

Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church

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Website: www.witherspoonchurch.org

Dr. Elsie Tshimunyi McKee, Guest Preacher
Denyse Leslie, Lector
Edin Orellana, Sexton

Fumi Nakamae Korodan, Director of Music
Chun Tong, Guest Organist
Dr. Cecelia Hodges, Director, Verse Speaking Choir

December 24, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

PRELUDE

Organ Instrumental

CALL TO WORSHIP

Do not be afraid. God is with us.
Savior of the nations, come.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Both: We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. As the Lord has promised, in days to come . . .

Voice 1: The Lord will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child.

Voice 2: She shall bear a son, and name him Emmanuel: "God is with us."

Both: Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

Congregation:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (AA #188, verses 1-4)

**O Come, O Come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

**O Come, O thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,**

And cause us in her ways to go

**O Come, Desire of nations, bind
All order peoples in one heart and mind;
But envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace**

**O Come, O Come thou Day spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

REFRAIN

**Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel**

GATHERING HYMN *Angels from the Realms of Glory* (AAHH #207)

CALL TO CONFESSION

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, let us confess the sins that have kept us from glorifying and enjoying our God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we anticipate the birth of our newborn savior. Yet we are depressed by the suffering and despair of our world. Our hearts grow hard with hopelessness. What reason is there to rejoice? We question your power and doubt our faith. Emmanuel, help us resist the overwhelming forces that drag us down. Lift our spirits so we can experience your transcendent presence and incarnate grace. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Psalm 103:17)

“The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.”
Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI

(PH #579)

**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.**

WELCOME OF GUESTS AND VISITORS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the Peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you!

VERSE SPEAKING CHOIR

THE MAGI

Matthew 2:1-12

SPECIAL MUSIC

First Noel

Verse 1

**The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep**

Chorus

**Noel Noel Noel Noel
Born is the King of Israel**

Verse 2

**They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night**

Verse 3

**And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far
To seek for a king was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it went**

Verse 4

**This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Mary, Did You Know? by Michael English

Verse 1

**Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would one day walk on water
Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters
Did you know
That your baby boy
Has come to make you new
This Child that you delivered
Will soon deliver you**

Verse 2

**Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would give sight to the blind man
Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Would calm a storm with His hand
Did you know
That your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod
And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God
Oh Mary did you know**

Interlude

Ooh Mary did you know ooh ooh

Bridge

**The blind will see
The deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb**

Verse 3

**Oh Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Is Lord of all creation
Mary did you know
That your baby boy
Will one day rule the nations
Did you know
That your baby boy
Is heaven's perfect Lamb
And the sleeping Child you're holding
Is the great I Am
Oh Mary oh**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Savior God, liberate us from the sins which distort our vision and disrupt our hearing as we approach your Word. Standing firm in your love, let us open ourselves to the truth you reveal to us today. Amen.

FIRST READING

Luke 1:26-38, 46-55

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

⁴⁶And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

SECOND READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

SERMON *Risky Grace and Faith-full Gratitude* Elsie Tshimunyi McKee

PROFESSION OF FAITH

(Apostles' Creed)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand
of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

With joy and gratitude for all we have been given, let us offer our tithes and gifts to God.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Organ Instrumental

DOXOLOGY

(PH #592)

**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

Gracious God, accept these gifts in grateful response for your generosity. May these gifts bring joy to those most in need of Christ's mission and ministry. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / INVITATION TO FELLOWSHIP

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and 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.

CHARGE and BENEDICTION

ADVENT HYMN

Christmas Peace by Richard Blank

POSTLUDE

Organ Instrumental

Today's liturgy was created by Teri McDowell Ott (The Presbyterian Outlook).

**OFFICE HOURS 112 WITHERSPOON ST.
MONDAY - FRIDAY 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 AND
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26**

The CDC's most recent COVID Community Levels for Mercer County remain Low. Witherspoon's COVID protocols for in-church worship service going forward are that **masks are optional for in church worship for low risk parishioners and are highly recommended for people at high risk for severe illness in consultation with their health care providers.** Hand sanitizing before entering the sanctuary and social distancing within each pew such as sitting on the ends or in the middle of a pew are in effect. Self health screening at home is encouraged prior to worship. If you are not well, please stay at home and contact your healthcare provider. Witherspoon will continue to monitor our COVID Community Levels weekly and update our protocols when the levels change.



The Christmas floral arrangement at the alter is in honor of the PROUD HISTORY AND LEGACY OF WITHERSPOON STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

-Presented by Shirley A. Satterfield



WELCOME – The Elders and Deacons of Witherspoon warmly welcome all worshipers. Our fellowship is enriched by your presence. If you do not have a church home of your own, we do sincerely invite you to be a part of our fellowship. Please contact the church office if you are interested in church membership or if you want to be added to the church e-mail distribution list. (witherspoon@verizon.net or 609-924-1666)

WE HAVE A FACEBOOK PAGE! “Like” our Facebook page



(<http://www.facebook.com/WitherspoonStreetChurch>)

to get the latest updates on your wall. Share your WSPC comments, photos and videos. If you want pictures added or notices posted please send an email to the church office (witherspoon@verizon.net).

GIVING TO WITHERSPOON STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Support our mission using your credit or debit card. On our church website, click on the *Give Now* button. **WWW.WITHERSPOONCHURCH.ORG** <http://bit.ly/WSPCGive>

For those who prefer to give through the mail, please send your donations to: 112 Witherspoon St., Princeton NJ 08542

IN APPRECIATION FOR THEIR SERVICE

Our Ushers and Tech Media Team

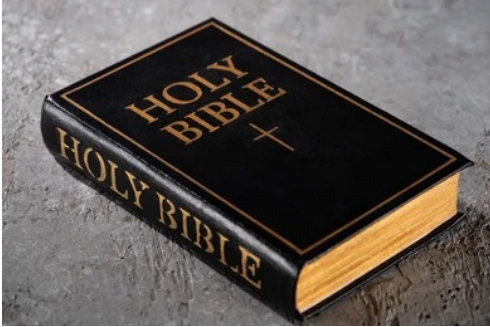
NEED HELP? Through generous donations by members and friends of Witherspoon, **THE DEACON BOARD** has resources available to provide monetary relief for members of our congregation who need **FINANCIAL SUPPORT** due to an extended illness, loss of a job, or other circumstances that are creating a difficult financial situation. We encourage you to let your deacon, the pastor, or an elder know if you, or a family member, needs financial assistance.

PATRICIA BUGGS AND BERNADINE HINES would like to thank the Witherspoon family and friends for the cards, calls, and words of compassion and kindness over the recent loss of Uncle Earl. He is very much missed. May you all enjoy a **HEALTHY, HAPPY AND JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



GUEST PREACHER ELSIE MCKEE

Elsie Tshimunyi McKee was born and reared in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in central Africa. She was the Archibald Alexander Professor of Reformation Studies and the History of Worship at Princeton Theological Seminary for 29 years and continues to be a member of Witherspoon St. Presbyterian Church. Since retiring, she has worked with Woman, Cradle of Abundance, Inc., the non-profit organization she and PTS friends established in 2013.



SATURDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We invite you to connect with us each Saturday morning at 10 a.m. to study and discuss scripture. All are welcome to be with us as we learn together.

December 23 *Welcome* (Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 1:39-55)

December 24 *Christmas Eve Stay Awhile* (Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-20; John 1:1-14)

December 25 *Christmas Day and Beyond: Don't be a Stranger* (Isaiah 52:7-10; Matthew 2:13-23).

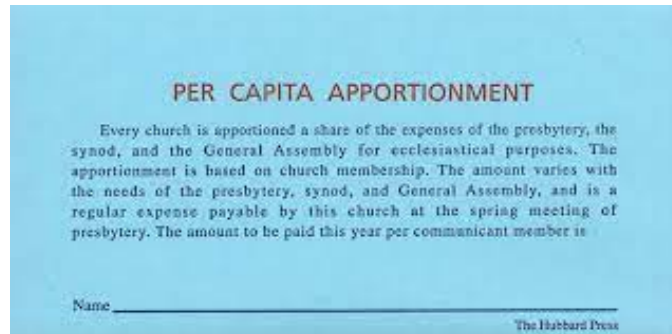


FELLOWSHIP HOUR BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS will be held **Sunday December 31** immediately following the Worship Service. If you are celebrating a Birthday or Anniversary in December, the Deacons invite you, your family, and friends to join us in celebrating you and your important event on this the last Sunday of your special event month.



VOLUNTEER MUSICIANS

Do you have a gift that God gave you? Do you feel led to share it with us at Church? Volunteer Musicians for all instruments are needed to add to our Music Ministry for Sunday and Special Worship Services. Volunteer guitar player(s) (amplified, non-amplified or electric) are also needed for select Sunday Worship Music. We encourage you to come, rehearse and play with us!



2023 Per Capita \$40
Mail to 112 Witherspoon St., Princeton NJ 08542
or Pay Online [LINK](#)

Witherspoon Session Makes a Last Appeal for Members to Submit 2023 Per Capita - Help Close \$2000 Gap

Witherspoon has a long tradition of paying our full Per Capita apportionment to the PCUSA and our Presbytery. We are committed to doing so again for this past year (2023). The Session asks those of you who have not yet paid to please submit your \$40/member per capita amount. If you can add an additional \$40 for members who cannot afford to do so, please do. Per capita connects Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations and mid-councils with the work of the larger Church. Session believes that paying our full per capita is an important element of belonging to a **connectional church** and a recognition that **Witherspoon has received support from the Presbytery and the Synod of the Northeast** over the years. We hope that 50 members will pay \$40 so Witherspoon can close the gap and raise an additional \$2000.

Pay Online [LINK](#)

By Mail - Check to 112 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542

In Church - In Collection Plate during Worship Service

This Week at Witherspoon

Today	Christmas Eve Service	10:00 AM
	Guest Preacher Elsie Tshimunyi McKee	
	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	11:30 AM
Monday		
Tuesday	Verse Speaking Choir (Sanctuary)	6:30 PM
Wednesday	Sunday Worship Planning Group (via Zoom)	5:30 PM
	Buildings & Grounds Committee (via Zoom)	7:00 PM
Thursday	Worship & Music Committee (via Zoom)	5:30 PM
Friday		
Saturday	Saturday Morning Bible Study (via Zoom)	10:00 AM
Next Sunday	Worship - Guest Preacher Michael Livingston	10:00 AM
	Birthdays/Anniversaries Fellowship	11:00 AM
	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	11:30 AM

Mary Did You Know

Words by
Mark Lowry

Music by
Buddy Greene

VERSE

♩ Am
G
Dm7

1. Mar y, did you know that your ba - by boy would one day walk on wa -
 (2. Mar y, did you) know that your ba - by boy would give sight to the blind
 (3.) know that your ba - by boy is Lord of all cre - a -

4 Esus
E
Am
G
Dm7

ter? Mar - y, did you know that your ba - by boy would save our sons and daugh-
 man? Mar - y, did you know that your ba - by boy would calm a storm with His
 tion? Mar - y, did you know that your ba - by boy will one day rule the na -

8 Esus
E
Dm7
G
C
G/B

ters? Did you know that your ba - by boy has come to make you new?
 hand? Did you know that your ba - by boy has walked where an - gels trod,
 tions? Did you know that your ba - by boy is heav - en's per - fect Lamb,

12 Am
Em/G
Dm7
Last time to Coda

This Child that you de - liv - ered will
 and when you kiss your lit - tle ba - by you've
 and the

INTERLUDE

15 Esus 1 2
 E E Am
 soon de - liv - er you. 2. Mar y, did you Oh, Mar - y did you know?
 kissed the face of God?

Am/G Dm11 Em7 Am Am/G Dm11
 19
 Ooh, Mar - y did you know? Ooh.

BRIDGE

25 Em7 Dm7 G/A Am G/A Am Dm7
 Ooh, the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live a - gain. The

30 G/A Am G/A Am G/A Am Esus
 lame will leap, the dumb will speak the prais - es of the Lamb.

34 E D.S. al Coda
 3. Oh, Mar - - y, did you

35 Dm7 Esus
 ⊕ Coda
 sleep - ing Child you're hold - ing is the great

38 E Am Am/G Dm11 Em7 Am Am/G

I Am? Oh, Mar - y. Oh._____

45 Dm7 Em7 Am2

Am2

Christmas Peace

Unison

1. Lord, be born in our hearts this day, Ho - ly
2. Lord, the world cries for u - ni - ty; bind our
3. Lord, be born in us ev - ery day, keep the

Spir - it, bring peace, we pray, Make the wars of the
hearts in com - mu - ni - ty, From all ha - tred our
world in your peace al - way, Ho - ly Spir - it, in

world to cease, Bring us, Lord, Christ - mas peace.
souls re - lease, Bring us, Lord, Christ - mas peace.
us in - crease, Bring us, Lord, Christ - mas peace.

Refrain

Christ - mas peace, Christ - mas peace, Bring us, Lord, Christ - mas peace.