

***THE DOXOLOGY #965** "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

—Words by Thomas Ken; Music by Louis Bourgeois

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

***HYMN #80** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

— We Are Sent in Christ's Name —

***BENEDICTION**

Never put your faith in worldly status,
 and never underestimate your heavenly importance.
 Let your soul magnify the Lord,
 and your spirit rejoice in God, your Savior.
Amen.

***POSTLUDE** "Go Tell it on the Mountain"

—Traditional Spiritual; Arranged by Mark Hayes

As you leave
 Second, live each
 day by leaving a
 meaningful legacy
 for your life: be
 rich toward God.

For those desiring childcare, the nursery is available during the service for children five years of age and younger. In addition, there is a "family room" available at the back of the sanctuary.

If you have a prayer request, please fill out a prayer request form (found in the friendship register) and place it in the offering plate. We will include your request in the bulletin for a month, unless you request for us to leave it in longer.

STAFF

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Helen Pribesh, Parish Cook		
Barbara Watson, Housekeeper		

Our pastor since 2010, Dr. Craig Wansink received his Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University, after having graduated from seminary in Chicago, and having studied at universities in Japan, Jordan, Germany, and Israel. Since 1993 he has been a Professor of Religious Studies at Virginia Wesleyan University, where he also serves as the Joan P. and Macon F. Brock, Jr. Director of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom. Craig is married to Nancy Chapman, and his two children—Katrina and Teddy—are college students.

Rev. Catherine Hart Monroe, our Covenant Associate Pastor for Discipleship & Spiritual Formation, received her M.Div. from Union Presbyterian Seminary. Catherine also serves as the chaplain for University Presbyterian Ministries at Old Dominion University. She and her husband, Chuck, live in Norfolk with their three children, Whitley, Hart, and Alden.

Isaac Thomas, our Pastor of Music, Outreach, and Technology, joined the SPC staff in 2014. He received his education at John Brown University and The University of Texas at Arlington. He is a published composer and has served as conductor for contemporary Christian recording artists Twila Paris and Fernando Ortega. He is a graduate of Dubuque Theological Seminary via the Commissioned Lay Pastor program. Additionally, he completed a six-week piano course through The Juilliard School under the instruction of Dr. Michael Shinn, Chair of Keyboard Studies.

The First Christmas Carols

"Love, the Lowly, and the Song of Mary"

Second Presbyterian Church, December 23, 2018



Whether we are old or young, whether we are first-time or longtime worshipers, whether we come full of doubts or confidence, joy, or sorrow, in this place we all are family, because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. Welcome!

“When a person is mesmerized by the beauty of the music or tranquillized by the smoothness of the poetry, a person fails to perceive how radical and revolutionary the song of Mary actually is.”
—Edward F. Markquart

In *Here I Stand*, Roland Bainton writes that Martin Luther saw three miracles in Christ’s nativity: God became human, a virgin conceived, and Mary believed. In Luther’s mind, the greatest was the last.

—*We Gather in God’s Name* —

GATHERING MUSIC “*Mary, Did You Know?*”—Music by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene

WELCOME

***THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

The peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.
Greet your neighbor with the peace of Christ.

RINGING THE CHIMES

HANDBELL PRELUDE “*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*”
—14th century carol; Arranged by Sandra Eithun
Featuring Wendy Horner, Mary Meister, Joe Morgan, Nancy Morgan, Helen Pribesh, and Sandra Stearns

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Luke 1: 46-50)
Our souls magnify the Lord!
Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!
For God offers new life; from generation to generation God gives mercy.
Let us worship God.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES
Today we light the first, second, third, and fourth candles of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. The first candle is hope, the second candle is peace, the third candle is joy, and the fourth candle is love.
Jesus said to his disciples, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34)
Let us pray: Loving God, your mercy and compassion endure forever.
Open our hearts, that we may receive your love; and following the example of your Son, spread that love to a love-starved world. Through Jesus Christ, who loved us to the end. Amen.

***HYMN #76** “*O Come All Ye Faithful*”

***CONFESSION OF SIN** (inspired by Luke 1: 46-55)
Holy God, you promise to do great things for us, yet we do not trust you. You extend your mercy to us, yet we do not trust you. You lift up the humble, you fill the hungry with good things, and yet we still do not trust you. Forgive us, and help us to trust in the promises you have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

***MUSICAL RESPONSE #88** (vs. 4, first 2 lines only) “*O Little Town of Bethlehem*”
—Words by Phillips Brooks; Music by Lewis H. Redner
***O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.***

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Our soul magnifies the Lord! Our spirit rejoices in God our Savior! There is no place we can go where God is not with us. There is nothing we can do that will cause God to abandon us. There is no darkness where God’s light cannot shine.
We are loved, forgiven, and restored. We are challenged to go forth and live into this Good News. Amen.

— *We Hear the Word* —

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHRISTMAS PLAY “God With Us: A Nativity Play”

CHORAL ANTHEM “*Almost There*”
—Words and Music by Michael W. Smith, Wes King and Amy Grant;
Arranged by Heather Sorenson

Mary, full of innocence, carrying the Holy Prince, you’re almost there, you’re almost there. Mother of the Living Word, trusting in the voice you heard, you’re almost there, you’re almost there. You’re almost where the angels see redemption’s plan unfolding. All hope is in the Son you’ll bear; you’re almost there. A lonely road, a willing heart, prayer for strength to do your part; you’re almost there, you’re almost there. Trust the Father to provide, Bread of Heaven prophesied; you’re almost there, you’re almost there. You’re almost where the waiting ends, delivering the Life within, the answered prayer, Emmanuel; you’re almost there. You’re almost where the journey ends, where death will die and life begins, the answered prayer, Emmanuel; You’re almost, almost there. You’re almost where the waiting ends, delivering the Life within, the answered prayer, Emmanuel; You’re almost there. You’re almost where your journey ends, where death will die and life begins, the answered prayer, Emmanuel; You’re almost there.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:46-55 (page 57; large print, page 69-70)

A TIME FOR ADULTS “Love, the Lowly, and the Song of Mary” —Dr. Craig Wansink

HYMN #95 “*What Child is This?*”

—*We Respond to God’s Word* —

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER
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

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING: THE SHARING OF OUR LIVES AND GIFTS

OFFERTORY “*Breath of Heaven*” (*Mary’s Song*)—Words and Music by Amy Grant and Chris Eaton
Featuring Suellen White, Soprano
I have traveled many moonless nights, cold and weary with a babe inside, and I wonder what I’ve done. Holy Father, you have come, and chosen me now to carry your Son. I am waiting in a silent prayer. I am frightened by the load I bear. In a world as cold as stone, must I walk this path alone? Be with me now. Be with me now. Breath of heaven, hold me together, be forever near me, breath of heaven. Breath of heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness, for you are holy. Breath of heaven. Do you wonder as you watch my face, if a wiser one should have had my place? But I offer all I am for the mercy of your plan. Help me be strong. Help me be. Help me. (Repeat refrain)

“During this festive Christ-Centered Season, find space to let God be born in your world. Carve out a few precious moments and listen for angels singing. Take a step back and see all that you already possess, your health, your family, and your faith, and then let God use them for a noble purpose.”
—Steve Gedon

“Gabriel twice refers to Mary as ‘blessed.’ Yet Mary, God’s favored one, was blessed with having a child out of wedlock who would later be executed as a criminal. Acceptability, prosperity, and comfort have never been the essence of God’s blessing.”
—Alan Culpepper