



New Life Presbyterian Church

Welcome to New Life Presbyterian Church

Dear Visitor,

Welcome! It is a joy and privilege to gather this morning to worship God together. Here at New Life, we are a small part of the worldwide, multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi-cultural body of Christ. Although we are Presbyterian and Reformed, our identity is found not in what makes us distinct, but in what makes us united: we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not only our Maker; He is our Savior. If you have put your hope and trust in Him, we welcome you as a brother or sister. It is in Him that we have New Life!

If you are here this morning and do not know what you think about Jesus, or about the claims of the Bible, we are delighted that you have chosen to join us for the morning. We hope and trust that you will experience a warm welcome, regardless of your religious convictions. We are a community of those who have experienced the embrace of God, through Jesus Christ. It is our goal to show that love to all who are around us. Please know that I personally would welcome your thoughts and perspectives on anything you observe this morning.

May the grace and peace of Christ be with you all!

Joyfully,

Pastor Erik Swanson

P.S. There is a staffed nursery, off the fellowship hall, for children ages 0-4.

Worshiping God

December 24, 2023

Reflections:

⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn...

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” - Luke 2

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Erik Swanson

Prelude

Call to Worship – Adapted from Luke 1

Joe Heidler

Minister: My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

People: His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

Minister: He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

People: He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

Minister: He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

People: He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.

All: O come let us adore Him! O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Prayer of Praise

Manger Throne

Verse 1

You could have stepped into creation
With fire for all to see
Brought every tribe and nation to their
knees
Arriving with the host of heaven
In royal robe and crown
The rulers of the earth all bowing down

Pre-Chorus

But You chose meekness over majesty
Wrapped Your power in humanity

Chorus

Glory be to You alone
King who reigns from a manger throne
My life my praise everything I own
To Jesus the King on a manger throne

Verse 2

You could have marched in all Your glory
Into the heart of Rome
Showed them splendor like they'd never
known
But You wrote a better story
In humble Bethlehem
Creator in the arms of common men

Pre-Chorus

You will die for our redemption
And You'll rise so we can live

Chorus

Bridge

From heaven to the cradle
From cradle to the cross
Let heaven and nature sing
This is our King
But the grave couldn't hold Him
Our God has overcome
Let heaven and nature sing
This is our King
(REPEAT)

All hail the King
All hail the King
All hail the King

Chorus

Ending

My life my praise everything I own
To Jesus the King on a manger throne
To Jesus the King on a manger throne

"Manger Throne" words and music by Jonathan Smith, Phil Wickham, Tony Wood

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Angels We Have Heard on High

1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains,
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

REFRAIN

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

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

Advent Reading

- Sue & Rich Vester, Alyssa & Henry Johnson

Reader: *Our waiting is almost over. In these last days of Advent, we stand on the threshold of Christmas. Whether our Lord waits another 1000 years or returns tomorrow, we stand on the threshold of his return.*

Child: *It's almost here. We are almost at Christmas!*

Reader: *As we have waited we have experienced the presence of the One for whom we wait. God's presence brings peace.*

Lighting of the Candles

Reader: *Isaiah prophesied: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Jesus himself reminds us: "Behold, I am coming soon!" [Isaiah 9:6 and Revelation 22:7]*

Congregational Prayer: **God of Peace, have mercy on us for failing to live at peace with others. Have mercy, we pray. This Advent, we wait for the birth of the Christ-Child, the Prince of Peace. And we wait for Jesus' coming again in glory when swords will become plowshares. We pray for those who live in conflict, that they will be protected. We pray for the situations that create conflict, that they will be resolved peacefully. We pray especially for the children, who are hurt the most by conflict, protect them and bring caring adults alongside them to care for them. Show us how we can be peacemakers in our own relationships, our own families and workplaces, and in the world. Help us to be blessed as peacemakers in your name, Amen.**

Reader: *Hear God's promise through the prophet Isaiah: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God...He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." [Isaiah 40:1a, 11]*

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

1. It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace - ful wings un - furled,
3. And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
4. For lo, the days are has - t'ning on, by proph - et bards fore - told,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world:
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow,
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years comes round the age of gold:

"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heav'n's all - gra - cious King";
a - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now! for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing:
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,

the world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing,
and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
O rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing,
and the whole world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Prayers of the People

Offering

The offering allows friends and members of our church to express their faith in God's Word, and to support the extension of that Word in our community and in the world.

Special Music: "Jesus, What a Wonderful Child"

Women's Choral Ensemble

Chorus

Jesus, Jesus, oh, what a wonderful Child.
Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek and mild.
New life, new hope to all he brings.
Listen to the angels sing:
"Glory, glory, glory to the new born
King!"

Verse 1

He was herald'd by the angels
yes, born in a lowly manger.
God chose the virgin Mary as His mother,
and Joseph as His earthly father.
Three wise men trav'lin' from afar,
they were guided by a shinin' star
to see King Jesus where He lay in a
manger full of hay.

Chorus

Verse 2

Some traveled north, some traveled
south
to see this wonderful Child.
Some traveled east, some traveled west
to see this wonderful Child.

Chorus

"Jesus, What A Wonderful Child" Traditional Spiritual Arranged by Rollo Dillworth
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Doxology:

**All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son;
Evermore your voices raising
To th'eternal Three in One:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

Scripture – Isaiah 60

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen
upon you.

² For behold, darkness shall cover the
earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.

³ And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your
rising.

⁴ Lift up your eyes all around, and see;
they all gather together, they come to
you;
your sons shall come from afar,
and your daughters shall be carried on
the hip.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and exult,
because the abundance of the sea shall
be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to
you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall bring good news, the praises
of the LORD.

⁷ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered
to you;
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to
you;
they shall come up with acceptance on
my altar,
and I will beautify my beautiful house.

⁸ Who are these that fly like a cloud,
and like doves to their windows?

⁹ For the coastlands shall hope for me,
the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your children from afar,
their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the LORD your God,
and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has made you beautiful.

¹⁰ Foreigners shall build up your walls,
and their kings shall minister to you;
for in my wrath I struck you,
but in my favor I have had mercy on
you.

¹¹ Your gates shall be open continually;
day and night they shall not be shut,
that people may bring to you the wealth
of the nations,
with their kings led in procession.

¹² For the nation and kingdom
that will not serve you shall perish;
those nations shall be utterly laid
waste.

¹³ The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,
to beautify the place of my sanctuary,
and I will make the place of my feet
glorious.

¹⁴ The sons of those who afflicted you
shall come bending low to you,
and all who despised you
shall bow down at your feet;
they shall call you the City of the LORD,
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵ Whereas you have been forsaken and
hated,

with no one passing through,
I will make you majestic forever,
a joy from age to age.
¹⁶You shall suck the milk of nations;
you shall nurse at the breast of kings;
and you shall know that I, the LORD, am
your Savior
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of
Jacob.
¹⁷Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
and instead of iron I will bring silver;
instead of wood, bronze,
instead of stones, iron.
I will make your overseers peace
and your taskmasters righteousness.
¹⁸Violence shall no more be heard in your
land,
devastation or destruction within your
borders;
you shall call your walls Salvation,
and your gates Praise.

¹⁹The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give you light;
but the LORD will be your everlasting
light,
and your God will be your glory.
²⁰Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your everlasting
light,
and your days of mourning shall be
ended.
²¹Your people shall all be righteous;
they shall possess the land forever,
the branch of my planting, the work of
my hands,
that I might be glorified.
²²The least one shall become a clan,
and the smallest one a mighty nation;
I am the LORD;
in its time I will hasten it.

Sermon Notes

Celebration of the LORD's Supper

New Life Church invites all baptized Christians who are members of Christ's church to join us in this feast of bread and wine. The inner circle of cups contains red wine and the outer circle of cups contains white grape juice. If you are unable to consume wheat, gluten-free crackers are available.

Prayer

Words of Institution – from 1 Corinthians 11

Minister: Let us proclaim the mystery of the faith.

All: **Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.**

Communing Together

The elders and deacons will serve you in your seats. Please hold the elements so that we can partake together after all have been served. Use the extra time during communion for prayer and reflection.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

A Medley for Christmas

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
born that man no more may die,

born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."

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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,

who hath made heaven and earth of
naught,
and with His blood our life hath bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
born is the King of Israel.

God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
let nothing you dismay.
Remember Christ our Savior
was born on Christmas day,
to save us all from Satan's pow'r
when we were gone astray;
O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

What child is this who, laid to rest on
Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthem's 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.

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.

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we
see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the
silent stars go by:

yet in thy dark street shineth the
everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are
met in thee tonight.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet
head;
the stars in the sky looked down where
He lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me I pray;
bless all the dear children in Thy tender
care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee
there.

Our God heav'n cannot hold Him, nor
earth sustain;
heav'n and earth shall flee away when He
comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place
sufficed,
the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a
lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him? Give my heart.

O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

For You alone are worthy,

for You alone are worthy,
for You alone are worthy, Christ the Lord.

We'll give You all the glory,
we'll give You all the glory,
we'll give You all the glory, Christ the Lord

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace;
chains shall He break, for the slave is our
brother,

and in His name all oppression shall
cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus
raise we,
let all within us praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord,
O praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His power and glory evermore proclaim!

"O Come Let Us Adore Him" words and music by John Francis Wade, C. Frederick Oakley, Teri Bryant, Matt Redman
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Benediction – 2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The Sending:

Minister: Go in peace, to love and serve the LORD.

All: Thanks be to God!

Postlude

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This Week at New Life

Date	Time	Event	Location
Sun. 12/24	10:00 am	Corporate Worship Service	Sanctuary
Sun. 12/24	6:30 pm	Lessons & Carols Service	Sanctuary
W. 12/27	7:00 am	Men's Breakfast	Fellowship Hall
Th. 12/28	11:15 am	Prayer Meeting	Resource Room
Sun. 12/31	9:00 am	Sunday School for All Ages	New Life
Sun. 12/31	10:00 am	Corporate Worship Service	Sanctuary

Church Financial Summary

Category	Budget	Actual
Year to Date 2023	\$259,903.65	\$329,997.97
Week of 12/17/23	\$5,096.15	\$13,565.00

Announcements

- **Pageant Thanks:** Thank you to all who helped to make NLPC's first ever children's Christmas pageant a success! From snacks to costumes and from props and backdrops to baking cookies for the reception, so many people stepped up to help make this event possible. We couldn't have done this without you. And a special thank you to all of the children and their families for bringing so much joy to the story of Jesus's birth! - Sarah, Catherine, Peggy, Jami, and Jenn
- **Volunteer Schedule:** The volunteer sign-up for 2024's first quarter has been posted in the lobby. Thank you to all our volunteers! Remember, if you are signing up for refreshments, please keep it simple.
- **Christmas Eve Service:** Our Lessons & Carols service will take place at New Life at 6:30 this evening.
- **Women's Event: Painting Class:** Paint a snowman/snowwoman in this beginner level project led by Donna Ryan on **Sat. Jan. 13** at 2pm at the church. The cost is \$5. Limit: 20 people.
- **Congregational Meeting on January 21:** Please mark your calendars for **Sun. Jan. 21** for a congregational meeting at 11:30am. The agenda will include: 1. Giving thanks for the highlights of 2023; 2. Discussion of ministry plans for 2024, including the plan for searching for/hiring a second pastor by mid-year; 3. A presentation of the 2024 budget, which also will include a congregational vote on the proposed cost living increase for the pastor's salary. Regular attenders are encouraged to attend; for any matters that require voting only members may vote.
- **Women's Book Club:** This winter we will be reading *All My Knotted-Up Life* by Beth Moore. Read at your own pace, then join us for a dinner and discussion on Sun. Feb. 25. Exact time and place to be determined. Contact Connie Kay with any questions.