

### Notes about Worship at MPC

Welcome! We are so glad you are here. For those who are visiting MPC, please stop by and introduce yourself to our pastor, Courtney Pittman, or to one of the ushers. We want to celebrate your presence! We know there are a lot of demands on your time, so we are thrilled that you have chosen to spend your Sunday morning at MPC!

Children's Church—Children age 3 and up are invited to join our leaders for fun and faith in Children's Church located in the fellowship building following Let the Children Come. Pick up is immediately following the service in the fellowship hall.

Stewardship—Should you feel called to give today, ushers will be passing around the offering plates during the Invitation to Generosity. Giving is also available online at <https://madisonpresbyterian.church/generosity>.

Language—The words we use are important! So often we go into “autopilot” during worship that we miss the meaning of the words we say each Sunday. In an effort to be more conscious of the language we use during worship, some words in our liturgy will change monthly; but please know that you may pray in whatever way you feel comfortable. We are family here!

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#### Coming Up in the Life of the Church

**Save the Date!** The Women's Retreat will be held March 8-10 with facilitator Kim Ness. Watch upcoming bulletins for more information.

**New Member Sunday** will be January 21st. The Session will welcome our new members immediately following worship.

The **2024 Flower Calendar** is now available on the bulletin board by the stairway in the education building. Sign up to place flowers in the sanctuary in memory or in honor of a loved one or in celebration of a special event.

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#### Opportunities for Outreach and Mission

**Ministry Bags for January:** The Caring Place is a food pantry established in Madison to help families who struggle to have enough food for their families. A food box is provided to each family which includes non-perishable food items such as cereal, bread, cans of soups, vegetables, fruits, tuna, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, and packages of hot dogs. The food items come from sources such as the Atlanta Food Bank, donations from local stores, and donations from individuals like yourself. Located next to the Highway Patrol office on Hwy. 83, the boxes are given out on Friday mornings. Staffed totally by volunteers, this ministry serves those with food insecurity which is a very real issue in Morgan County. Items to fill your bag include healthy cereal, soups, can vegetables, can fruits, cans of tuna, packages of macaroni and cheese, and peanut butter. Thank you for sharing your love!

## THE WEEK AHEAD

- **Monday, January 1** Church Office Closed
- **Tuesday, January 2** 7:30 am Men's Breakfast/Bible Study; 10:00 am Ladies Coffee Circle
- **Wednesday, January 3** 7:15 am Youth Breakfast Club; 10:30 am Bible Study; 6:00 pm Bible Study; 6:00 pm Outreach Ministry Meeting (Room 205)
- **Sunday, January 7** 11:00 am worship with the baptism of Madelyn Ruth Cochran

Sunday, December 31, 2023

11:00 AM

*An Epiphany Service*

First Sunday after Christmas



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## Gathering as God’s Beloved

### Gathering Music

### Chiming of the Hour

### Prelude

### Welcome

#### \*Call to Worship

O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

**The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star!**

O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

**The people who live in the shadows see the glorious light!**

O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

**The Christ who embodies the Word unveils the hidden plan,  
making us joint heirs of the promise of salvation through the gospel!**

O come, let us worship the Lord,  
**for God has done wondrous things!**

#### \*Hymn 127

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

#### \*Confessing Together

*adapted from Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy*

Gracious God, we would like to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God’s love into this world. And yet, merciful God, we recognize whenever we, in our inactions, find our own need for control more compelling than the needs of others for health and safety; whenever we cling to the security of our privilege, rather than standing up for the rights of the oppressed. Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another, and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives as true disciples in Your name, without counting the cost. *(We continue in silence....)* **Amen.**

#### \*Assurance of God’s Love

*adapted from Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy*

God’s light is present in this world. Present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness. Present in the star, in all that guides us to love. God’s light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it. God’s grace is in the world, and our missteps will not overcome it. **We are loved, we are forgiven, and we are free to try again. Alleluia! Amen.**

#### \*Response to God’s Grace (Hymn 581)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen, Amen.**

#### \*Passing of the Peace

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

**And also with you!**

## Proclaiming the Word

### Let the Children Come!

### Prayer for God’s Wisdom

#### First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Holy wisdom, holy word. **Thanks be to God.**

### Anthem

*I Wonder as I Wander*

arr. John Jacob Miles

#### Second Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Holy wisdom, holy word. **Thanks be to God.**

### Sermon

Call and Response(s)

## Responding to the Word

#### \*Hymn 152

*What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright*

#### \*Affirming our Faith

*Westminster Confession, 6.044*

We believe that the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon himself human nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof; yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures—the Godhead and the humanity—were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very human, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and humankind.

#### Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer

**Our Redeemer, 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.**

#### Star Words

*Having prayed together, it is now time to receive our star words for the upcoming year. As music plays, we invite you to come forward and draw a star word from the Table.*

#### Star Words Closing Prayer

#### Invitation to Generosity

#### Offertory

#### \*Response (Hymn 606)

Praise God, from all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God, above ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### \*Prayer of Gratitude

## Being the Church in the World

#### \*Hymn 151

*We Three Kings of Orient Are*

#### \*Charge and Blessing

#### Postlude

\*Please stand in body or in spirit

## Serving in Worship

Courtney Pittman—Senior Pastor

Karisa Seymour—Music Director

Meghan Shafer—Accompanist

Lori Hume—Liturgist

Brooks Berry—Acolyte

Tommy Arthur—Communications Technologist