
Gathering those who fear they are not enough,
so we may experience grace, wholeness, and renewal as God's beloved.



By Unknown Georgian artist – Goldschmiedekunst und Toreutik in den Museen Georgiens Aurora Leningrad 1986 Source of first version: Guram Abramishvili (1977), Treasury of the Georgian Museum of Arts. Tbilisi: Khelovneba, Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons.

We Gather to Praise God

PRELUDE

O Jesus So Gentle, Jesus so Sweet!

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

arr. Patrick Liebergen (1949-2020)

Christine Connor, soprano

*O Jesus so gentle, Jesus so sweet! Your Father's task is now complete. From heaven on high and
kingly crown, God's love and peace to us came down. O Jesus so gentle, Jesus so sweet!*

*O Jesus so gentle, Jesus so sweet! Your loving face we joyfully greet. The light of God is with us here.
Our cheerful songs now ring out clear. O Jesus so gentle, Jesus so sweet!*

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME

Yena Hwang

* CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Here on the heels of Christmas ...

ALL: ... we speak of hope.

ONE: We speak of peace.

ALL: We speak of joy.

ONE: We speak of love.

ALL: We speak of Light.

ONE: A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

ALL: Thanks be to God for the bright hope of this day.

* GATHERING HYMN 134

Joy to the World

CALL TO CONFESSION AND PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Myra Bridgforth

ONE: Friends, when we are honest with God in our confession, we open ourselves up to receive God's grace and mercy. And that grace is full to the brim with good news. So join me in this prayer of confession not out of shame or guilt, but because there is joy on the other side that will take your breath away.

ALL: God of today and tomorrow, we know that your fingerprints are all over this world. Yet in our rush, we miss you. We miss you in the one who begs for change. We miss you in the one with hungry eyes. We miss you in the one who sleeps on a grate or is too afraid to speak. Forgive us for all the times we fall short of who we could be. Give us eyes to see you. Give us courage to trust you. Give us lips to speak of you in our midst, today and every day. Amen.

Personal prayer in silence

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Megan Klose

ONE: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel. Jesus sees us. Jesus loves us.
Jesus forgives us!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

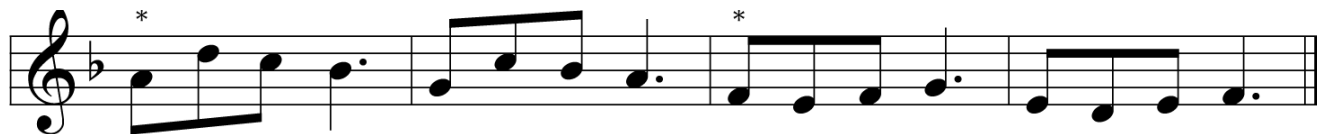
** Please rise in body or spirit*

* GLORY TO GOD



Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!



Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

TEXT: Trad. liturgical text
MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1979
Music © 1979, 1981 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

GLORIA (Taizé)

* PASSING THE PEACE

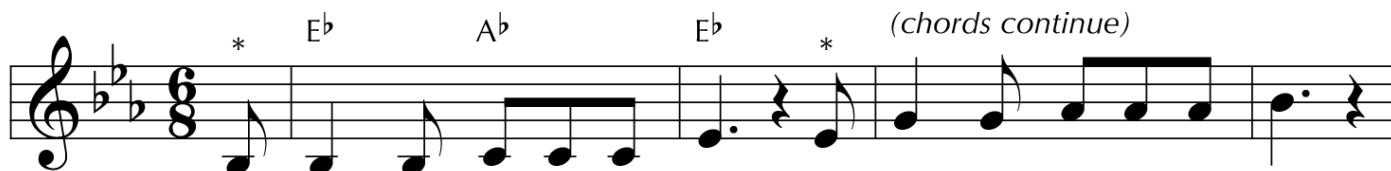
Megan Klose

ONE: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

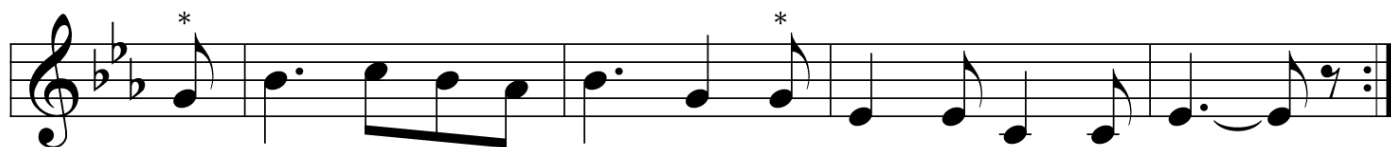
ALL: And also with you.

We Listen for God's Word

SUNG PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION HYMN 95



Pre - pare the way of the Lord. Pre - pare the way of the Lord,



and all peo - ple will see the sal - va - tion of our God.

TEXT: Taizé Community, 1984
MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1984
Text and Music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

PREPARE THE WAY
7.7.6.7

²² When the time came for their ritual cleansing, in accordance with the Law from Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (²³ It's written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord.") ²⁴ They offered a sacrifice in keeping with what's stated in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

²⁵ A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple area. Meanwhile, Jesus' parents brought the child to the temple so that they could do what was customary under the Law. ²⁸ Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

²⁹ "Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word,

³⁰ because my eyes have seen your salvation.

³¹ You prepared this salvation in the presence of all peoples.

³² It's a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and a glory for your people Israel."

³³ His father and mother were amazed by what was said about him. ³⁴ Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "This boy is assigned to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that generates opposition ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your innermost being too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, who belonged to the tribe of Asher. She was very old. After she married, she lived with her husband for seven years. ³⁷ She was now an 84-year-old widow. She never left the temple area but worshipped God with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ She approached at that very moment and began to praise God and to speak about Jesus to everyone who was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Mary and Joseph had completed everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown, Nazareth in Galilee. ⁴⁰ The child grew up and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

ONE: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTION

What words or images stand out to you in this story?

Notice the characters in this story. For each one, imagine what emotions they might be feeling. Who do you relate to most?

- Mary

- Joseph

- Simeon

- Anna

The text says that Simeon was “moved by the Spirit” (v. 27). Have you ever felt “moved by the Spirit”? What does that look like for you?

Both Anna and Simeon publicly display their faith, telling all who will listen about Jesus and their dreams for Jerusalem’s future.

- What things do you speak up about?

- What are things you have remained silent about?

- What prevents you from speaking?

Today's text speaks of Jesus being presented in the temple. In many ways, this mirrors the ritual of baptizing babies at a young age in worship. Recall a meaningful baptism memory, either from your faith community or family. What made it meaningful?

Now what? Where does this story lead you?

We Respond to God's Word

Individual Reflection

You are invited to write your responses to the following prompts on separate index cards available in the pews and from the ushers. During the hymn, you are invited to come forward and put your cards on the corresponding bulletin boards.

Gratitude: Anna and Simeon begin by praising God. Write something that you are grateful for – a piece of good news that is worthy of praise.

Dream: Anna and Simeon have dreams for a better world. Write a dream you have for the world that we need to speak about.

Speak and be heard: Anna and Simeon speak and are heard. What have you been wanting to say? What would you say if you knew you would be heard?

*** REFLECTION HYMN 133**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *by Nathan Nettleton*

Yena Hwang

We believe in God, the creator and giver of life, who brought all creation to birth, who mothers us and fathers us, protecting, nurturing, and cherishing us.

We believe in Jesus Christ: God born among us as a fragile baby, embodying both love and the need for love, and calling us to rest in God as trustingly as a tiny child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, breathed into us at our birth, always drawing us on to be born again, encouraging, exhorting, comforting, nourishing our growth and inspiring our living.

We believe in the reconciliation of the world to God, through Christ.

Hunted at birth and humiliated at death, Christ entered our fearful darkness so that we might enter his glorious light and share the life of his resurrection.

And we believe that each new child is a glimpse of the face of God, a sign of the life to come, and a call to live in peace and celebrate living together.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Myra Bridgforth

ONE: Lord in your mercy,

ALL: Hear our prayer.

The Prayers of the People are offered on behalf of and with the congregation, usually by an elder who is currently serving or has previously served on Session. Prayer requests can be sent to Pastors Yena and Megan at prayers@fallschurchpresby.org.

Prayer Concerns

Theresa Brown, Avery Burns, Allan Capon, Linda Garvelink, Winnie Harris-Zoellner, Ruth Mileham, Ken Waugh, all with continuing health concerns

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.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Yena Hwang

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Please support the mission and ministry of the church with your financial contributions. Offerings can be placed in the offering plate, mailed to the church office, given online through our secure giving portal (fpc.breezechms.com/give/online), texted to give at 7037751355, or scanned using the QR code.



OFFERTORY

I Wonder as I Wander

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980)

Christine Connor, soprano

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky, How Jesus, the savior, had come for to die,
For poor on'ry people, like you and like I.
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.*

* DOXOLOGY (tune: *The First Noel*) *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

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. No-well, No-well, No-well, No-well Born is the King of Israel!

* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Yena Hwang

Holy One, accept these offerings as a token of our lives. Use them to fortify us and your church to live into your vision, with all its joys and sorrows. We do this through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the grace of Jesus Christ.

We Are Sent into the World

* SENDING HYMN 127

Jesus, the Light of the World

* CHARGE AND BLESSING

Yena Hwang

POSTLUDE

Angels We Have Heard on High

arr. Tom Birchwood (contemporary)

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Supporting Us in Worship

Worship Leader	Myra Bridgforth
Ushers	Steve Rutsch, Gail Warner
Audio/Video	Xander Burdette
Sexton	Clay Warner

Thank you to Marnie Sarver and friends for decorating our church for the Christmas season.

A Warm Welcome

Thank you for joining us in worship this morning. Please sign the red welcome pad which can be found at the end of the pew, then pass the pad along to your neighbor.

There are nametag boards outside of the sanctuary side entrance. Please make a nametag and wear it as a sign of hospitality.

Large-print bulletins are available at the sanctuary entrances. Portable electronic assistive listening devices are available in the narthex.

A recording of today's service can be found at www.fallschurchpresby.org/sermon.

If you would like to learn more about our family of faith, please talk to the pastor as you exit the sanctuary. More information can be found on our website.

Children in Worship

Children are always welcome in our services. Children's bulletins and coloring sheets are available for children of all ages at each entrance. **The Kids' Corner** in the front right of the Sanctuary is a space where children and their grownups can play, read, color, and participate in worship. **Children up to age 4:** Child care is offered in Room 201. Parents may drop off and pick up children throughout this service. *BibleFun with Mr. Tom will resume Jan. 5 at 10:00 a.m.*

Fellowship Hour

Please join us in Fellowship Hall following worship to greet your neighbors and enjoy some light refreshments.

Announcements

City of Falls Church Watch Night events at FCPC, Tuesday, Dec. 31, 7-11 p.m. Free events include Northern Lights Big Band Orchestra, Victorian Society photo parlor, interactive music performance for all ages, face painting, and puppet show.

Reading the Bible in 2025. Pastor Yena has set a goal of having the entire congregation read the Bible in the coming year. There will be many ways to engage with scripture: small groups reading the entire Bible or parts of the Bible together, an individual plan, special Bible study classes, and fun competitions. Details about small groups will be coming soon. Week 1 plan is as follows:

Read the Bible in a Year: Week 1

Day 1: Genesis 1; Psalms 1 & 2

Day 2: Genesis 2; Psalms 3 & 4

Day 3: Genesis 3 & 4; Psalms 5 & 6

Day 4: Genesis 5 & 6; Psalm 7

Day 5: Genesis 7 & 8; Psalm 8

Day 6: Genesis 9, 10, 11; Psalm 9

Day 7: Genesis 12 & 13; Psalm 10

Confirmation Info Session, Jan. 5. If you are currently in 7th or 8th grade, come and learn about Confirmation on Sunday, Jan. 5, at 11:15 a.m. on the third floor. The Confirmation process will begin in February 2025 and finish up in April 2026. Please email Diane with questions or bring them to the January 5th info session.

FCPC Library Crèches. Be sure to stop by the library during this holiday season to view our Advent and Christmas books and crèches from around the world. There are 23 crèches on display throughout the room. Can you find them all?

Church Calendar

Sunday, December 29 – 1st Sunday of Christmas

Worship Service, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary, in person or online

Monday, December 30 – *No scheduled events*

Tuesday, December 31 – New Year's Eve

City of Falls Church Watch Night events at FCPC, 7:00-11:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1 – New Year's Day – *Church office closed*

First Wednesday Welcome Table, 11:00 a.m.-7:15 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Thursday, January 2 – *No scheduled events*

Friday, January 3 – *No scheduled events*

Saturday, January 4

Bible Study & Fellowship Group, 8:00 a.m., Parlor. Contact Tom Koger.

Silent Witness for Racial Justice, noon, Broad Street in front of FCPC

Sunday, January 5 – 2nd Sunday of Christmas/Epiphany of the Lord

Hunger Offering

Serendipity Class, 9:00 a.m., Conference Room

Bible Fun, 10:00 a.m., Room 206

Worship Service, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary, in person or online

Card Ministry Sunday, 11:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Confirmation Info Session, 11:15 a.m., Third Floor

Youth Group, 6:00 p.m., Third Floor

Falls Church Presbyterian belongs to the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, “working for the unity of the church, furthering the inclusion of LGBTQ persons, seeking understanding and reconciliation, and joining with others seeking a still more just and inclusive church.”

Falls Church Presbyterian is also a Matthew 25 church seeking to build congregational vitality, dismantle structural racism, and eradicate systemic poverty.

The Rev. Yena Hwang, Pastor

The Rev. Megan Klose, Associate Pastor

Diane Maloney, Director of Spiritual Growth and Community Engagement

Dr. Don Armstrong, Director of Music

Dr. Lisa Bloy, Organist

225 East Broad Street, Falls Church, VA 22046

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