

Epiphany Worship with Holy Communion on Sunday, January 2, 2022

Welcome

Prelude Variations on “Oh, Thou Joyful Day” *Benjamin Carr*
“In Sweet Jubilation” *J. S. Bach*

Greeting God is good **all the time**. All the time **God is good**.

Question of the Day What is our star word?

Hymn #249 *UMH* “There’s a Song in the Air”

Call to Worship

Arise, shine; for your light has come! The glory of God has risen among us.

We are awake; we are alive! Praise God for deliverance and blessings.

Lift up your eyes to see all around you. Let your hearts rejoice, and be radiant with hope.

God’s ways are being revealed to us today.

We proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Prayer of Invocation

God of the stars, whose guidance is always available to those who look up and listen, speak to us now. We are troubled by many things. Break into our thoughts to reveal great joy at the heart of life, that we may worship wholeheartedly, offer you our best, and lead others to the discoveries of faith. Amen.

Hymn #245 *UMH* “The First Noel”

Isaiah 60:1-6 *The Message*

Get out of bed, Jerusalem! Wake up. Put your face in the sunlight.

GOD’s bright glory has risen for you.

The whole earth is wrapped in darkness, all people sunk in deep darkness,
but GOD rises on you, his sunrise glory breaks over you.

Nations will come to your light, kings to your sunburst brightness.

Look up! Look around!

Watch as they gather, watch as they approach you:

your sons coming from great distances,

your daughters carried by their nannies.

When you see them coming you’ll smile – big smiles!

Your heart will swell and, yes, burst!

All those people returning by sea for the reunion,

a rich harvest of exiles gathered in from the nations!

And then streams of camel caravans as far as the eye can see,

young camels of nomads in Midian and Ephah,

pouring in from the south from Sheba,

loaded with gold and frankincense, preaching the praises of GOD.

Matthew 2:1-12 *The Message*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory – this was during Herod’s kingship – a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified – and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It’s you, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land, no longer bringing up the rear.

From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves. They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

Response: *The Word of God, for the people of God! Thanks be to God!*

Time of Prayer

How Is It With Your Soul?

Call to Confession

In the light of Christ we see the shadows of our world and of our hearts.

Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Unison Prayer

God of light, we admit our retreat into the shadows of pretension and exclusion. How often we choose to associate with people who are like us and then look down on others who differ from us. It is easier to discover their sins than to admit our own. We judge the poor and join their oppressors, while you call us to identify with those in need, that all may prosper together. We imagine that we alone are faithful stewards of your grace, while you welcome, as fellow saints with us, many whom we ignore. Save us from our earthbound judgments, that we may look up and be guided by the star that draws all people to yourself. Awed by your forgiving presence, we fall down to worship you.

Time of Silent Prayer

Assurance

This is the good news: Christ is the light of the world, who grants forgiveness and healing of our sins.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Answer to the Question of the Day What is our star word?

Hear each other

Engage in developing better understanding

Act to bring about change

Lead and inspire others by your good example

Time of Offering *Thank you to everyone for your faithful generosity.*

Offering Prayer

Glorious God, you led three scholars to seek Jesus, your Holy Child, born of Mary.

Overjoyed in the presence of his radiant light, they knelt before the infant and offered him precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We, too, offer our gifts in gratitude,

reverence, and thanksgiving for the birth of your child, whom you called to lead the world into fullness of life. Receive and bless this offering as a joyful sign of the boundless love and abundant life we are called to share in Christ. Amen.

Song of Offering #221 UMH “In the Bleak Midwinter”

Message “So Very Shiney” Rev. Joyce Rich

Holy Communion

Prayer of 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.**

Bright shining God, inner light of all faithful souls, . . .

We join together with all your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, as we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you . . . as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us . . .

all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray together:

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 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sharing of the Elements *Use the bread and cup that you have prepared.*

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

Prayer After Receiving

Holy God, empower us to be as the light of the star, that we may draw the world to the glory of Christ, our Lord, through whom we pray. Amen.

Commission and Blessing

Let us go forth rejoicing in the light of God’s love.

Thanks be to God!

May the love of Christ that shines in you shine brightly in the world wherever you go. And the blessing of God, Divine Giver, Radiant Light, and Fountain of Life bless you and keep you always. Amen. **And Amen.**

Hymn #254 UMH “We Three Kings”

Announcements

Read For Next Week: Luke 3:1-17, 21-22

Postlude “March of the Kings” *Renaud De Vilbac*

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