

THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Sometimes we scurry so for joy that we forget what it feels like. Sometimes we work so hard for peace that we neglect the peace that is sitting with us in our chair. Sometimes we hope so much for hope that we miss the hopeful signs that are right underfoot. Give us this day, a song, one we sing in harmony with heaven and nature. Let the song recollect joy, be peace itself; let the song hope a little ahead of our own hope. You grant us joy and peace and hope: these are not our own accomplishments. Let this day find us, with heaven and with nature, singing about you.

—Donna Schaper
On Tiptoes in Expectation

NORTHMINSTER BAPTIST CHURCH
3955 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211

THE ACT OF WORSHIP
The Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025
Ten-thirty o'clock

LIGHT COMING INTO DARKNESS

The worship of God begins this morning as you enter the sanctuary. You are encouraged to use these moments for meditation, reflection, and prayer. Following the service, please enjoy a time of fellowship with those around you.

The Meditation of Preparation

In the gospel of John, Jesus sums up pretty much everything by saying, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:11) He said it at the supper that he knew was the last one at which he’d have a mouth to eat with.

Happiness turns up more or less where you’d expect it to – a good marriage, a rewarding job, a pleasant vacation. Joy, on the other hand, is as notoriously unpredictable as the one who bequeaths it.

—Frederick Buechner
Beyond Words

The Prelude “Savior of the Nations, Come” Bach

The Call to Worship “Advent Message” How

Come, Lord Jesus, O come quickly!
The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness:
Prepare ye the way of the Lord;
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!
Come, Lord Jesus, O come quickly! Amen.

THE COMING OF THE LIGHT

*The Lighting of the Candle of Joy Mary Alden Ratcliff

*The Advent Banner Lyla Witt May

*The Processional Hymn No. 133 *VENI EMMANUEL*

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

*The Advent Litany

Amy Moremen

Leader: The joy of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Come once more, with eager longing, to receive the promises of God.

People: Out of the desert places of our lives, we gather with joy and gladness.

Leader: Come expectantly, with all your questions. Bring to this place all your hopes and dreams.

People: Out of our weaknesses and fears, we assemble to gain new strength and courage.

Leader: Come to behold the majesty of our God. Draw near to God's Holy Way.

All: Out of all circumstances that imprison us, we come to claim the joy of freedom in Christ.

—Lavon Bayler

Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2

*The Gloria Patri

MEINEKE

**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.**

*The Prayer of Invocation

Amy Moremen

The Greeting

Geoff Davidson

The Lessons

Isaiah 35:1-10

Geoff Davidson

Luke 1:46b-55

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

**THE CONFESSION OF DARKNESS
AND THE ASSURANCE OF LIGHT**

The Meditation of Confession

Giver of joy, inspire all peoples with your meekness and humility of heart. Heal the strife and animosity that separate your sons and daughters and all the nations of the world. You who came to save us, endow us with loving intentions and loving actions. Let the joy of Bethlehem be

with us always. Grant us the hope of justice, the peace of charity, and eternal joy with you.

—Adapted from a prayer by
Father John Mudd

The Silent Prayer

The Assurance of Pardon

Lesley Ratcliff

The Morning Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Lesley Ratcliff

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

GRATITUDE FOR THE LIGHT

*The Offertory Hymn No. 155

ST. LOUIS

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

*The Offertory Prayer

Amy Moremen

The Offertory

“Of the Father's Love Begotten”

Held

*The Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise loving God, whom we adore. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

PROCLAIMING THE LIGHT

The Gospel

Matthew 11:2-11

Scott Dickison

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

On the first day, from darkness a voice called forth the light.
It did not say there would be only light.

More at night than day did waters churn and separate,
and thus the world was made. Creation happens without light.

But so does pain, and confusion. Silent tears seen by no one.
So much done and left undone, revealed only in the light.

In fog of war, a promise comes: A virgin shall conceive
and bear the one who'll make what's heavy light.

How long: O Lord. Do you have a face to hide?
And still the sun sets, revealing moon and starlight.

At ev'ry table set, in broken bread and cup outpoured,
the world to come in secret, illuminated by candlelight.

Then by angel call, in visit and in dream, hist'ry finds its turn.
The waters of the womb again stir and brood, waiting for the light.

In cries that pierce the loaded silence, the promise comes to form.
The heavens torn in angel song for the Christ, the One who is the
Light.

TIME OF RESPONSE

At this time of Advent,
fire our imaginations
with the sweep of your salvation.

Catch us up
in the cause of your kingdom,
already breaking into this world
in our ransomed lives,
yet waiting for its final fulfilment when Christ shall come again.

And let your Spirit,
wild as the wind,
gentle as the dove,
move within us and among us,
to enliven our worship and strengthen our faith
and send us out with anticipation and joy.

—John Harvey
Candles & Conifers

*The Recessional Hymn No. 152

GLORIA

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

*The Benediction

Scott Dickison

*The Postlude

“From Heaven Above”

Young

**The congregation will please stand.*

The scriptures for today are found on
the following pages in the pew Bible:

Isaiah 35:1-10, page 578

Luke 1:46b-55, page 832

Matthew 11:2-11, page 792

Today is the Third Sunday of Advent, the beginning season of the Christian year. Advent is a time of spiritual preparation for the coming of Christ and of anticipation of the fullness of the kingdom of God. The color purple reflects the Advent themes of preparation and restoration.

The Advent Wreath marks the four Sundays of Advent with the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love surrounding the Christ candle. The ever-green wreath symbolizes the never-ending love of God, and the flickering candlelight dispels the darkness as we are reminded that Jesus is the Light of the World.

The Advent Banner, *Highway Through the Desert*, marks the beginning of the season. The shapes remind us of the unfolding of new life and the flowing of God’s spirit among God’s people. It is a visual symbol of Emmanuel’s coming to earth as told in the book of Isaiah. The prophet foretold the birth of a leader who would cause great changes. On the horizon is a dawning. The banner reminds us of Isaiah 40:3-5:

A voice is calling, “Clear the way of the Lord in the wilderness. Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up and every mountain and hill made low; and the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

The banner was designed and made by a Northminster member.

The flowers for today are given on the occasion of the wedding of Anna Kate Williams and Patrick Allen Boyd.

Notes on the Anthem

A ghazal (pronounced guzzle) is a traditional Arabic poetic form written in couplets (pairs of two lines) with a refined syllable count and rhyme pattern, and marked by the repetition of a word or phrase. Ghazals have also traditionally been set to music. This emphasis on a particular idea and association with music was the inspiration behind these lines I prepared for Tim. In the same way that the traditional service of “Lessons and Carols” situates the story of Christmas within the broader arc of scripture and history, this poem, too, aims to present the birth of Christ as part of an unfolding act of creation and illumination, by which we still see.

Scott Dickison

First Song
by Galway Kinnell

Then it was dusk in Illinois, the small boy
After an afternoon of carting dung
Hung on the rail fence, a sapped thing
Weary to crying. Dark was growing tall
And he began to hear the pond frogs all
Calling on his ear with what seemed their joy.

Soon their sound was pleasant for the boy
Listening in the smoky dusk and the nightfall
Of Illinois, and from the fields two small
Boys came bearing cornstalk violins
And they rubbed the cornstalk bows with resins
And the three sat there scraping of their joy.

It was now fine music the frogs and the boys
Did in the towering Illinois twilight make
And into dark in spite of a shoulder's ache
A boy's hunched body loved out of a stalk
The first song of his happiness, and the song woke
His heart to the darkness and into the sadness of joy.

The Risk of Birth, Christmas, 1973
by Madeleine L'Engle

This is no time for a child to be born,
With the earth betrayed by war & hate
And a comet slashing the sky to warn
That time runs out & the sun burns late.


That was no time for a child to be born,
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;
Honour & truth were trampled by scorn —
Yet here did the Saviour make his home.

When is the time for love to be born?
The inn is full on the planet earth,
And by a comet the sky is torn —
Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.

————— CAREGIVING CONCERNS —————

CARE CARDS may be found in the pew racks, if you would like to write anyone. Place your cards in the offering plate. Cards will be mailed from the church office on Monday morning.

Congratulations to Patrick and Anna Kate Williams Boyd on the occasion of their marriage yesterday.

 Northminster is saddened by the death of Carolyn Aden, a member of Northminster since 1968. Christian sympathy is extended to Anne Russell and Scott Bradley, Leigh and Mike Box, Katherine and Patrick Rhodes, Aden Marie Burchak, Barrie and Eddie, Cole, Andrew and Nick Mahaffey, and to all of Carolyn's family and friends.

ONGOING CAREGIVING CONCERNS

Gorman Schaffer
Carla Holt

Virginia Hamilton
Sue Edwards

Libby McGee

The Caregiving Committee considers it a privilege to pray for each concern that affects our church family. Recognizing the power of prayer, we meet each Monday at 8:30 a.m. in the church conference room for a brief, informal prayer-time and invite all who can to join us. If you have prayer concerns, please call the church office or a member of the Caregiving Committee.

Pastoral Care Number

To alert the ministers of a pastoral care need,
please call 601-980-1002.

Brumfield House

December 18: Bill Thompson
December 25: Jeff Wilson

Meals on Wheels

Wednesday, December 17

Cooks:	Drivers:
Amy Moremen	Rt. 1: James Bethea
Kathryn Davis	Rt. 2: Julie & Dudley Wooley
Jan Stewart	

Monday, December 22

Cooks:	Drivers:
Gail England	Rt. 1: Beverly & David Raddin
Ann Calhoon	Rt. 2: Mariann Field &
Kelly Hicks	Janet Holt

— ANNOUNCEMENTS —

Christmas Caroling

You are invited to join our first—twelfth graders for Christmas caroling today at 1:30 p.m. We'll meet in the back parking lot, carpool to carol at a few members' homes, and return to the church by 3:30.

Office Closing Tuesday, December 16

The office will be closed from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. while the staff celebrates Christmas with a luncheon.

Northminster Angel Tree

Tuesday, December 16, is the last day to bring gifts. Please contact Megan Mayhan at 601-624-6701 or meganmayhan@gmail.com with any questions.

Spann Kindergartners Sing Christmas Carols

You are invited to join the Adopt-A-School Committee in listening to the Spann School kindergarteners sing Christmas carols on Wednesday, December 17 at 11:30 a.m. in the Great Hall.

The Season of Advent

The Worship and Music Committee offers *The Season of Advent 2025*, this year's devotional guide, as a gift to our congregation. We hope that the creative expressions and offerings by members and friends will encourage and enhance moments of individual worship throughout this season of expectant waiting. Copies are available throughout the church for you to take and share.

Join us for the church-wide

Christmas Breakfast

Sunday, December 21
during the Sunday School hour
(no Sunday School)
in the Great Hall!

Merry Mahjong

Sunday, December 21, 2:30-4:30 p.m. in the Great Hall

The highest scorer at each table will take home a mahjong ornament.



Sign up here!

This event will be for folks who have learned the basics. If you haven't yet, please reach out to Lesley about a time to learn.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service

Wednesday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.

Pre-service music begins at 5:00 p.m.

Childcare will be available.

In-Home Communion

In the spirit of Thanksgiving and Advent, Northminster is offering in-home communion. If you or your loved one is not able to attend our worship service, please contact us to arrange a time when we can bring communion to you. If you are interested in sharing communion where you reside, contact Marty Harper by emailing marty@northminsterbaptist.org or by calling 601-954-4348.

Stewpot Clothes Closet

Stewpot is in need of men's clothing size 40 or lower, especially pants, shoes and belts. You can drop them off at Stewpot or bring them to the church office. Please contact Julie Wooley at jjwooley12@gmail.com or Leslie Ward at lward@northminsterbaptist.org with any questions.

Holiday Hours

The church office will close
Wednesday, December 24 at 12:00 p.m.

The church office will be closed
Thursday, December 25
Friday, December 26
Thursday, January 1

Northminster Women's Retreat

Saturday, February 28—Sunday, March 1
Eagle Ridge Conference Center, Raymond, MS

YOUTH NEWS

Youth Sunday School

Join us at 9:15 a.m. for donuts and good conversation.

Christmas Caroling

Today, 1:30 p.m.

CHILDREN'S NEWS

Children's Worship Volunteer Schedule

- December 14: Chapel Coordinators—Amanda & Trey Clark
Firecrackers—Sarah & Nick Newcomb
Sparklers—Kim & Kyle Watson
- December 21: Firecrackers—Anne & Parker Snow
Sparklers—Kelly & Josh Guyton
- December 28: Firecrackers—Sarah & Nick Newcomb
Sparklers—Jennifer & Drew Rymer
- January 4: Firecrackers—Krysten & Jay Jernigan
Sparklers—Mary Hastings & Gray Samson

The Living Nativity

Children in the Beginners, Firecrackers and Sparklers classes, as well as all first through sixth graders, are invited to participate in the Living Nativity, which is a part of the pre-service music for the Christmas Eve Service.

The rehearsal schedule follows:

December 21 from 9:00-9:30 a.m.

December 24 at 4:30 p.m.

All rehearsals will be in the Choir Room, except for December 24, when we will meet in the Great Hall. Because rehearsal times are short, please be on time and attend as many rehearsals as possible. We look forward to our children leading us in worship throughout the season of Advent!

THE CHURCH IN SERVICE

Sunday, December 14

- 8:30 a.m. Chapel Communion
- 9:00 a.m. Living Nativity Practice
- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
- 11:30 a.m. Deacons' Luncheon, GH
- 1:30 p.m. Christmas Caroling
- 4:00 p.m. Youth Ensemble Choir

Tuesday, December 16

- 5:30 p.m. Personnel Cmte., L/CR

Wednesday, December 17

- 10:00 a.m. Meals on Wheels
- 11:30 a.m. Spann Elementary Caroling, GH
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 21

- 8:30 a.m. Chapel Communion
- 9:00 a.m. Living Nativity Practice
- 9:15 a.m. Christmas Breakfast, GH
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
- 2:30 p.m. Mahjong, GH

MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH
Every member a minister

The Deacon of the Week is Wilson Stribling.
The Caregiving Chair for December is Annette Hitt.
The Caregiving Coordinators for December are Annette Hitt,
Susan O'Mara, Sarah Reynolds and Sunny Fowler.
The Caregiver of the Week is Susan O'Mara.
The Liturgist for December is Gray Jackson.
The flowers for December are provided by Lisa Kelly
and Kandy Sims.
The Usher Captain for December is Keith Davis.

Every member of Northminster Baptist Church, like every disciple of Christ, is commissioned to participate in Christian ministry. The following persons have been called by this congregation to serve as enablers in such ministry.

Senior Pastor	Scott Dickison
Associate Pastor for Children and Adults	Lesley Ratcliff
Associate Pastor for Students	Geoff Davidson
Associate Pastor for Senior Adults	Marty Harper
Minister of Music	Tim Coker
Organist	Sheila Hess
Organist Emeritus	Billy Trotter
Office Manager	Leslie Ward
Financial Secretary	Sam South
Receptionist/Secretary	Jan Wilson/Neely Grimsley
Sexton	Lamenais Simeon

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