



First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 2023
Worship begins at 11 a.m.



Untitled (Star of Bethlehem) by an unidentified American artist

Gathering Around the Word

Prelude

Desseins eternels

Olivier Messian

Welcome and Announcements

Susan Landrum

Ringling of the Bell

As the tower bell rings, may it call out to the city and the world that Central Presbyterian Church is worshiping God.

✠ Call to Worship

Rev. Kate Culver

When Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph,

God is there.

When Jesus is presented at the temple,

God is there.

When Simeon holds Jesus in his arms,

God is there.

When Anna recognizes Jesus in the temple,

God is there.

This very morning,

God is here.

In the future we cannot see,

God is there.

Let us worship God!

✠ Hymn 143

Angels from the Realms of Glory

REGENT SQUARE

✠ Call to Confession

✠ Prayer of Confession

If we say we are completely put together, the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our distractions, our errors, and our anxieties, God will meet us and renew us. Before God and God's people, I confess that I have been reluctant to speak out clearly, naming the injustice I see and declaring God's vision. Before God and one another, we confess our reluctance to receive our calling as God's people, made by God and chosen as witnesses to God's dream of justice and joy. Remind me, God, that you have made me for your service and recharge me with your Word. Renew us, God. Grant us courage to live out your Way of peace and grace. We ask it in Jesus' name...

(Silent Confession) **Amen.**

✠ Assurance of Pardon

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

✠ Passing of the Peace

✠ Hymn 155

Raise a Song of Gladness

JUBILATE DEO

**Raise a song of gladness,
peoples of the earth.**

**Christ has come, bringing peace,
joy to every heart.**

Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!

Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!

Proclaiming the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Kitsy Battle

First Lesson

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Second Lesson

Luke 2:22-40

Susan Landrum

Sermon

Responding to the Word

✠ Hymn 148

Mary and Joseph Came to the Temple

EVENING HYMN

✠ Affirmation of Faith

Courtney Anne Henry

ADAPTED FROM THE IONA COMMUNITY

We believe in God above us, maker and sustainer of all life, of sun and moon, of water and earth, of all people and every creature. We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, born of a woman, servant of the poor, teacher by word and deed. He died forsaken. He descended into the earth to the place of death. On the third day he rose from the tomb. He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present, and his kingdom will come on earth. We believe in God within us, the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire, life-giving breath of the church, Spirit of healing and forgiveness, source of resurrection and eternal life. Amen.

Offertory Sentence

Music at the Offertory

Go Tell it on the Mountain

arr. Mark Hayes

Lucas Gray, baritone; Mason Copeland, piano

Go tell it on the mountain, Go tell it in the valleys.
Go tell it all over this land that Jesus,
Yes, Jesus Christ is born!

There's a star in the East on Christmas morn,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

If you take good heed to the angel's words,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and ev'rywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

Children, go and tell it, over the hills and everywhere,
Go, and tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly host.
Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

✠ Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

TRADITIONAL: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

**Beloved parent who is 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 forgive 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.**

Bearing and Following the Word into the World

✠ Hymn 127

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT

✠ Charge and Benediction

Susan Landrum

Postlude

Greensleeves

Richard Purvis

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Special Participants in Today's Worship

Central Presbyterian Church Staff

Lector: Kitsy Battle
Tower Bell Ringer: Chris Sciarrone
Dean Hammond,
Volunteer Technology Director

Hospitality Team

A faithful group of
Central members

Give

You may give via the envelope in the pew, online at www.cpcatlanta.org or using the QR code.



The Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner, Senior Pastor and Head of Staff
The Rev. Kate Culver, Associate Pastor
Susan Landrum, Director of Family Ministries
Dr. Jennifer Sengin, Director of Musical Arts
Mason Copeland, Organist/Music Associate
Kristie Johns, Business Administrator
Mark Wallace Maguire, Director of Communications
Melissa Johnson, Executive Assistant & Event Coordinator
John White, Facilities Manager
Abraha Diedre, Custodian
Christin Bland, Communications Associate
Linda Massengill, Part Time Assistant
Karen Brown, Pianist, Bethlehem & Jerusalem Choir
Courtney Anne Henry, Children & Youth Fellow
Thomas Chafin, Interim Choir Director
Elizabeth Daly, Music Intern
Patrick Maguire, Video Assistant
Josh Smith, Audio Engineer

