



# GRACE COVENANT

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship December 31, 2023 9:30am  
First Sunday of Christmas

### Gathering

SONG TO GATHER

“Make Room”

by Casting Crowns

ALL

**A family hiding from the storm ~ Found no place at the keeper's door  
It was for this a Child was born ~ To save a world so cold and hollow  
The sleeping town, they did not know that lying in a manger low  
A Savior King who had no home has come to heal our sorrows  
Is there room in your heart? Is there room in your heart?  
Is there room in your heart for God to write his story?**

**Shepherds counting sheep at night do not fear the glory light  
You are precious in his sight ~ God has come to raise the lowly  
Is there room in your heart? Is there room in your heart?  
Is there room in your heart for God to write his story?**

**You can come as you are, but it may set you apart  
When you make room in your heart and trade your dreams for his glory  
Make room in your heart ~ Make room in your heart**

**A mother holds the promise tight ~ Every wrong will be made right  
The road is straight, the burden's light for in his hands, he holds tomorrow  
Is there room in your heart? Is there room in your heart?  
Is there room in your heart for God to write his story?  
You can come as you are, but it may set you apart  
When you make room in your heart and trade your dreams for his glory**

**Make room in your heart ~ Make room in your heart  
Make room in your heart ~ Make room in your heart**

WELCOME

Rev. Karen Wright

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

**ONE:** God is here! The Messiah has come!

**ALL:** **We open our eyes to see him and lift our hearts to worship him.**

**ONE:** We have come to exalt the name of Jesus,

**ALL:** **our Savior and King, and to bring glory to God!**

**\*SONG TO PRAISE**

**"Light of the World"**

by We the Kingdom

**All**

**Light of the world, treasure of heaven, brilliant like the stars in the wintery sky.**

**Joy of the Father, reach through the darkness**

**Shine across the earth send the shadows to flight.**

**Light of the World, from the beginning,  
the tragedies of time were no match for your love.**

**From great heights of glory, you saw my story.**

**God, you entered in and became one of us.**

**Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah for the things he has done.**

**Come and adore him, bow down before him, sing hallelujah to the Light of the World!**

**Light of the World, crown in a manger. Born for the cross to suffer, to save.**

**High king of heaven, death is the poorer. We are the richer by the price that he paid.**

**Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah for the things he has done.**

**Come and adore him, bow down before him, sing hallelujah to the Light of the World!**

**Light of the world soon will be coming with fire in his eyes he will ransom his own.**

**Through clouds he will lead us straight into glory.**

**And there he shall reign forever more!**

**Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah for the things he has done.**

**Come and adore him, bow down before him, sing hallelujah to the Light of the World!**

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

*(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O God, we need Christ to renew our commitment. We confess that our lack of faith has made us fearful. May your angels sing again to us of peace for body and soul. We acknowledge that we have foolishly let our desires lead us astray. May your star once more set our course firmly in your direction. We have turned our faith into a lifeless ritual. May your manger call us again to expressions of love and devotion. We have carefully kept our gifts and have not freely given our goods and our hearts to you. May the Magi show us the spirit of giving. Lord, may your Spirit linger in our hearts and bring renewal in our lives. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

### SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

**ONE:** May the peace of Christ be with you.

**ALL:** And also with you and all others!

### \*SONG OF PEACE

"Christmas Halleluia"

by Cohen/Cloverton

All

**I've heard about this baby boy who's come to earth to bring us joy**

**And I just want to sing this song to you**

**It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth ~ The minor fall, the major lift**

**With every breath, I'm singing Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**A star shone bright up in the East, to Bethlehem, the wise men three**

**Came many miles and journeyed long for you.**

**And to the place at which you were their frankincense and gold and myrrh**

**They gave to you and cried out Hallelujah!**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**I know you came to rescue me, this baby boy will grow to be  
a man and one day die for me and you.  
My sins would drive the nails in you that rugged cross was my cross too  
Still every breath you drew was Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

## Equipping

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 61:10–62:3 (NRSVue)

Nathan Littlejohn

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;  
my whole being shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn  
and her salvation like a burning torch.  
The nations shall see your vindication  
and all the kings your glory,  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will give.  
You shall be a beautiful crown in the hand of the Lord  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

### SONG TO REFLECT

“Rose in Bethlehem”

by Selah

Praise Team

*There's a Rose in Bethlehem with a beauty quite divine  
Perfect in this world of sin on this silent, holy night  
There's a fragrance much like hope that it sends upon the wind  
Reaching out to every soul from a lowly manger's crib*

*Oh, Rose of Bethlehem ~ how lovely, pure and sweet  
Born to glorify the Father ~ Born to wear the thorns for me*

*There's a Rose in Bethlehem colored red like mercy's blood  
It's the flower of our faith ~ It's the blossom of God's love  
Though its bloom is fresh with youth, surely what will be he knows  
For a tear of morning dew is rolling down the Rose*

*Oh, Rose of Bethlehem ~ how lovely, pure and sweet  
Born to glorify the Father ~ Born to wear the thorns for me  
There's a Rose in Bethlehem with a beauty quite divine  
Perfect in this world of sin on this silent, holy night*

*Oh, Rose of Bethlehem ~ how lovely, pure and sweet  
Born to glorify the Father ~ Born to wear the thorns for me*

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 2:22–40 (NRSVue)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word,  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words  
**Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“And Jesus Was a Teenager”

Rev. Karen Wright

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

SONG FOR GIVING

“Joy Unto the World”

Praise Team/**ALL**

*It was a silent night, a holy night when all the world was sleeping  
In a little town, on lowly ground, no one knew what was coming  
In a manger, we would find our humble King  
All creation held its breath when suddenly*

**Your light came breaking through the darkness, waking every heart with  
Heaven singing joy unto the world  
Our long-awaited Savior, you will reign forever  
We are singing joy unto the world**

*Hope is here, so lift your eyes and see his glory and splendor  
Son of God, love's pure light, we come before you in wonder  
In a manger, we have found our mighty King  
All creation held its breath when suddenly*

**Your light came breaking through the darkness, waking every heart with  
Heaven singing joy unto the world  
Our long-awaited Savior, you will reign forever  
We are singing joy unto the world**

## Sending

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

#### \*SONG TO SEND

*“Joy Unto the World” (continued)*

**All**

**Joy to the world! The Lord has come!**

**Let earth receive her King**

**Let every heart prepare him room**

**And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing**

**And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing**

**All heaven and nature sing**

**Your light came breaking through the darkness, waking every heart with**

**Heaven singing joy unto the world**

**Our long-awaited Savior, you will reign forever**

**We are singing joy unto the world**

**Joy unto the world**

**Joy unto the world**

### GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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