

CHURCH SESSION

Class of 2023

Rosemary Gordon
Sharon Ragghianti
Becky Stirling

Class of 2024

Akwi Lillian Aseh
Susie Hayes
Janet Wawter
Moderator: John Michael Krech
Clerk: Becky Stirling
Treasurer: Jere Lawson

Class of 2025

Jere Lawson
John Price
Matthew Smith

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	John Michael Krech, jmkrech@yahoo.com
Organist/Choirmaster	Susan Steppe, susansteppe@comcast.net
Director Tech. Services/Instrumental Music	Bob Vawter, bvawter@bellsouth.net
Director of Children & Youth Ministry	Cristaldawn Smith, revmiss2002@yahoo.com
Nursery Attendants	Kathe Walker & Judy Thigpun
Financial Administrator/Admin Asst.	Betsy Lewis, eaclewis@yahoo.com
Sexton	Scott Hunter
Director of Grace Pres. Child Care	Jill Bailey, childcare@grace-pres.org

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Please consider Grace Presbyterian Church in your estate planning.



Grace Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA),
Presbytery of the Mid-South, Synod of Living Waters.

Grace Presbyterian Church

Worships God at 11:00 a.m.

December 31, 2023

First Sunday of Christmas/Epiphany Observed

The Bell Calls Us to Worship

Prelude O Come, O Come, Emmanuel & Angels We Have Heard on High
Grace Notes Hand Bell Choir Arr. Sondra Tucker

Organ Voluntary

Star in the East
William Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835; Arr. Susan Steppe

The congregation stands to sing

Hymn 56 The First Nowell The First Nowell

Opening Sentences

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,
People: **The Maker of heaven and earth.**
Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: **And also with you.**
Pastor: Let us pray.

Prayer for the Day (spoken by the pastor; the congregation joining the Amen.)

Almighty God, you wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature. In your mercy let us share the divine life of Jesus Christ, who came to share our humanity and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

The congregation sits.

We Sing the Good News of the Birth of Jesus

Hymn 22 Angels, from the Realms of Glory Regent Square

Hymn 34 In Bethlehem a Babe Was Born Discovery

Please stand to sing stanza 3 of Hymn 34

Pastor: The peace of Christ be always with you.
People: **And also with you.**

Passing of the Peace (Worshippers safely greet one another with the peace of Christ, and then sit for the announcements.)

Welcome and Announcements

The children bring their ringing offering and come to the Chrismon tree for a
Time for Young Christians

Hymn 36 In the Bleak Midwinter Cranham
Hymn 275 God of Our Life Sandon

Prayer for Illumination
Old Testament

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 72:1-7,10a,11-12 Unison

Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son.
May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people
and the hills in righteousness.
May he defend the cause of the poor among the people,
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.
May he live while the sun endures,
as long as the moon through all generations.
May he be like the rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
In his days may righteousness flourish,
and peace abound until the moon is no more.
May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute.
May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service,
for he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.

Anthem What Child Is This arr. Michale Shiragawa
Rickie Cooke, baritone horn; Susan Steppe, piano

Epistle Galatians 4:4-7

The congregation stands to sing

Hymn 63 As with Gladness Men of Old Dix
The congregation sits.

Gospel Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon The Guidance of the Light of Christ Mike Krech
“When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.” Matthew 2:10

The congregation stands to sing

Hymn 68 What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright Puer Nobis Nascitur
Apostles' Creed Unison; Hymnal, page 14, Traditional
Gloria in Excelsis Refrain of Hymn 23 Gloria
The congregation sits.

Pastoral Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession, and Dedication

The Lord's Prayer (debts/debtors) Unison; Hymnal, page 16, Traditional

Offertory Sentence

Offertory Bring We the Frankincense of Our Love
H. Kenn Carmichael; arr. John Weaver

The congregation stands to sing the

Doxology 592 Old Hundredth

Benediction

Hymn 40 Joy to the World Antioch

Worshippers are encouraged to be seated for the postlude,
or you may depart the sanctuary quietly and quickly now if necessary.

Postlude On the tune Gloria arr. Jason D. Payne

Welcome to worship at Grace Presbyterian Church.

Today is the first Sunday of Christmas, and we are focusing upon the visit of the Magi to the Child Jesus, associated with Epiphany in the Western Church (Roman Catholic and Protestant).
JMK

Hymn Texts for Online Worship

The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they a-keeping their sheep, On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light, And so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)

And by the light of that same star, Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent, And to follow the star wherever it went. (Refrain)

This star drew nigh to the northwest; O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay, Right over the place where Jesus lay. (Refrain)

Then entered in those wise men three, Fell reverently upon their knee,
And offer there in His presence, Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. (Refrain)

Then let us all with one accord Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of nought, And with His blood our life hath
bought. (Refrain)

Text: English carol, 17th century;

Tune: THE FIRST NOWELL; English carol' Sandy's *Christmas Carols*, 1833

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

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 new-born King.

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night,

God with us is now residing, Yonder shines the infant light:

Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ the new-born 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 new-born 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 new-born King.

Text: Stanzas 1-3, James Montgomery, 1816,1825; Stanza 4, *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857

Tune: REGENT SQUARE, Henry Thomas Smart, 1867

In Bethlehem a Babe Was Born

In Bethlehem a Babe was born With love enough for all.
While kingdoms slept, the Lord came down To grace a manger stall.
And with a glorious light Angels appeared that night,
Singing, "Come, come, Christ is born! Come, come, world forlorn,
The Child of peace and sacrifice is waiting to be found."

Royalty and shepherds came To worship from afar,
Guided through the long cold night By one persistent star.
As each beheld the Son, Strangers became as one,
Singing, "Come, come, Christ is born! Come, come, world forlorn,
The Child of peace and sacrifice is waiting to be found."

The mystery of Bethlehem Was long ago, they say,
But, miracle of miracles, The Baby lives today
In each new heart that hears Love coming through the years,
Singing, "Come, come, Christ is born! Come, come, world forlorn,
The Child of peace and sacrifice is waiting to be found."

Text: Barbara Mays, 1986;

Tune: DISCOVERY; Barbara Mays, 1986; Harm. John Weaver, 1988

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the bleak midwinter, Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow.
In the bleak midwinter, Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him, Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away When He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter A stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim Thronged the air.
But His mother only, In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved With a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him, Give my heart.

Text: Christina Rossetti, 1872; alt.

Tune: CRANHAM; Gustav Theodore Holst, 1906

God of Our Life

God of our life, through all the circling years, We trust in Thee;
In all the past, through all our hopes and fears, Thy hand we see.
With each new day, when morning lifts the veil,
We own Thy mercies, Lord, which never fail.

God of the past, our times are in Thy hand; With us abide.
Lead us by faith to hope's true promised land; Be Thou our guide.
With Thee to bless, the darkness shines as light,
And faith's fair vision changes into sight.

God of the coming years, through paths unknown We follow Thee.
When we are strong, Lord, leave us not alone; Our refuge be.
Be Thou for us in life our daily bread,
Our heart's true home when all our years have sped.

Text: Hugh Thomson Kerr, 1916; alt. 1928;

Tune: SANDON; Charles Henry Purday, 1860; Harm. John Weaver, 1986

As with Gladness Men of Old

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 Lord, may we Evermore be led to Thee.

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

As they offered gifts most rare At that manger 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 heavenly 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.

Text: William Chatterton Dix, c. 1858;

Tune: DIX; Conrad Kocher, 1838; Abr. William Henry Monk, 1861;

Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright

What star is this with beams so bright, More lovely than the noonday light?
'Tis sent to announce a newborn King, Glad tidings of our God to bring.

'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed, "From Jacob shall a star proceed";
And lo! the Eastern sages stand To read in heaven the Lord's command.

O Jesus, while the star of grace Impels us on to seek Your face,
Let not our slothful hearts refuse The guidance of Your light to use.

To God the Father, God the Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in one,
May every tongue and nation raise An endless song of thankful praise.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1736; Trans. John Chandler, 1837, alt;

Tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR; Trier ms., 15th century;

Adapt Michael Praetorius, 1609; Harm. George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1910

Joy to the World!

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns: Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Tune: ANTIOCH; Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742; Arr. Lowell Mason, 1836