ORDER OF SERVICE

GATHERED BY GOD FOR WORSHIP

Welcome
Call to Worship
Malachi 3:1-4
Songs of Praise
Joy to the World
Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Prayer of Adoration

RENEWED BY GOD THROUGH GRACE

Confession of Sin
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Colossians 1:11-14
Songs of Renewal & Gratitude
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In Christ Alone

SET APART BY GOD

Offering
Sermon
The Lord’s Supper
Profession of Faith
The Apostle’s Creed

SENT BY GOD

Song of Response
What Child Is This?
Blessing
CALL TO WORSHIP

1 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.”

- Malachi 3:1-4 (English Standard Version)

SONGS

JOY TO THE WORLD  (Words and Music by George Frideric Handel and Isaac Watts)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King; let ev’ry heart prepare Him room.
And heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing.
And heav’n and heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy.
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING  (Words by Charles Wesley / Music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy)

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild; God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem.”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King.”

(Continued on next page)
**CONFESSION OF SIN**

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

- Colossians 3:5-8 (English Standard Version)

**DECLARATION OF GRACE**

11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- Colossians 1:11-14 (English Standard Version)
O COME O COME EMMANUEL
(Words and Music by Chris Tomlin and Louie Giglio, 2003)
O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel;
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save, and give them victory o’er the grave.
O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

IN CHRIST ALONE  (Words and Music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, 2002)
In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease.
My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied.
For every sin on Him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
Then, bursting forth in glorious Day, up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory, sin’s curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me;
From life’s first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I’ll stand!
**SCRIPTURE**

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- Matthew 1:18-25 (English Standard Version)

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS** (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What is a favorite journey or trip you have gone on? What sort of unexpected events happened on that trip? How did they impact your journey or trip?
- What sort of hopes and plans do people make when they are engaged? How might they be similar or different to the plans that Mary and Joseph were making?
- How do you think Mary felt when she heard she was going to bear and give birth to Jesus, the Son of God?
- Read Luke 1:26-38 - Look at Mary’s words and responses. What did she feel and say?
- How do you think Mary was able to conclude this interaction with the angel with her words in Luke 1:38, “Behold, I am a servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”
- Read Mary’s song, Luke 1:46-55. What strikes you about Mary’s song of praise? What brings you joy?
- How can you stir up the wonder and joy of Jesus’ birth in this Christmas season?
- What might it look like for you to take steps of joyful service over these next days and weeks?
Mary: Joyful Servant of the Lord on an Unexpected Journey
Matthew 1:18-25

Mary’s story takes her on an unexpected journey of joyful service to the Lord…
(Luke 1:38)

God calls us to joyful service through the unexpected journeys of our lives…

Mary: An UNEXPECTED Journey (Matthew 1:18-19)
• Non-Customary Betrothal (Matthew 1:18-19)
• Unplanned Pregnancy (Luke 1:26-34)
• Unexpected journey to Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-5)

Mary: SERVANT of the Lord... (Matthew 1:20-23; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35-38, 48)

Mary: REJOICING in the gift of Jesus the Savior... (Matthew 1:24-25; Luke 1:46-55)
In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The custom of betrothal was different from “engagement” in modern society. Customarily the parents of a young man chose a young woman to be engaged to their son. A second stage of betrothal involved official arrangements and a prenuptial agreement before witnesses, which was a legally binding contract and could be broken only by a formal process of divorce…Betrothed partners were referred to as husband and “wife” (v. 20), though they were not yet considered to be married, and having sexual relations during that period was considered immoral.

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.
PROFESSION OF FAITH: THE APOSTLE’S CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
   Maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
   who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
   and born of the virgin Mary.
   He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
   was crucified, died, and was buried;
   he descended into hell.
   The third day he rose again from the dead.
   He ascended into heaven
   and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
   From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
   the holy catholic* church,
   the communion of saints,
   the forgiveness of sins,
   the resurrection of the body,
   and the life everlasting. Amen.

* (“catholic” means “world-wide” in scope rather than regional or sectarian)

READINGS

SONGS

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
(Words: Trad. English Carol / Music: Greensleeves, English melody)

What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

   This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
   Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him; The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.

   Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby:
   Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

   Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:
   Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary.
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: One family-friendly worship service at 6pm on Friday, December 24th. Come join us!

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDIES: New Bible studies for men and women begin in January. Registration open now. See the insert in today’s bulletin, or valleysprings.org for details.

STEPHEN MINISTRY TRAINING: Stephen Ministry provides confidential, Christ-centered care to individuals in the congregation and community who are experiencing life difficulties. A Stephen Ministry training class will begin in January 2022. This training is valuable for all relationships and is available for the entire congregation. The training requires weekly attendance, but there is no obligation to become a Stephen Minister. For more information, contact Laurie Whiddon: lauriewhiddon@yahoo.com.

WE’RE HIRING: Valley Springs is looking for a Preschool Assistant Teacher (M-Th 8:30am-12:30pm). Inquire for details on qualifications and requirements. To apply, contact: Christian Savage (christian@valleysprings.org).

For more information, visit www.valleysprings.org

OUR MISSION
Valley Springs Presbyterian Church is an intergenerational community of grace, learning to love God, and serve our world, together.

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