

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Christmas Day

December 25, 2011

✠ GATHERING ✠

PRAYER OF PREPARATION (silent prayer)

O God, before whom mountains melt like wax, the earth trembles, and idols are humbled, we proclaim your righteousness as we behold your glory. You have sought out a people and proclaimed them holy. You have sent your chosen one, Jesus, to prepare your way. We have passed through the gates of salvation, which he opened for us, and now gather to worship you with our praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

Worship begins with the chiming of the hour.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

As the session gathers at the chancel steps to pray for our worship, we invite you to join us in prayer.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Dieu parmi nous

O. Messiaen

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Erskine Carmichael

Leader: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

People: **We will sing praises to the Lord with the lyre and the sound of the horn.**

Leader: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

People: **We will sing you a new song, O God, for the marvelous things you have done.**

Leader: Let us worship God!

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN 22

Angels, from the Realms of Glory REGENT SQUARE

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of all worlds, we confess that we seek to create our own limited reality in which you have no part. We do not sense your glory or sing your praise. By our words and deeds, we deny Jesus as

our brother, and reject Christ as Savior. We deal falsely with one another, caring more for our own reputation and comfort than for the common good. O God, we plead for forgiveness. By your holy arm, lead us to victory over our selfish impulses, and uphold us in your steadfast love. Hear now our silent confession.

(A time of private confession.)

Amen.

KYRIE (sung in unison)

Organ Congregation G. R. Smoke

Lord, have mer - cy up -
on - us. Christ have mer - cy up - on us.
Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel.

People: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

* GLORIA (sing refrain of Hymn 23)

Gloria in excelsis Deo;

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

✠ THE WORD ✠

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 52.7-10

(p. 633)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

Ding Dong Merrily on High

Candlyn

SECOND LESSON

John 1.1-14

(p. 922)

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

* HYMN 28

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

SERMON

The Wait is Over.

Cary Speaker

✠ RESPONSE TO THE WORD ✠

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed (traditional)

Hymnal p. 14

ANTHEM

Wash Me Through and Through

Sam Batt Owens

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Walter Glover Moran,

Sarah and John Moran, parents

ANTHEM

From Our Mothers Wombs, You know Us

Mel Bringle

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

Offertory Statement

Offertory *A Child Is Born*

T. Jones

* Doxology

Old Hundredth

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Prayer of Dedication

✠ SENDING ✠

* HYMN 40

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

* CHARGE AND BLESSING

* RESPONSE

Noel (refrain)

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

G. Smoke

*Those who are able, please stand.
The Congregation stands with the choir.

MUSIC NOTE: The prelude, Dieu parmi nous (God Among Us), is the ninth and final piece from La Nativité du Seigneur (The Nativity of the Lord) written in 1935 by Olivier Messiaen. Messiaen was born in Avignon, France in 1908 and died at his home near Paris in 1992. He studied organ, improvisation, and composition at the Paris Conservatory (winning first prizes in all three departments). After graduating in 1930 he became the organist at the Trinity Church in Paris—a post he held until his death, along with faculty appointments to various schools. Messiaen was one of the most original and influential modern French composers.

Messiaen was a devout Catholic and his music is very influenced by the mystical aspects of religion. Much of his music is based on theological ideas. Messiaen constantly strives to find a connection between musical sounds and religious ideas. To do this he makes use of musical resources as varied as Gregorian Chant, non-Western rhythms and harmonies, and sounds from nature (especially birdsongs).

The introduction to the first volume of La Nativité du Seigneur begins with these words: "Emotion and sincerity above all else. But conveyed to the listener by means which are clear and true." Messiaen then goes on to discuss the "threefold viewpoint" by which the subject of the Lord's birth can be treated in these nine organ pieces. No doubt this "threefold viewpoint" is purposefully Trinitarian, as is the choice of 9 for the number of pieces (3x3). This viewpoint includes theology, instrumentation, and music.

In discussing the theology, Messiaen says: "...there are five main ideas: 1. Our predestination, fulfilled through the Incarnation of the Word. 2. God living in our midst, God suffering. 3. The three births: the eternal birth of the Word; the temporal birth of Christ; and the spiritual birth of Christians. 4. Descriptions of some of the characters who lend a particular poetry to the Christmas feast; the Angels, the Magi, the shepherds. 5. Nine pieces in all to honor the maternity of the Holy Virgin."

After this, Messiaen discusses the use of the organ (instrumentation) and describes the various scales, harmonies and rhythmic ideas used in these nine pieces (musical point of view). Although the discussion of the musical materials is fairly detailed, there is no attempt to specify what any melody, harmony, or rhythm means. The performer and listener are expected to fully engage with the composer in contemplating the emotion and meaning of these works—emotion and meaning which are inexpressible in words.

This is a difficult piece to play—and, perhaps, difficult to listen to. Given the subject matter, God Among Us, this is as it should be. The idea of the Incarnation is both grand and terrifying and this piece seems to express this clearly. One could say that the descending chords and descending pedal line in the first few measures symbolize Christ's descent from Heaven to Earth, that the calm which follows is, perhaps, symbolic of that peaceful evening in Bethlehem, that the music in general reflects the highs and lows of Mary's response to Gabriel as recorded in St. Luke. Although it sometimes helps, music, such as Dieu parmi nous, does not really need a story to make sense. Listen for the presentation, juxtaposition, and combination of musical ideas. Enjoy the dramatic changes of texture—from handfuls of notes to unaccompanied melodies. Relish the harmony. Feel the fluid, yet constant, rhythm. Above all, contemplate the idea of the Incarnation—God Among Us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Nursery is provided for birth to age 3 from 9:30 - 12

Children's Sunday School

There is no 9:30 Sunday school class for children

2 and 3 Year Old Class 11:00-Noon

This new class uses curriculum based on Godly Play by Jerome Berryman, but written specifically for our MBPC children. This class meets in Room 109 next to the Nursery.

Step x Step Kids Learn 2 Live B.I.G.* 11:15-12-15

Following the Passing of the Peace in the worship service, children age 4 through grade 6 are invited to leave with their teachers for Sunday school. (*On the first Sunday of each month, there is no Sunday School for age 4 through grade 6.* Families are encouraged to worship together and join in the celebration of communion.)

Age 4 through Grade 2 meet in Room 201 St. Stephen
Grades 3 through 6 meet in Room 208 St. Stephen

**Live B.I.G.* curriculum helps children see, hear and live their Belief In God.

parenTeen Sunday School 9:30-10:30

This class for youth (grades 7-12) and their parents meets in the St. Stephen Youth Room. Parents and their teens get to discuss and learn together in a friendly setting. The curriculum (*BLAY* — Bible Lessons for Youth) focuses on how Scripture relates to our lives and covers the entire Bible in six years. The teachers are Ralph Cook, Traci Finch, Ev Gunn, and Rosh Plugge.

Adult Sunday School 9:30-10:30

The *Adventure Class* led by Larry Harper meets in the Reception Room. They are studying the book of Genesis. They are using *The Mighty Acts of God* by Arnold Rhodes as a resource, but go into more detail in their study.

The *Other Class* meets in the Pastor's Classroom in the Administration Building and is led by Rev. Cary Speaker. This class is studying *Year of Plenty: One Suburban Family, Four Rules, and 365 Days of Homegrown Adventure in Pursuit of Christian Living* by Craig L. Goodwin. In 2008, Pastor Craig Goodwin and his young family embarked on a year-long experiment to consume only what was local, used, homegrown, or homemade. In Year of Plenty, Goodwin shares the winsome story of how an average suburban family stumbled onto the cultural cutting edge of locavores, backyard chickens, farmer markets, simple living, and going green. More than that, it is the timely tale of Christians exploring the intersections of faith, environment, and everyday life.

We welcome visitors who are worshipping with us today. We hope you feel and experience the love that makes Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church a unique and warm Christian family. If you are seeking a church home and would like to follow Jesus Christ through the fellowship of this congregation, we invite you to membership. For more information please speak with our pastor after worship or call the church office 967-5037.

CALENDAR

Sunday, December 25— CHRISTMAS DAY!

No Sunday School

11:00 am Worship

Monday, December 26

OFFICE CLOSED

8:00 am Body Works

Tuesday, December 27

8:00 am Body Works

Wednesday, December 28

12:00 pm AA Meeting

Wednesday dinner & classes resume
Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Thursday, December 29

8:00 am Body Works

6:00 pm AA Meeting

Friday, December 30

8:00 am Body Works

Saturday, December 31

Sunday, January 1, 2012— New Year's Day!

No Sunday School

11:00 am Worship - Communion



Please recycle your bulletin,
use the baskets in the narthex.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| ❖ Harriet Anne Menzel | ❖ Jane Long |
| ❖ Emil Menzel | ❖ Jon Horton |
| ❖ Calvin Long | ❖ Dot Clark |
| ❖ Lamar Osment | |

Christian sympathy to Ray Swords on the death of his wife, and Margaret Semmes for the loss of her mother, Louise Swords.

If you have requests for prayer for the Prayer Team or the congregation, please fill out the pew card and place it in the offering plate or call Mary Frances Whitmer (663-6813) or the Church Office (967-5037).

THE STAFF

Pastor:

Cary Speaker

Director of Music:

Dewin Tibbs

Organist:

Gary Smoke

Director of Christian Education & Children's Music:

Peggy Thompson

Director of Youth Ministry:

Traci Finch

Administrative Assistant:

Bonnie Hartley

Financial Assistant:

Bernie Gregson

Preschool Director:

Kelly Huddleston

THE SESSION

2011

Tom Barr
Katherine Brown
David Copeland
Ann Dudelston
Kelli Eshleman
Nancy Harper

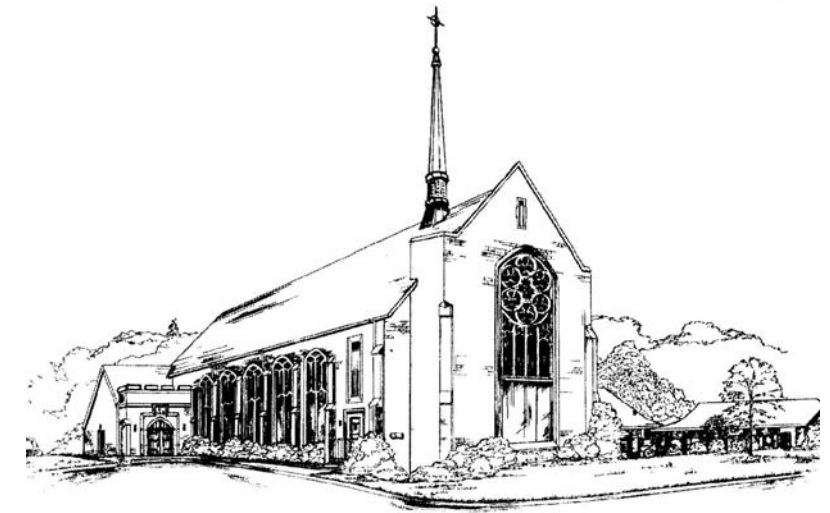
2012

Suzanne Cook
Lloyd Gathings
Bill Hester
Dot McCraney
Charles McKell
Michael Melvin

2013

Joseph Bonatz
Margaret Nichols
Donna Speaker
Drew Spransy
Mike Terry

MOUNTAIN BROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Our Mission

*We are a congregation filled with Christ's love,
nurturing and serving from God's abundance.*