



*I will  
praise  
you*

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
At South Presbyterian Church  
Gate of the Year Service  
January 1, 2023

**THE CHURCH GATHERS TO WORSHIP**

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We are delighted that the first day of the New Year finds you at worship with this congregation. Our liturgy calls for engagement and participation in the praises of God.

Please note that **phrases in bold** are spoken by the congregation.

At this symbol \* worshippers rise in body or in spirit as able.

Face coverings are not mandatory but we encourage their use.

Everyone is welcome at the Lord's Table for the sharing of communion today.

As we focus our thoughts on the presence of God among us, we listen to the Prelude and silently meditate on the poem by Minnie Louse Haskins, from where we take the title for today's service, *THE GATE OF THE YEAR*

'God Knows'

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown".

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way".

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

*So heart be still:*

*What need our little life*

*Our human life to know,*

*If God hath comprehension?*

*In all the dizzy strife*

*Of things both high and low,*

*God hideth His intention.*

*God knows. His will*

*Is best. The stretch of years*

*Which wind ahead, so dim*

*To our imperfect vision,*

*Are clear to God. Our fears*

*Are premature; In Him,*

*All time hath full provision.*

*Then rest: until*

*God moves to lift the veil*

*From our impatient eyes,*

*When, as the sweeter features*

*Of Life's stern face we hail,*

*Fair beyond all surmise*

*God's thought around His creatures*

*Our mind shall fill.*

PRELUDE

*Siciliana, from Petite Christmas Suite*

Alec Rowley (1892-1958)

Phillip Lamb, Organist

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Rejoice, children of God!

The Savior born among us is the hope of the world!

**God beyond Time, has entered our time and space as a new-born child.**

The Lord of history and of eternity is the Shaper of our Days and the Maker of our Years.

**This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!**

This is the year that the Lord has begun. We will rejoice and be glad in it!

**May our faithful God lead us in this new year along the paths of peace.**

May the Holy God guide us in the way of truth.

**May the Holy Spirit place in us the words of kindness that others need to hear.**

May Jesus Christ kindle in us the joy that will lead us through this Christmas season

**And then flow through us abundantly throughout the New Year!**

\*HYMN OF PRAISE

*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

GtG #146

## UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(by Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*)

**“My Lord God. I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.**

**I cannot know for certain where it will end.**

**Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.**

**But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.**

**And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.**

**I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.**

**And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.**

**Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.**

**I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”**

## ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

POEM

*The Unknown Way*

Miriam Richards

When I face the unknown way whither shall I go?

Who’ll be nigh to counsel me if I’m right or no?

When the clouds and mist descend whither shall I flee?

Doubts and fears surround my path: who will comfort me?

When the evening shadows fall whither shall I turn?

Who will point the journey’s end where I peace may learn?

Jesus will, for His loving care is round about me still;  
at my side He’ll abide and my soul shall fear no ill.

And God's people joyfully respond:

**Alleluia! Amen!**

\*GLORIA PATRI

*Let the Whole Creation Cry*

GtG #679

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(During this element of worship, please refrain from walking around or touching, but feel free to turn around and offer a wave, smile, nod, bow, virtual embrace or any other visual sign that conveys the notion of peace)

RELATING TO THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

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RESPONSIVE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Open our hearts, O God, to this your Word.

**May we hear with joy what you would have us hear this day,**  
and may the music of your grace build our whole lives long  
**that we may sing your praise with our whole being. Amen.**

FIRST TESTAMENT LESSON

*Isaiah 63:7-9*

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The Word of the Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

CAROL

*Il Est Né*

19<sup>th</sup> century French Carol

Refrain: He is born! Now the child has come!

Fill all the air with our merry caroling!

Play the pipe, beat the joyful drum!

Hope is born, for the child has come!

1. Faithful sages through ages long,  
prophets sang of the Savior's coming;  
faithful sages through ages long,  
prophets sang of the promised dawn.  
Refrain:
2. See what light from his face has shone,  
grace and mercy of God revealing;  
see what light from his face has shone,  
from this child, from the promised one!  
Refrain:
3. Christ embraced our human form,  
made the stable a holy dwelling;  
Christ embraced our human form:  
dwell in us, well-beloved Son!  
Refrain:
4. Jesus, Sovereign and Holy One,  
we adore you, before you kneeling;  
Jesus, Sovereign and Holy One,  
dwell in us, make our hearts your throne!  
Refrain:

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

**Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise all you shining stars.

**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created, who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.

**Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;**

Fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;

**Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;**

Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;

**Sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;**

Young men and maidens, old and young together.

**Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.**

The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, **the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

CAROL

*Creator of the Stars of Night*

GtG #84

EPISTLE LESSON

*Hebrews 2:10-18*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God;

they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”

Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Holy Wisdom! Holy Word!

**Thanks be to God!**

RESPONSIVE LITANY FOR THE NEW YEAR

Some protest that what has been will be again;

that what has been done will be done again, since there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there anything of which one can say, “Look, this is something new?”

**We remember that God said, “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.**

**See, I am doing a new thing! I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wastelands.”**

We must remember that God said, “You will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. No longer will they call you ‘Desolate’, but instead, you will be called ‘My Delight’”.

**We should remember that Jeremiah said, “The LORD’s compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is God’s faithfulness.”**

Therefore, let us turn to the Sovereign Lord of all our beginnings and all our endings.

**Today God places in our hands an entire year, like a precious book of fine new pages ready for us to create the story of 2023.**

Last year’s tattered pages are already bound between the covers of memory.

Let us put 2022 on the shelf gracefully, grateful for its successes and willing to learn from its setbacks.

**Hopefully, we have learned from the mistakes we made in the past.**

**As God has forgiven us for past failings, may we find grace to forgive ourselves.**

So we go on to write new chapters with confidence.

**Even as we welcome a brand new year with some fear and trepidation,**

**God will grant us courage to face the unknown challenges ahead.**

God will give us wisdom to fulfill our callings in our places of employment, our schools, our communities and our homes.

**Presented with new opportunities, let us make choices based on the values we have learned from Christ’s life and teaching.**

And when we feel we have no choices at all, may God protect us from desperation, hold us tightly and help us listen to the Spirit’s voice.

**Secure in God’s peace, may we grow in love and faithfulness each day of the New Year. Amen!**

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## TO RESPOND IN FAITH

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(Tithes, gifts, and offerings can be deposited in the offering plate by the main entrance)

\*HYMN OF INVITATION     *Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

GtG #347

\*INVITATION TO THE LORD’S SUPPER

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks....

who forever sing to the glory of your name:

SANCTUS

(Tune: GtG #347)

**Holy, holy, holy, reigning God of pow'r and might,  
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory, all creation seeks your light!  
Blessed is the One who comes in your name.  
Blessed be the Lord most high!**

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Together we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!**

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.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND BREAKING OF THE BREAD

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

RESPONSIVE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Loving God, light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy,  
and gave us power to be your children.  
In this meal, you have drawn us into the mystery of your love.  
Grant us faith, O Christ, to know your presence among us,  
so that all creation may sing new songs of gladness  
and walk in the way of peace. Amen.**

TO DEPART TO SERVE

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\*HYMN OF PARTING

*God of Our Life*

GtG #686

\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Good King Wenceslas*

Arr. Virgil Fox (1912-1980)  
Phillip Lamb, Organist



So that everyone may be able to proceed with their normal New Year's Day festivities there will not be Coffee Hour after worship today.