



METROCREST

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



**The King
& His
Kingdom**

**Morning Worship
First Sunday of Epiphany
January 7, 2024**

Welcome!

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;
To all who mourn and long for comfort;
To all who struggle and desire victory;
To all who sin and need a Savior;
To all who are strangers and want fellowship;
And to whoever will come –

*This church opens wide her doors and offers her welcome
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

God Calls Us To Worship

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship - Psalm 99:1-5

Leader: The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

Unison: The LORD is great in Zion; He is exalted over all the peoples.

Leader: Let them praise Your great and awesome name! Holy is He!

Unison: The King in His might loves justice. You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

Leader: Exalt the LORD our God; worship at His footstool! Holy is he!

We Respond To God's Call

Opening Hymn - "Holy, Holy, Holy!"

Trinity Hymnal #100

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

¡Santo! ¡Santo! ¡Santo! Por más que estés velado,
E imposible sea tu gloria contemplar;
Santo tú eres sólo, y nada hay a tu lado
En poder perfecto, pureza y caridad.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Acknowledging God's Presence

Worship Theme - "Jesus, John the Baptist, and Us"

Theme Verse - Matthew 11:11

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Hymn - "On Jordan's Bank"

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings.

Then cleansed be ev'ry heart from sin;
Make straight the way for God within,
And let each heart prepare a home
Where such a mighty guest may come.

For You are our salvation, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward;
Without Your grace we waste away
Like flow'rs that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out Your hand,
And bid the fallen sinner stand;
Shine forth and let Your light restore,
Earth's own true loveliness once more.

All praise to You, Eternal Son,
Whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit, evermore.

We Confess Our Sins

Prayer of Confession

Heavenly Father, we confess to You our manifold sins. Because You are holy and cannot look at wrong, we ask for forgiveness, not on the basis of anything we have done, but on the basis of Your Son's perfect obedience. In love, He has called us to Himself and washed us in His Own sinless blood. Have mercy on us, Father, and renew us, we pray, that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ and filled with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Please take a moment for personal reflection and confession.

Assurance of Pardon - Psalm 103:8-12

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever. He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Amen.

Hymn - "Holy Spirit"

Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the risen Lord,
Come renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see,
Give me passion for Your purity;
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within,
May Your joy be seen in all I do.
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin,
In each thought and deed and attitude.
Kindness to the greatest and the least,
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.
Turn my strivings into works of grace;
Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,
Giving life to all that God has made,
Show Your power once again on earth,
Cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.
Let the fragrance of our pray'rs arise;
Lead us on the road of sacrifice,
That in unity the face of Christ
May be clear for all the world to see.

We Profess Our Faith And Pray

Affirmation of Faith - Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator 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 to hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended to 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.

Greeting

Hymn - "All of Our Tomorrows"

This spinning world by Your Own hand
Hurls ever on around the sun.
The seasons march at Your command;
The old departs, the new year comes;
And though celestial is Your gaze,
You search and care for all our ways.
We offer up to You this day,
And all of our tomorrows.

May zealous youth and cautious age
Determine not the steps we choose.
Great Shepherd, guide us through each day;
Oh, how we want to follow You.
Come, Living Way, our way make clear,
Let perfect love drive out our fear;
Be Thou our vision, now and here,
And all of our tomorrows.

When winter makes us reminisce
Of warmer days so distant now,
Of cherished saints the sun once kissed,
Whose beauty passed behind the clouds,
Let all our fond and longing tears
Remind us we are pilgrims here;
We trust You, Sovereign of our years,
With all of our tomorrows.

Hands to the plow, we're pressing on
And running hard to win the prize,
Empowered by the love of God,
With grace before and grace behind.
For lo, what Hope before us stands:
You finish all that You began.
Eternal joy is in Your hands,
And all of our tomorrows.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is
the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Prayer for God's Blessing on the New Year

Sovereign Father, on this first Sunday of the year of Our Lord 2024, we at Metrocrest pray humbly for Your mercy upon us. Give us grace that, like Your servant John the Baptist, we may proclaim Your Son and His saving gospel to the dark and needy world all around us. Like the Magi, who were the first Gentiles to worship Christ, may we also acknowledge His authority over the whole world; may we bow before Him; and may we declare His praise so that many others will worship Him with us. Direct us, Father, provide for us, bless us, and use us powerfully; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We Receive God's Word

Reading God's Word - Matthew 11:1-19

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Unison: Thanks be to God.

Understanding and Applying God's Word

Pastor Bill Lovell

"Jesus, John the Baptist, and Us"

Sermon Series - "The King & His Kingdom"

We Respond To God's Grace

Offertory Sentence - 2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Closing Hymn - "Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed"

How can it be the One who died
Has borne our sin through sacrifice,
To conquer every sting of death –
Sing, sing hallelujah!

For joy awakes as dawning light
When Christ's disciples lift their eyes.
Alive He stands, their Friend and King –
Christ, Christ He is risen!

(Refrain)

Christ is risen, He is risen indeed.
Oh, sing hallelujah!
Join the chorus, sing with the redeemed:
Christ is risen, He is risen indeed.

Where doubt and darkness once had been,
They saw Him and their hearts believed.
But blessed are those who have not seen
Yet sing hallelujah!

Once bound by fear, now bold in faith,
They preached the truth and power of grace,
And pouring out their lives they gained
Life, life everlasting. (Refrain)

The power that raised Him from the grave
Now works in us to powerfully save.
He frees our hearts to live His grace –
Go, tell of His goodness! (Refrain)

He is risen – He's alive! He's alive!
Heaven's gates are opened wide.
He's alive! He's alive!
Now in heaven glorified.

God Sends Us Out With His Blessing

Blessing - 2 Corinthians 13:11,14

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full reconciliation, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

"**Holy, Holy, Holy!**" Words by Reginald Heber, Music by John B. Dykes, Spanish translation by Juan Bautista Cabrera Ivars. "**On Jordan's Bank**" Words by Charles Coffin, translation by John Chandler. "**Holy Spirit**" Keith Getty & Stuart Townend, Copyright © 2005, Thankyou Music. . "**All of Our Tomorrows**" Words and music by Dave Fournier and Ryan Foglesong – © 2020 Sovereign Grace Praise, Sovereign Grace Worship. All rights reserved. "**Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed**" Words and music by Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, and Ed Cash – © 2012 Capitol CMG Paragon, Getty Music Publishing. All rights reserved. CCLI License #451603.

Sermon Text

English Standard Version - Matthew 11:1-19

1 When Jesus had finished instructing His twelve disciples, He went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.

2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to Him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by Me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written,

""Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
who will prepare Your way before You."

11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

17 "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at Him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

Sermon Notes

Matthew 11:1-19

Pastor Bill Lovell

"Jesus, John the Baptist, and Us"

Jesus (vv 1-6)

John the Baptist (vv 7-10)

And Us (vv 11-19)

*"Every believer has a part to play, a witness to give, and a stand to make...
Your local church needs you. Your pastor needs you. We all need you."*
Dick Lucas on Matthew 11

Church Life Notes

Today - January 7, 2024

1. **First Sunday of Epiphany:** The season of Epiphany gets its name from a Greek word which means *manifestation*, referring specifically to the manifestation of the gospel to the Gentiles (beginning with the Magi). Traditionally Epiphany has an emphasis on cross-cultural mission.
2. **Serving Today:** This morning's scheduled Liturgy Leader is John Fowler. Our scheduled Prayer Leader is Paul Hartgrove.
3. **Giving Online:** To access our secure online giving portal, you may use the QR code on the back of the bulletin.
4. **MPC Youth Ministry:** Please join us at 6:00pm this evening at the church for our annual White Elephant gift exchange! Guys bring snacks, girls bring something sweet, leaders bring drinks, and we're asking everyone to bring a wrapped gift between \$5-\$10 in value. We hope to see you this evening!

Upcoming Activities & Events

5. **MPC Sunday School for All Ages:** Please join us Sunday mornings between 9:00-10:00am.
 - **Children** - Pre-K-Grade 5 - Solid Bible teaching from the Children's Catechism, age appropriate and fun.
 - **Youth** - Grades 6-12 - Mature reflection on the Bible and the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
 - **Adult** - Starting next Sunday, January 7 - "The Gospel According to Isaiah"—led by Will Grover.
6. **Care Group Sunday:** Next Sunday, January 14, we will highlight MPC small group Bible studies, which we call Care Groups, and encourage everyone at MPC to join one.
7. **Annual Congregational Meeting:** We are set to meet on Sunday, January 28, following the 10:15am service, to elect new officers and reflect on God's faithfulness to us. See announcement 8.

News & Needs

8. **Officer Nominations:** Nominees for Session are Rick Bajema, Bill Camp, Rick Carruth, and James Woods. Nominees for Board of Deacons are Vianny D'Souza and Brian Ray. The nominee for Board of Trustees is Steve Withers. Info on each office and each nominee is available in the Lobby.
9. **Life Change** for January will support Human Coalition, one of the largest pro-life, pro-women, and pro-family organizations in the country. They are committed to making abortion unthinkable and unnecessary by helping lead a movement that values human

dignity and establishes a culture of life. The Life Change basket will be in the back of the sanctuary this week. If you prefer, you can write a check with "Life Change" written in the memo line, or you can give online via Realm.

10. **Men's Book Group:** Beginning January 23, interested men will meet on **Tuesday evenings at the church** to study Jimmy Davis' ***Cruciform: Living the Cross-Shaped Life***. For info, contact Paul Hartgrove (972-816-2205 - paul.hartgrove@gmail.com).
11. **Prayer Ministry:** Help us keep our prayer requests current and up-to-date by letting us know **via email** when we want to remove or revise requests on Realm and on the list in the Sunday bulletin. Thanksgivings for answered prayer may also be posted on Realm.

High Fives & Thanks

12. **December Giving:** Huge thanks to everyone who pitched in last month to help MPC end our second quarter with our best numbers of the year. To God be the glory!

Prayer Requests

13. **For The World:**
 - **World Leaders** - For God's gift of wisdom for President Biden and "all who are in high positions" (1 Timothy 2:1), that we may lead peaceful, quiet, and godly lives.
 - **Armed Conflicts** - For God's mercy on the suffering people in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and Yemen.
14. **For Our Church's Mission and Ministry:**
 - **Prophetic Witness** - For God to give each of us grace to be His Son's prophetic witnesses.
 - **Church Finances** - For God's gracious provision.
15. **For One Another:**
 - **Marriages** - For God's blessing on all those who are married.
 - **Health Issues** - For God's blessing on Yvonne Alford (Bill Lovell's friend), Connie Bielefeld (Margaret Marrs' grandmother), Kerry Buswell, Kathy Carruth (Rick Carruth's mom), Steve Collinworth, Krystal Hays (Bill & Shona Camp's neighbor), Maurane Huckaby, Jim Huckaby (Colton Huckaby's grandfather), Max Kizziar, Suzanne Larsen, Cherry Leslie, Marcia Livingston (David Wamsley's sister), Ruth Lerner (Elinor Hites' sister), Ariel Lopez, Ashley Marble, Jay Marble, Alana Marion, Jeannie Marion (Mike Marion's stepmom), Mike Marion, Tom Mayfield, Lauren Muckleroy (friend of Scott Marrs), Ryan & Dianna Muller (friends of Alana Marion), Kristen Novak (Steve & Liz Wallin's daughter), Larry Perry, Ron Revell, Laura Stites and Family, David Wamsley, Marlene Wamsley, Lori Winn, and Norm Winn; and also for God's blessing on expectant mom Madeleine Esmond, whose baby girl is due this month.

Welcome to Metrocrest! Please take a few moments to leave your contact information with Pastor Bill or a member of the Welcome Team. We would love to know that you worshipped with us today and share more information about our church.



How can we pray for you? MPC is a praying church! You can share your prayer requests with us by (1) using one of the cards found in the lobby; or (2) pointing your smartphone camera at this QR code to access a digital card. Please indicate whether your request is private or public. You may also request to pray with an Elder.

Do you want to make a donation? To fund MPC's mission and ministry, we depend on God's provision through you. If you'd like to make a donation this morning, you can do so by (1) placing it in the collection basket during the Offertory; or (2) pointing your smartphone camera at this QR code to access our secure online giving portal.



Thank you for your financial support! At MPC, we aim for financial transparency. Here's where we stand six months into this fiscal year (July-June): Last week's giving - \$13,087; our weekly giving goal - \$7,885; our actual giving to-date - \$192,576; and our projected giving to-date - \$212,885. We know these are difficult times for everyone. Please be as generous as you can in your personal stewardship, and please pray for God's faithful provision.



Let's get connected! MPC uses an app called Realm to allow you to update your personal information, communicate with groups and teams, follow church announcements, look up members, manage online giving, and join events. To get started, contact us through the church office at info@metrocrestchurch.org!

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The Session (Elders)
John Fowler
Paul Hartgrove
Larry Perry

The Board of Deacons
Dalton Dallas
Will Grover