

Praise God

Elevate . . . Admire . . . Lift up . . . Focus all positive attention on . . . Grateful for. . .

Psalm 148 is packed full of praise, an invitation for all of creation, including the angels and us humans, to praise God. What a wonderful way to start the new year—for everything and everyone to praise God!

A posture of our hands lifted in praise feels appropriate, reaching toward God and at the same time acknowledging both our submission to God's will and our humble position in God's universe.

How do you praise God? When do you praise God?

For me, praising God is also an act of cleansing and putting myself in right relationship with God. For many years, especially while traveling abroad where I was outside of my comfort zone, I sang in the shower to start my day. I sang, "Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation. Oh, my soul praise him for he is my strength and salvation! All ye who hear, now to God's temple draw near. Praise God in glad adoration." It somehow seemed to start my day off right. I didn't intentionally decide to do this. I must have been moved by the Spirit to sing.

Another song of praise that often comes to mind goes like this: "I love you, Lord / And I lift my voice / To worship you / Oh my soul rejoice / Take joy, my king / In what you hear / May it be a sweet sweet sound / In your ear." I learned it when it was taught to children at Annual Conference. Why did this song particularly draw my attention? I can only say that again it was the Spirit leading.

What praise issues forth from your soul in this season of new beginnings? Have you experienced what a difference it makes in your life to begin your day with praising God?

—Beverly Eikenberry
North Manchester, Indiana

"Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; *praise him* in the heights!" (Psalm 148:1, *NRSVue*). **Today's Bible readings from the lectionary:** 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52.

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Praise him

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 AM

December 29, 2024

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Lisa Bussard, Worship Leader

WHERE DID YOU SEE GOD?

PRELUDE "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" (Wells)

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

All: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

One: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

All: We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

One: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

All: In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity.

***HYMN #212** "O come all ye faithful"

[Verse 1]

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Come, and behold him, born the King of angels. O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

[Verse 2]

True God of true God, Light of light eternal, our lowly nature he hath not abhorred; Son of the Father, begotten, not created. O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

[Verse 3]

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above; glory to God, glory in the highest. O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

[Verse 4]

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

***OPENING PRAYER**

God who labors to bring forth abundant life among us, we thank you for the birth we celebrate this day. A newborn bundle of human life can cause us to gaze for hours, amazed. Refresh our amazement that you sent Jesus to us from your very self, to be born as a human baby, and to live among us, showing us the way to new life. In response to your great labor of love, may we open ourselves to you, that you may create new life within us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

MORNING ANTHEM "A Song of Christmas" (Martin)
Temple Choir

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

As we prepare to worship God through the giving of our offerings, let us focus our attention on these thoughts: Did you ever feel as though the wealth many of us are blessed with is sometimes a heavy burden? We can feel weighed down with responsibility and over commitment. It can feel as though we have no room to breathe. And worse yet, there is no room to let Jesus in and to experience his glory.

Included in the joy of our giving is the space it creates for Jesus. The burden is lightened because we give to serve with him in his ministry. Our giving welcomes Jesus into our lives. As we give today, may we be aware of Jesus's presence in that space which we have created for him.

As we pass the offering plate here in the sanctuary, we also pass a virtual offering plate to those worshipping with us on Facebook Live. We invite you to give by mailing your offering to the church or dropping it off at the church during the week, or by going to the Hagerstowncob webpage and using Paypal.

Offertory "Christmas Reflections" (Martin)

***Doxology #119** "Praise God from whom"

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Let us pray. God, thank you for this time of giving and the space which it creates...giving us the opportunity to know your presence, and experience your work in our lives. Use these offerings where ever you see they are needed for your ministry. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

Please remember our worship is also on Facebook Live and our website.

Please do not share any personal information you do not want to be made public.

An usher will hold the microphone for you while you share.

PASTORAL PRAYER

HYMN #215

“What child is this”

[Verse 1]

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping, whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing. Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe,

the son of Mary!

[Verse 2]

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. 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!

[Verse 3]

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high; the virgin sings her lullaby. Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 1:1-14

NT 91

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

MESSAGE

“Power to Become Children of God”

Pastor Eddie Edmonds

*HYMN #251 (Methodist Hymnal)

“Go tell it on the mountain”

[Refrain]

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

[Verse 1]

*While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.*

[Refrain]

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

[Verse 2]

*The shepherds feared and trembled, when, lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth.*

[Refrain]

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

[Verse 3]

*Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.*

[Refrain]

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

*BENEDICTION

After the Benediction, you may be seated.

Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.

*POSTLUDE

“The Newborn King”

(Martin)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship

Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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Hagerstown
Church of the Brethren
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21740
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Office: Tuesday—Friday
Flexible hours
(appointments welcome/
call ahead)

Morning Praise Worship
at 8:30 AM
Sunday School at 9:30 AM
Worship and Facebook Live at
10:45 AM

www.hagerstowncob.org

[www.facebook.com/
hagerstowncob](http://www.facebook.com/hagerstowncob)

Twyla Rowe
Pastor

Allyson McPeak
Administrative Assistant

Burton Young
Director of
Music Ministries

Don Rowe
Interior Esthetics
Technician

*We welcome you to our church and
Rejoice in your participation with us in
worship. It is our prayer that you will
experience the presence of God's Spirit and
that it will equip you for service and ministry
in the week ahead. Our Pastor, Deacons, and
Cluster Leaders are available after worship
and during the week to listen and assist you in
your Christian pilgrimage.*

THE ANNOUNCER December 29, 2024

If you placed someone on the prayer list and they are now celebrating a recovery and would like their name taken off the list, please contact the church office.

If you or a loved one has surgery scheduled, is hospitalized, or would like a visit from the pastor, please notify the church.

“Take a Moment” Let this be our daily prayer for the week beginning on Sunday, December 29 - Holy God, Now that the calendar shows that Christmas has passed, I ask that you help me to keep the spirit of Christmas... your gifts of hope, joy, peace, and love...in my heart...alive through all I say and do, throughout the new year. I boldly enter this new year as your child...ready to fulfill your plan for me. Thank you for calling me friend and walking with me on this journey of life. Amen.

Our thanks to Lisa Bussard for being our worship leader today and to the Temple Choir for our morning anthem.

A special thanks to Pastor Eddie Edmonds for being with us today while Pastor Twyla is away on vacation.

Attendance. Please sign the attendance rosters found at the end of your pew, or possibly in the hymnal rack, and pass it down the row so everyone can sign.

The church office will be closed through January 1st for the New Year. Pastor Twyla will be on vacation through January 1st. If you are in need of regular pastoral care, please contact your Deacon.

The flowers on the altar this morning are to the Glory of God and in loving memory of our grandmother and great-grandmother Henrietta D. Kephart (Nan-Nan) on her 137th birthday today. Love Susan, Jeremy and Colie

Next Sunday is our regular Food Pantry collection. Bring in your gift(s) of non-perishable food items and place them on the cart as you enter the west entrance, and a volunteer delivers the food. We thank everyone for their continued support of this ministry to our community! Just a reminder - all items should be either dry, boxed, or in cans. Please do not bring in anything in a glass jar that could break and injure a recipient or our volunteers. Thank you!

Christmas Cards. Please remember to check your church mailbox for Christmas cards. Any cards leftover will not be delivered or mailed by the church office or Spiritual Nurture Team. Please check your mailbox often. You never know what might be in there. Blessings! - *Your Spiritual Nurture Team*

Inclement Weather Policy—If inclement weather is forecasted, be sure to:

- * Check your email—we will send out a group email as quickly as possible if the decision to cancel in-person worship is made.
- * Check our Facebook page—Hagerstown Church of the Brethren (facebook.com/hagerstowncob) we will post updates there as well.

If we do hold in-person worship, and if you are uncomfortable driving in bad weather, please join us on Facebook Live. Be safe first and check your email!

Our new website is live! You can go to hagerstowncob.org to check it out. If you find any information incorrect or missing, contact Mary Early at her email listed below. Also, if you have photos that you think could improve any of the pages, you may send them to Mary as well—webmaster@hagerstowncob.org

A Friendly Reminder: Meritus is encouraging the community to keep in mind that this is the season when the flu and viruses are easily spread. The hospital is currently seeing an influx of people with a very contagious virus. This reminder is not to alarm anyone, but to ask us all to keep in mind that if we become ill; or if we feel like we are coming down with something; or if you know you have been exposed to something contagious...please take care of yourself at home and worship with your church family on Sundays using Facebook Live. They also suggest avoiding hugs and handshakes during this season. Worshiping God is central to our life together. May we do so, even as we care for each other by following these preventative guidelines.

January Tidings are now available. If you did not receive an electronic copy please notify the Church office and you will be added to the emailing list. Printed copies can be found on the credenza in the wing of the sanctuary or in the fellowship hall.

We're entering the season for high heating costs. We remind everyone to please keep doors closed to the sanctuary, fellowship hall, church entrances, hallways, and church office. All classroom doors (2nd and 3rd floor) should stay open. Thank you for your awareness and cooperation.

Because winter weather is here, we'd like to pass along a gentle reminder to drive slowly in our parking lot, especially when it's snow-covered or icy. Always be on alert for children, pedestrians, dogs, cats, and those less mindful than you are of the pavement surface conditions.

Cash for Causes/Martin's Gift Card Program. Purchase Martin's gift cards to take to the store to pay for your groceries or gas, and 5% of the face value of the gift card is a donation to the church and goes toward your yearly charitable contribution. To purchase a card, please contact Larry Kees, Jr. (301-331-0107). We can make arrangements to leave cards in your church mailbox or mail them to you.

Please remember to keep the administrative assistant updated on when and where meetings/events are being held. Please email or call the Administrative Assistant with information that needs added to the church calendar. **301-733-3565 or secretaryhcob@gmail.com.** Thank you!

Printed copies of Leadership and Ministry team meeting minutes are available in the west entrance. The holders are located on the wall beside the bulletin board.

Offering envelopes are located in the pew racks and at other convenient locations around the church. To assist our financial secretary, we ask that you use an envelope and please put your name and envelope number on the outside. Here's a tip - take a few envelopes home and stick one of those return address labels we all get on the outside. Then all you need to add is your number. Having your name and number on the outside of the envelope is a huge help to our offering counters. Thank you!

The last Offering Count for the 2024 year will be for Sunday, December 29th's collection. **However, additional contributions for the 2024 year will be accepted until December 31st.** If dropping off or mailing your contribution, please clearly mark your contribution as "2024 Contribution" or "2024 Offering" to ensure your contribution is not counted towards the 2025 year. The Administrative Assistant will not be available in the office on December 31st, but you may use the offering drop-off box located in the west entrance. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Heather Kees, Financial Secretary.

Year-end Giving Guidelines

The Internal Revenue Service states under the heading of Timing of Contributions: *Contributions must actually be paid in cash or other property before the close of your tax year to be deductible, whether you use the cash or accrual method.*

This means all contributions for any given year must be physically at the church no later than December 31st to be applied to the year's contribution statement.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/charitable-contribution-deductions>

CALENDAR

Sunday, December 29

Pastor Vacation/Admin. Assistant/Vacation

Pastor Eddie Edmonds, Guest Preacher

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall

9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms

10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Monday, December 30

Pastor Vacation/Admin. Assistant/Vacation/Church office closed

Tuesday, December 31

New Year's Eve/Pastor Vacation/Admin. Assistant/Vacation

6:30 pm Leadership Team/Room 302

7:00 pm Hag. Choral Arts/Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, January 1

Church office closed

New Year's Day/Pastor Vacation

12:00 pm Deadline for bulletin announcement submissions

Thursday, January 2

5:30 pm Praise Band Rehearsal/Fellowship Hall

6:30 pm Brethren Bells/Choir Room

7:30 pm Temple Choir/Fellowship Hall

Friday, January 3

8:00 am Bulletin preparation time/Church office

1:00 pm Islamic Center/Use of Parking Lot (1-3pm)

Saturday, January 4

Pastor Twyla's day off

Sunday, January 5

Food Pantry Sunday

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall

9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms

10:20 am Fellowship Time/Mullendore Room

10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & Facebook Live

Remember our weekday schedule is subject to rapid change.

You may mail your offering to
15 S. Mulberry Street,
Hagerstown MD 21740
OR
you can make a secure offering
donation on our website using
PayPal www.hagerstowncob.org

The church calendar is online at
www.hagerstowncob.org.
Click the calendar tab.