



SUMMER WORSHIP  
MONTREAT CONFERENCE CENTER

July 29, 2025, 10:30 a.m.  
Anderson Auditorium

GATHERING

\*Opening Sentences

In the beginning was the Word,  
**and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.  
**The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness will not overcome it.**

\*Hymn 109    Blest Be the God of Israel

MERLE'S TUNE

Confession and Pardon

**I confess to God Almighty,  
before the whole company of heaven,  
and before you, my beloved in Christ,  
that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed,  
by what I have done,  
and by what I have left undone;  
and I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me.**

*Silence*

Almighty God, maker of all things,  
**have mercy on us all.**

Jesus Christ, redeemer of the world,  
**have mercy on us all.**

Holy Spirit, giver of life,  
**have mercy on us all.**

We hear good news of great joy:  
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

\*Hymn    Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

GLORY TO GOD

The first chapter of John's gospel gives us these great words of light that shines in darkness. The first chapter of Luke's gospel gives us the Song of Zechariah, a traditional customary text for morning prayer that also sings of dawning light. We sing that Luke text today in this hymn. The hymn's tune, MERLE'S TUNE, was written by beloved composer and church music leader Hal H. Hopson. Hal died last Sunday; his loss is grieved and his life and work is celebrated and remembered with affection and gratitude.

## The Sacrament of Baptism

\*Peace

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

## WORD

### Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Isaiah 7:10-14

Gaudete,  
gaudete Christus est natus  
ex Maria virgine Gaudete.

*Rejoice,  
rejoice, for Christ is born  
of the virgin Mary. Rejoice!*

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;  
there he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.

Angels sang about his birth; wise men sought and found him;  
heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;  
all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ringing.

Matthew 1:18-23

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

Sermon "The Most Important Word" The Reverend Betsy Swetenburg

This medieval tune comes from a collection called *Piae Cantiones* published in 1582. Its rhythmic buoyancy matches this text of joy. The arrangement is by Robert Batastini; the stanzas of "Gentle Mary" are by Joseph Cook and date from 1919.

## LESSONS, CAROLS, PRAYERS

### *Luke 2*

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

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

O Christ, we pray for all who journey...

We ask this in your name. **Amen.**

### *Matthew 2*

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings – let loving hearts adore him.

**Nails, spear shall pierce him through,  
the cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**

O Christ, we pray for all who seek your light...

We ask this in your name. **Amen.**

### *Matthew 2*

*silent prayers*

O Christ, we pray for all who suffer violence...

We ask this in your name. **Amen.**

### *Luke 2*

O Christ, we pray for all who shepherd and keep watch...

We ask this in your name. **Amen.**

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

***Gloria in excelsis Deo!***

***Gloria in excelsis Deo!***

*Glory to God in the highest!*

## RESPONDING AND SENDING

### Offerings

Sing noel, sing noel, noel, noel!

arr. André Thomas

Sing we all noel!

O come, ye people, gather here

to hear the news of good cheer!

The King of kings, the Lamb of God is born today in Bethlehem –  
sing noel!

This anthem is called *African Noel*. Full of rhythmic vigor and surprise, it is an arrangement of a traditional carol from the African continent.

### Prayer of Thanksgiving 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 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.**

This great hymn's text was written by our friend Mary Louise Bringle. The tune, written by William Rowan, is called *TEMPLE OF PEACE*—a fitting name for a hymn that ends with *shalom*. It is followed by a short chorale-prelude by J. S. Bach, from the Advent-Christmas section of his *Little Organ Book*. Its English translation by C. S. Terry is based on a text by Martin Luther, itself a German translation from an older Latin hymn.

\*Hymn 79    Light Dawns on a Weary World

TEMPLE OF PEACE

### \*Benediction and Charge

\*Voluntary    "O hail this brightest day of days...

J. S. Bach

...all good Christian people!

For Christ has come upon our ways—ring it from the steeple!

God's own Son from heaven's high state is born the Son of Mary!"

### *Assisting in Worship*

Adele Carlisle, reader

Richard DuBose, Montreat Conference Center President

Michaela English, Omega Small Group Leader

Hannah Garrity, Artist in Residence

The Reverend Keith Grogg, Pastor, Montreat Presbyterian Church

The Reverend Jenny McDevitt, Pastor, Shandon Presbyterian Church,  
Columbia, SC

The Reverend Hugh Hamilton

The Reverend Betsy Swetenburg, Pastor,

Northridge Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX

Alec Peters, Summer Worship Liturgy Writer

Heather Scott, Production Associate

Eric Wall, Conference Center Musician

Summer Singers

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