN

- 1 *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Alles schläft, einsam wacht
 nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
 Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
 schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
 schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!*

SPANISH

- 1 *¡Noche de paz, noche de amor!
 Todo duerme en derredor,
 entre los astros que esparcen su luz,
 bella, anunciando al niño Jesús,
 brilla la estrella de paz,
 brilla la estrella de paz.*

KOREAN

- 1 고요한밤 거룩한밤
 어둠에 묻힌밤
 주의부모 앉아서
 감사기도 드릴때
 아기잘도 잔다
 아기잘도 잔다

The tradition that this carol's tune was created for guitar accompaniment at its first singing on Christmas Eve 1818 seems reliable, though a recent find shows that the text was about two years old. But there is no question that this is now a favorite Christmas carol worldwide.

134

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heaven and na - ture sing,

and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing,

While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it "The Messiah's coming and kingdom." So "the Lord" here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.



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.



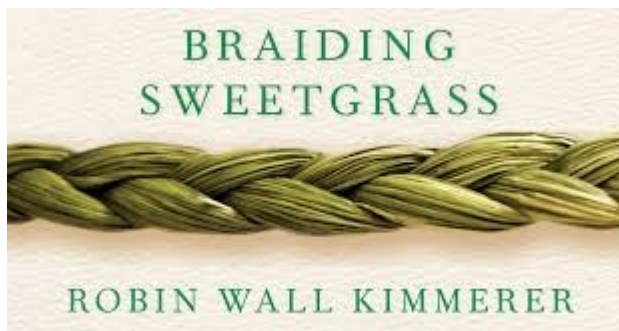
MERRY CHRISTMAS

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.