



St. John's Episcopal Church
The Sunday before Epiphany
January 3rd, 2021

We have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him. ~ Matthew 2:2

Opening Hymn #128 ~ *We Three Kings*

We three kings of Orient are; bearing
gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain,
moor and mountain, following yonder star.

*Refrain: O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I
bring to crown him again, King forever,
ceasing never, over us all to reign. *[Refrain]*

Frankincense to offer have I; incense
owns a Deity nigh; prayer and praising,
gladly raising, worshiping God on high. *[Refrain]*

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a
life of gathering gloom; sorrowing, sighing,
bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. *[Refrain]*

Glorious now behold him arise; King and
God and Sacrifice; heaven sings alleluia:
Alleluia, the earth replies. *[Refrain]*

Invitation to Worship

Lift up your eyes, O lands of the earth! For the star of the Lord has burst through the night!

We shall lift up our eyes to follow its path; we shall take up our staffs to embark on our journey.

Arise, shine; for your light has come! The glory of the heaven has risen upon you!

**We shall see and be radiant; we shall thrill and rejoice-
For this star shall dance over the cradle of God!**

The Word of God

Celebrant Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Old Testament

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
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 proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The Psalm

Psalm 72:1-7,10-14

Deus, iudicium

- 1 Give the King your justice, O God, *
and your righteousness to the King's Son;
- 2 That he may rule your people righteously *
and the poor with justice;
- 3 That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, *
and the little hills bring righteousness.
- 4 He shall defend the needy among the people; *
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.

- 5 He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, *
from one generation to another.
- 6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, *
like showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his time shall the righteous flourish; *
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute, *
and the kings of Arabia and Saba offer gifts.
- 11 All kings shall bow down before him, *
and all the nations do him service.
- 12 For he shall deliver the poor who cries out in distress, *
and the oppressed who has no helper.
- 13 He shall have pity on the lowly and poor; *
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, *
and dear shall their blood be in his sight.

The New Testament

[Ephesians 3:1-12](#)

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The Gospel

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

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.

The Sermon **The Rev. John Beach**

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God, Alleluia!
Shout to the Lord, all the earth, Alleluia!

With joy let us pray to our Savior, the Son of God who became one of us, saying:
The grace of God be with us all.

O Christ, let your gospel shine in every place where the Word of life is not yet received.
Draw the whole creation to yourself that your salvation may be known through all the earth.
The grace of God be with us all.

O Christ, Savior and Lord, extend your church to every place. Make it a place of welcome
for people of every race and tongue.
The grace of God be with us all.

O Christ, Ruler of rulers, direct the work and thoughts of the leaders of nations that they
may seek justice, and further peace and freedom for all.
The grace of God be with us all.

O Christ, Master of all, support of the weak and comfort of the afflicted, be with those we
know to be sick....strengthen the tempted and raise the fallen. Watch over the lonely and
those in danger. Give hope to the despairing and sustain the faith of the persecuted.
The grace of God be with us all. Amen.

O Christ, light that made manifest as the true light of God, gladden our hearts on the
joyful morning of your glory; call us by our name on the great Day of your coming; and
give us grace to offer, with all the hosts of heaven, unending praise to God in whom all
things find their ending, now and forever. Amen.

Celebrant

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.

Silence is kept.

Merciful God, you have given light to the world in Jesus Christ, but we have preferred to live in darkness. Your justice protects the weak and the distressed, yet we seek the shelter of privilege and power. Your righteousness redeems the poor and the needy, yet we seek the status of wealth and possessions. Your peace upholds the oppressed and the defenseless, yet we seek the security of weapons and retribution. Forgive us our sins, and lead us to true repentance, that we may trust you in all things through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Celebrant

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

The Peace

Celebrant

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People

And also with you.

Anthem

The Holy Communion

Prayer over the Gifts Holy

Gracious God, accept the offering of your Church, the hearts of your people, joined in praise and thanksgiving, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

This Eucharist is also offered in loving remembrance of the past and recently departed; Steven D. Foster, Gary Kanarkiewicz, James & Doris Smith, and Richard C. Nelson.

The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant

The Lord be with you.

People

And also with you.

Celebrant

Lift up your hearts.

People

We lift them up unto the Lord.

Celebrant

Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

People

It is meet and right to do so.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

**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.

The people stand or kneel.

Celebrant Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Celebrant We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

Celebrant Let us pray in the words of the One whose coming is certain and whose day draws near

People and Celebrant

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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the banquet of the Lamb.

The Invitation to Holy Communion

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

The presider invites the following prayer to be said by all.

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

Anthem during Communion Contemplation

Prayer after Communion

God of all the nations of the earth, guide us with your light. Help us to recognize Christ as he comes to us in this Eucharist and in our neighbors. May we welcome him with love, for he is Lord now and forever.

Celebrant Glory to God,
All **whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen**

The Blessing

Celebrant Let us pray. Bless, O Lord God almighty, this home, that in it there may be health, purity, the strength of victory, humility, goodness and mercy, the fulfillment of Your law, the thanksgiving to God the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. And may this blessing remain upon this home and upon all who dwell herein. Through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Concluding Hymn #109 ~ *The First Nowell* (verses 1, 2 & 6)

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *[Refrain]*

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
that hath made Heaven and earth of nought,
and with His blood our life hath bought. *[Refrain]*

Dismissal

Celebrant Looking forward to that final Day when God will be all in all, go in peace to
love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Weekly Prayer List

Maureen Burke, Annelies Caggiano, Gia Capello, Carolyn Chadsey, Don DiGiacomo,
Oriol Pi-Sunyer, Jim Dockery, Jim & Tim Eldridge, Claire Errico, Joanne Felci, Ruth
Garrett, Peggy Gibbs, Gary Goodwin, Estelle Heath, Bruce Higgins, Michele Hoelzl,
Janet Horrigan, Jeanne Kelly-Smith, Bill Jackson, (Baby) Autumn Ladder-Bush, Dennis
Lancaster, Janet Lancaster, Lisa Lancaster, Matt, Lori M., Linda Marquis, Harriet Miraglia,
Gisela Moore, Jeanine Morris, Fran Muise, Sara Murray, Debbie Rossetti, Bill St. Clair,
David St. Clair, Nancy Scarry, Jeanne Seaboyer, Bo Shaw, Ray Shaw, Malcolm Silva, Gail
Smith, Victoria Smith, Linda Sullivan, Meghan Tapley, Walter T., Susan Webb, Rachel W.,
and Candace Wormstead

Announcement

Newsletter

Please see our January newsletter for updates about the annual meeting, stewardship, prayer book offering, etc. For the New Year, please let us know if you prefer to change your preference of newsletter receipt; postal mail, email, or if you prefer to download it from our website. Thank you!

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