

A Service of  
Comfort  
and  
Rest

MISSION Responding to God's call and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we invite all to join us in knowing, serving, and sharing Jesus Christ here and around the world.

VISION To be a beacon of faith, hope, and love – every member an active disciple in Christ's ministry.



SAINT LUKE'S  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dec. 20, 2015  5:00 p.m.



**December 20, 2015**

4th Sunday of Advent

**Liturgical Color:** Purple

*Purple marks the seasons of penitence and preparation, Advent and Lent.*

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

8:30 a.m. Chapel Communion Service

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Worship Service

*Nursery available at all services & Sunday School*

**SERVING TODAY**

**Elders Serving**

**Communion** . . . . . Paula Morris, Jan Slater

**Greeter** . . . . . Janis Jones

**Usher** . . . . . Bob Polensek

**Refreshments** . . . . . Bob & Sharon Polensek,  
Paula Morris, Jan Slater

**WELCOME, GUESTS!**

We are delighted you are worshiping with us! For more information about our programs, ministries or membership, please contact one of our Pastors at 770.393.1424.



## In Preparation for Worship

In this season of short days and long nights, of grey and white and cold, teach us the lessons of endings; children growing, friends leaving, loved ones dying, grieving over, grudges over, blaming over, excuses over. O God, grant us a sense of Your timing. In this season of short days and long nights, of grey and white and cold, teach us the lessons of beginnings; that such waitings and endings may be the starting place, a planting of seeds which bring to birth what is ready to be born—something right and just and different, a new song, a deeper relationship, a fuller love—in the fullness of Your time. O God, grant us the sense of Your timing.

(from Ted Yoder, *Guerrillas of Grace*)

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### Prelude

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel *arr. Fred Bock*

### Welcome

Shannon Dill

### \* Call to Worship

Stan Thornton

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**All: The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth, and we have seen His glory.**

Leader: In Him was life, and that life was the light of all.

**All: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to extinguish it.**

**All: Let us worship God.**

### \* Hymn #84

Creator of the Stars of Night *CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM*

### \* Call to Prayer

Cathie Rogers

Leader: The Lord be with you

**All: And also with you**

Leader: Let us pray

### \* Prayer

God of mercy, hear our prayers in this Advent season for ourselves, our families and friends who live with the struggle of illness, the pain of loss, the confusion of uncertainty, the hurt of disappointment. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and peace for the past. In this time of worship, surround us with the comfort of the Holy Spirit and breathe new life into our weary souls. We ask these things in the name of Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

# STORIES OF LIGHT AND WORDS OF GOD'S PROMISES

The candle lighting service includes the lighting of five memorial candles along with scripture readings, each followed by a congregational response.

As each candle is lit, we are reminded that in the midst of darkness, light will shine.

## **The Light of Creation**

Genesis 1:1-15

Cathie Rogers

Reader: In the beginning God created the earth; out of void and darkness God brought forth light. And God said that it was good. Sometimes we feel that our lives are filled with only darkness. Our days stretch before us as a void that has no boundaries. We forget Who created us, Who gave us the world in which we live. We see only the darkness of our hurts and our loss. And so we light this candle; a reminder of the light of creation. A visible symbol to assure us that God's love has been present since the beginning of time. We are never alone in the darkness of our pain or despair, for God's light is there waiting patiently to break into that darkness. To break over our darkness and void bringing with it hope and new life.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

**All: Anyone who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

## **The Light of Exodus**

Exodus 13:17-22

Leslie Berry

Reader: From time to time during our lives we find ourselves wandering in the wilderness. It may be a wilderness of our own making. It may be a wilderness caused by forces beyond our control. When the Hebrew people escaped from the bondage of the Pharaohs in Egypt God lead them into the wilderness. The people didn't know what lay before them. They didn't know how their faith would be tested in that time of wandering.

As we live and move through our wilderness experiences these same things happen to us. God asks us to trust, to put our faith in the pillar of cloud and fire that goes before us. God's presence is in that sign and in the darkness of our lives, the light of this fire leads us on. As we light the candle of the Exodus may we see before us the comforting assurance of God's love as it leads us through our journeys in the wilderness.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

**All: Anyone who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

## **The Light of the Prophets**

Isaiah 60:1-3

Sharon Polensek

Reader: At certain times in the midst of the celebration of Christmas, we find it hard to sustain our enthusiasm. The loss, the hurt, the pain that is so very real to us in this season overwhelms us. We may find ourselves sinking into the darkness of our past, our sorrows, our

losses and our memories. We hear the words of God's love; we may even be aware of God's presence in our wandering but the darkness of the moment wipes all that away.

And so we need to hear, one more time, the cry of the prophet, Isaiah, telling us to "arise, shine; for your light has come."

The candle of the prophets, the light of hope and renewal, stands before us as a sign that within each of us is the light of Christ's coming and that light shines through us to others.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

**All: Anyone who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

### **The Light of Hope & New Birth**

Luke 1:46-55

Laura Strange

Reader: Mary knew what it was like to be afraid. Mary knew also the wonder of God's presence. And so Mary sings this song of praise to her God. A song filled with hope; a song expressing her trust in God and the knowledge that the child she bore would banish forever the darkness of this world. As we celebrate Christmas this year may we also have that same sense of hope—that knowledge that the Christ child can bring light into our darkness. The sorrow and the hurts of our lives will pass. They will not disappear but they will be healed and like Mary we will sing our own songs of praise.

As we light Mary's candle, the light of hope and new birth, let us remember that this light can never be extinguished when we carry it in our hearts.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

**All: Anyone who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

### **The Light of Promises Kept**

Romans 8: 28-31, 35, 37-39

Shannon Dill

Reader: Security is a critical element in life. Unfortunately, it's also very elusive. We realize that we have little or no security in those areas where we crave it most. Fortunately, in the single area that truly matters most—our relationship with God—we can have ultimate security.

It is hard to remember the love of God at times when life is challenging, when we're experiencing trials and difficult circumstances. This is why Paul reminds us that because of God's love we are "more than conquerors." These verses definitively declare that God keeps the promises God has made with us and with all of humanity.

As we light the candle of promises kept, may we be reminded that nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord and that the light of God's love within us can never be extinguished.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

**All: Anyone who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

## Unison Prayer

Loving God, hear our prayers and remind us that by Your grace, mercy and love light will shine in the midst of darkness. We ask all these things in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.

## \* Hymn #83

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus *STUTTGART*

## The Lord's Supper and Invitation to Light Candles

Communion will be served by intinction (dipping the bread into the cup). If you would like to be served where you are sitting, please raise your hand. Everyone is invited to participate in the sacrament. Children who have discussed the sacrament with their parents and/or a pastor are welcome. The cup holds grape juice, not wine, during this service. A server with gluten-free wafers will be standing directly in front of the communion table for those who prefer this option.

After you have received communion, you are invited to light a candle from the Christ candle in memory of a loved one or as a sign of hope.

## 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 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.**

## Communion Music

Bethlehem Prelude *Michael W. Smith*

O Little Town of Bethlehem *arr. Fred Bock*

## Intercession for Healing and Wholeness

Shannon Dill

Leader: The God of strength moves within us;

**All: The God of courage hears our distress.**

Leader: The God of hope reveals wholeness to us;

**All: The God of healing touches us when we are broken.**

Leader: When the pain overwhelms us, when the burden is too heavy,

**All: We turn to our God, who is sustaining and redeeming.**

Leader: When there is loneliness, when there is isolation,

**All: We turn to our God, who is loving and present.**

Leader: For God created us, redeemed us and sustains us,

**All: And we are not alone.**

**All: Lead us in Your ways, O God, and bring us Your healing touch.**

\* **Hymn #104**

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You *VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN*

\* **Benediction**

\* **Postlude**

The First Noel *arr. Fred Bock*

Light refreshments will be served in the Chapel foyer. Please come and stay for the solace known to those who gather in the name and community of Christ Jesus.

## SAINT LUKE'S STEPHEN MINISTERS

People don't always need advice. Sometimes all they really need is a hand to hold, an ear to listen, and a heart to understand them.

STEPHEN MINISTRY is a caring and listening ministry providing confidential, one-to-one Christian care to people facing difficulty. Stephen Ministers are members of Saint Luke's who receive fifty hours of training before they are commissioned and assigned care receivers. They participate in monthly group supervision and continuing education.

If you are experiencing difficult times and would like a Stephen Minister to help, please contact Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinators: Rev. Shannon Dill ([shannondill@slpres.org](mailto:shannondill@slpres.org), 770-393-1424, ext. 229) or Laura Strange ([jandlstrange@comcast.net](mailto:jandlstrange@comcast.net), 770-392-9284). If you have a friend in need, have the person call or obtain permission to inquire on their behalf.

Leslie Berry	Stan Thornton	Janis Jones	Liz Humphrey Lee
Jo Hutchison	Bob Polensek	Sharon Polensek	Jan Slater

### STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS

Shannon Dill	Paula Morris	Cathie Rogers	Laura Strange
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## CHURCH STAFF

Interim Pastor . . . . . Steve Vance  
Associate Pastor . . . . . Shannon Dill  
Associate Pastor . . . . . Phil Brown  
Pastor Emeritus . . . . . Dr. E. Moss Robertson  
Director of Music & Organist . . . . . Clair Maxwell  
Director of Children's Ministries . . . . . Catherine Anne Thomas  
Director of Saint Luke's Little Saints Preschool . . . . . Carol Perry  
Intern for Children & Youth Ministry . . . . . Emily Wilmesherr  
Director of Communications . . . . . Tina Knoedler  
Administrative Assistants . . . . . Liz Catlett, Lindsay Moss  
Receptionist . . . . . Sally Hawkins  
Facilities Manager . . . . . Roby Price  
Treasurer . . . . . Gary Phipps  
Assistant Treasurer . . . . . Mark Rogers

## SAINT LUKE'S PERIMETER COUNSELING CENTER

**Georgia C. Griffin, J.D., M. Div.**

Director, Perimeter Center

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist/Mediator

404.636.1457, ext. 452 • [www.cccgeorgia.org](http://www.cccgeorgia.org)

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

**5 pm** The Christmas story is told by kids through readings and songs, plus angels and real sheep!

**8 pm** Music will fill the Sanctuary in this traditional worship service, which includes communion and candlelight.

**11 pm** Join us in the chapel for a peaceful and intimate communion and candlelight service.



**SAINT LUKE'S**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1978 Mount Vernon Road | Dunwoody, Georgia 30338  
770.393.1424 | [www.slpres.org](http://www.slpres.org) | office hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.