

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

January 3 and 6, 2024



On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. - Matthew 2:11 (NRSV)



Adoration of the Child; Arrival of the Magi

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

Raise a Song of Gladness

URW 383

GREETING

PRESIDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP

STUDENT MINISTER

Presider: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

All: The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star!

Presider: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

All: The people who live in the shadows see a glorious light!

St Minister: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

All: The Christ who embodies the Word unveils the hidden plan,

Presider: making us joint heirs of the promise of salvation through the gospel!

All: O come, let us worship the Lord, for God has done wondrous things!

*OPENING HYMN

We Have Come from Foreign Lands

Jill Bruckart

See Page 9

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

[All are invited to turn toward the Baptismal Font.]

Presider: Lord, we confess that we have been wrapped up in our secular celebration of Christmas. We have enjoyed the music, the food, and the swirl of activities.

All: We have looked happily at the Christmas lights and decorations, and yet we have too often ignored the people who are most in need of compassion and assistance during this time.

St Minister: We often feel overwhelmed by the demands on our resources and so we turn our “deaf ear” and look away.

All: Open our hearts today, precious Lord, and help us hear the cries of those in need. Bring us to an understanding of active discipleship in which we work helping others and thus serving you. Heal us and give us courage and joy in your service.

Presider: As surely as the Light follows the Darkness, the light of God's love, given to the world so long ago, is given for you, for healing and hope. You are beloved of God. In God's name, receive the Light.

All: AMEN.

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

STUDENT MINISTER

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a way comfortable to you and your neighbor. Be mindful that some of our siblings may prefer non-contact ways of passing the peace, so kindly ask before hugging or shaking hands.

Peace be with you! **And also with you!**

Let us share this peace with one another.

Service of the Word

POEM [SAT. ONLY]

THE HEAVENLY SUMMONS

CHRISTINE WOOLGAR

This poem hints at the wonders of the Magi being present after the birth of the King of the Jews.

When the stars align, you don't ignore it,
When the heavens proclaim, you make sure that you saw it,
For when a king is born, the nations should come,
The many assemble at the feet of the one.
You don't ask if there's doubt whether you'll be received,
You take your gifts and you take your leave.
Yet when we arrived, streets were empty of news,
So we asked, "Where is he who is king of the Jews?"
And now here we are, it's not what we expected,
But then, his fate is to be rejected.
We're not shy that we came, despite causing a stir,
And we offer our gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Creator God, illuminate the scriptures, both read and explained. Open our hearts to hear from You, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

MATTHEW 2:1-12

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, verses 1 through 12.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Holy wisdom, holy Word. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

REV. DR. BETSY MILLER - JAN. 3

LOUVENIA McDUGALD - JAN. 6

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

STUDENT MINISTER

God, our provider, you govern this world in power and love; providing food for the swallow and the cardinal and clothing dainty lilies in glory.

Remind us that you will feed and clothe us too, we who are made in your image and likeness.

Comfort us, O God, when we feel alone in our anxiety. Hide us in the shadow of your wings when we are afraid of the implications of our decision making. When we are conflicted over academic, career, and family decisions, when we must decide not

whether, but what commitment to let go of, when we lie awake at night, uncertain of what the future holds:

We call to mind promises from Jesus that we ought not worry about tomorrow, for you, our heavenly Provider, know what we need. In the name of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, Amen.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Presider: The Holy One be with you.

All: And also with you.

Presider: Open your hearts to the One who is Love.

All: We open our hearts to you, O God.

Presider: Let us give thanks to God, who welcomes the stranger.

All: To the One who reaches across every border, we give thanks and praise.

In wonder of your expansive embrace, we give you praise, O God. Through your radical welcome, you reveal the limitations of our own imaginations. You break down walls and boundaries we don't even realize we have erected.

Like the magi guided by the light of star through foreign territory, you call us all towards you. You lead your people across borders of hate and into lands curious and different. You strengthen us as we journey, learning and unlearning stories about one another. Gathered in your presence, we come to recognize the gifts of community rich in diversity.

Therefore we join our voices with your people on earth and all the company of the heavens, singing praise to you,

Holy, Holy, Holy One

God of justice and love

Heaven and earth are full of your wonder

Hosanna among us

Presider: You move in mysterious way, O God. This journey with you is filled with more questions than answers. Each time we think we have you figured out, you surprise us again, revealing yourself in new ways.

In Jesus, we saw your radical welcome of strangers extended in challenging ways. Ways that disrupt our traditions and unsettle our comfort zones.

Jesus broke religious rules in order to include all people. He lifted up the sacredness of the people and places deemed unclean. He cared more about the well-being of the oppressed than his own reputation. Jesus taught us to rethink your presence among us, but we couldn't accept it. Resistant to transformation, your people sent him to the cross.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus shared a meal with his companions. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said: "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the meal, he took the cup, blessed it, and shared it saying: "This cup that is poured out is the new covenant." In remembrance of all you have done to save us, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ was birthed among us.

Christ was killed among us.

Christ rises again among us.

May the same Spirit that lifted Christ from the grave be poured out on these gifts. Make this bread and this cup be an extension of your welcome that knows no bounds. Fill us with the courage and faith to join you in the work of tearing down walls that exclude and pointing to the Sacred in the margins.

In collective longing for a taste of your Kingdom on earth, we join together in echoing the prayer of Jesus:

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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRESIDER

We have a few COVID related options for those who wish to partake. If you wish to receive from the ministers, take an empty cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. All bread is gluten free. Or you may take one of the sealed celebration cups with the wafer on top and juice beneath; hold them out to the minister for a blessing. A minister will pour grape juice into your cup. Eat, drink, and dispose of the cup in the waste baskets at the side aisles as you return to your seat.

If you are unable to come forward, please signal the ministers and we will come to you at your seat. Those who prefer not to partake in Communion are invited to a different kind of divine encounter through an interfaith prayer of blessing. If this is your preference, we invite you to meet the minister at the baptismal font.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at this table where Christ is the host.

COMMUNION SONG

I COME WITH JOY

URW 120

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

PRESIDER

God, this meal we shared together is a remembrance of your radical embrace of the outcast and oppressed. **May it strengthen us as we open our minds and hearts to new ways of recognizing your presence among us. Amen.**

*CLOSING SONG

Christ Be Our Light (vs. 1, 3, 5)

URW 114

*BENEDICTION

SENDING & POSTLUDE

*Go forth with praises lingering on your lips
and filling your lungs with new life.*

Cover Art: Adoration of the Child

<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20230720500202665&code=act&RC=51281&Row=6> (Accessed July 12, 2023)

Opening Hymn: Both the words and music are written by a Moravian in Bethlehem. She has graciously given permission for its use

Call to Worship: The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

<https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/the-visit-of-the-magi--epiphany-sunday--matthew-2/> (accessed July 11, 2023).

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**The worship planning team creates all other parts of the liturgy except where noted.*

LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM

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THE WORSHIP TEAM SEEKS:

To serve the universal church of our Creator.

To minister to the unique and diverse needs of the seminary community.

To foster an expansive culture of worship that values difference and challenges the normative.

We Have Come From Foreign Lands 34

Capo 1: G/D D G/D D G D/A G/D A



1. We have come from for-eign lands, bear-ing gifts ac - ross the sands.
 2. "Go to Beth - le-hem," as told in the He-brew pro-phet's word.
 3. Kneel we now, a-dore the one, Lord of all, yet moth-er's son;



D G Bm Em7 Bm G A



We have jour - neyed from the east man - y days with slave and beast;
 "Tra-vel on, the place is near; bring back news I long to hear."
 of - fer myrrh, gold, frank - in - cense, and our hearts with right - eous - ness.



A7 D G/D D G D/A G/D Bm



trav - el - ing by night, a star now we fol - low from a - far,
 So that star shone bright to show that small house where we must go,
 Ho - ly moth - er, ho - ly Child, as we bow our hearts are blessed



Bm G A7 Bm D/F# Gmaj7 A7 D



to Je - ru - sa - lem to meet with King Her - od, there to speak.
 there the child was to be found, there we lay our gifts a - round.
 with the prom - ise giv'n to all: Prince of Peace, now God with us!



TEXT: Jill B. Bruckart (2011)
 TUNE: Jill B. Bruckart (2011)
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7.7.7.7.D.
 EPIPHANY