



*Grounded in the grace of God, we are a
vibrant Christian community, disciples of all ages,
gathered for worship and nurture, scattered to serve and to love.*
MPC Mission Statement adopted by the Session March 31, 2008

WORSHIP for JANUARY 16, 2022
SECOND SUNDAY
after EPIPHANY

GATHERING

PRELUDE — *Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart* - Frederick Atkinson

Yun Kang

CALL to WORSHIP

Elizabeth Lester-Abdalla

One: O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! We gather to praise you!

All: When we look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established, we are overwhelmed.

One: O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! We gather to celebrate you!

All: Who are we that you are mindful of us? Who are we that you bother with us at all?

One: O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! We gather to worship you!

All: Who are we? We are yours. Let us worship God together.

HYMN — *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

ST. DENIO

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.*

*Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light.
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight.
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!*

PRAYER of CONFESSION -

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

Merciful God, you have made us in your image, and yet we reject the call to be yours. You have created us and called us “very good,” and yet we focus on all that the world says isn’t “very good” about us. Instead of focusing on our goodness and wholeness in you, we turn to the world to tell us who we are and what matters most about us. We allow the world to dictate our value and to tell us who we are and all the ways we could be better. Forgive us, O God, for failing to rest in your truth that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Forgive us, O God, for seeking our worth in the world, rather than resting in the gift of your grace and your love.

SILENT PRAYERS of CONFESSION

Here each worshiper may offer silent prayers of confession.

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

One: Hear the good news: The Lord is faithful in all God’s words and deeds. The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. Let us rest in the assurance of God’s grace and God’s love and together, let us proclaim the good news of the Gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

RESPONSE to GOD’S GRACE — *Glory to the Father*

GLORIA PATRI

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

LITURGY of the WORD

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING — *Psalm 8*

One: O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

All: **When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?**

One: Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

All: **You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,**

One: All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

All: **O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING — Selections from *Genesis 1*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; And it was so. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind...God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

And It Was Very Good

Pastor Rachel Rhodes

HYMN — *For the Beauty of the Earth*

DIX

*For the beauty of the earth for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies:
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

*For thyself, best gift divine to the world so freely given;
for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven:
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

AFFIRMATION of FAITH — *Apostles' Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

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.

S E N D I N G

HYMN — *God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens*

HOLY MANNA

*God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place,
flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space,
we, your children in your likeness, share inventive powers with you.*

Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.

*As each for horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew,
children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you.
May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor well begun.*

Great Creator, give us guidance till our goals and yours are one.

POSTLUDE — *A Trumpet Fancy* - Leon Nelson

QUESTIONS for REFLECTION

- How does the world try to convince you to deny your goodness?
- How might you allow God to help you write a different narrative?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Please note all announcements for Sunday bulletins are due by noon the Tuesday before they are to be published. Please email announcements to Bulletin@MPCusa.net.*

JOIN US IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN!

Have you been considering joining Bible Study but haven't wanted to jump in midstream? Now is the perfect time to join us! Starting Wednesday, January 12 at noon, we'll be taking the plunge into the Gospel of John, and we hope you'll consider joining us for this new adventure in the new year.

EVERYONE is welcome—this includes people who read the Bible and commentaries regularly, as well as people who don't even know what a commentary is. We are learning and growing together and we have a lot of fun doing it! Our Bible Study meets every Wednesday from noon-1:00 p.m. And at least for the month of January, we will be meeting over Zoom. We hope you'll make this part of your New Year's resolution and carve out a part of your week to study God's word among friends. Following our Bible Study each week, folks are also welcome to stay for our weekly prayer meeting that meets for about 15-20 minutes. If you would like to attend Brown Bag & Bible Study (or are at least interested enough to check it out for a couple of weeks), please contact Pastor Rachel at rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net. We'd love to have you!

BOOK DISTRIBUTION UPDATED NEEDS AND REQUESTS:

Cold weather is bringing changes, but we are still finding ways to continue to distribute books. We have depleted the reserves of dictionaries and Bibles so if you have copies of either item, we can distribute them immediately. Currently, 90% of the books taken are those read by children under the age of 5. Almost no books (except Harry Potter and Lemony Snicket) for children above the third grade are taken. We have great interest in children's books on dinosaurs, trucks, "Disney Princesses" (including Pinkalicious, Dora, etc.). New coloring books are always welcome. Adults take current best sellers (published within the past couple of years), cookbooks, religious books, and Civil War books.

If you have books that fall outside of the above categories, you will find Good Stuff on Route 1 will usually take them. The Salvation Army and Good Will, a short distance away from Good Stuff, also take books.

For the time being, please do not drop off large used toys. There is no place to store them while we wait for the weather to warm up and the handling of them is too time consuming for the current volunteers. If we decide to add toys we will need a separate volunteer to handle this category. If you are interested in working with donated toys, please contact Susan Light at susanklight@gmail.com. Thank you for your generous and cheerful support.

MANY THANKS

The Deacons would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who filled bags with toiletries and/or donated money to this year's Angel Tree project! It was an incredible success and exceeded our goal of 100 bags—we collected 130 toiletry bags for the Food Center Clients! Included in the Ziploc bag was the list of products collected, information about MPC including the address, phone number and website, and an angel blessing assuring our clients that God loves them. The Food Center will start distributing these care bags to our clients this month. Again, thanks so much for the wonderful outpouring of generosity!

MPC STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thanks to your support of MPC, we surpassed pledge budget estimates for 2021 by nearly \$30,000. The momentum of stewardship at our church pushes us into 2022 as we continue to receive pledge cards. God is working in us, God is tugging at our hearts. We know this because 35% of members increased their pledge for 2022; 4% of members doubled their pledge; nearly 100% of members who joined MPC in the last three years pledged; and the average pledge increased by over \$200. These funds will enable us to sustain spirit-giving, hope-giving, life-giving ministries into the future. Thanks be to God! When we all respond to God in gratitude for all God has given us, it will always be enough. Amen and Amen and Amen.

MPC *Weekly Calendar**

SUNDAY, January 16			THURSDAY, January 20		
10:30 a.m. Worship Service		Livestream	Noon	Alcoholics Anonymous	Room 220
MONDAY, January 17			FRIDAY, January 21		
<i>Church office closed</i>			7:00 p.m.	AA Meeting	Room 220
3:00 p.m.	Youth Club	Off Site	SATURDAY, January 22		
TUESDAY, January 18			SUNDAY, January 23		
6:30 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous	Room 220	10:30 a.m. Worship Service		Sanctuary
WEDNESDAY, January 19			10:30	Worship Service	Livestream
Noon	Brown Bag & Bible Study	via Zoom			

* Please note that some events listed on the calendar may be cancelled, moved to another location, or be held virtually due to COVID restrictions at MPC. Please contact the leaders of the organizations for updated information.

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