

January 3, 2010—Fresh Spirit—Epiphany Sunday

“I see the God in you. I greet the God in you.”

Bill Wallace, New Zealand

As you gather for worship,
please introduce yourself to those around you.
There are no strangers in God’s house.

CALL TO WORSHIP *Angels We Have Heard on High*
arr. Michael McDonald

It is the song that fills the night, The star that lights our day,
So begins our greatest hope, And a little child will lead the way.

(Solo) Come to Bethlehem and see, Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

(All) *Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

*Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

*Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be, Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

WELCOME

GATHERING THE PEOPLE

One: Let us pray.

All: *God, as we continue to journey through this season of
Christmas, we want to take the time to celebrate the many ways
you are made known to us.*

*Please, come and continue to be our guiding star,
the star of “wonder” that will lead us to be your people of faith.*

*May all of us be people of welcome and warmth;
May all of us be people who are your gift to others;
May all of us find the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that you lay
at our feet,
and lavish others with its true treasure: your unconditional love.*

*Help us to be the people you have called to be the glory of
your light,
your everlasting and piercing star that lights up the sky of your
creation. Amen.*

OPENING SONG *O Come, All Ye Faithful* Traditional

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, Born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

RENEWING THE COVENANT

One: O that we had the faithfulness of the Magi!

All: *Then, God, nothing would stand in the way of our search for the
highest good.*

One: O that we had the gifts of the Magi!

All: *Then, God, we would present what is appropriate to Jesus, your
Anointed One.*

One: O that we had the wisdom of the Magi!

All: *Then, God, we would see the hidden threat of the evil ones and
quietly avoid it.*

One: O that we had the joy of the Magi!

All: *Then, God, our encounter with Jesus would leave us exhilarated, thank-
ful, and ready for committed discipleship.*

---time for silent reflection---

One: In the light of the Bethlehem star, life changes: the way ahead shines
with opportunity, dreams come to reality, choices appear, and decisions are
clear before you.

All: *We will let the light of the star illumine our lifestyle, flood our spirits, and
enliven our faith community.*

One: And God will bless your endeavors, grant you peace, and cherish
your church.

All: *Thanks be to you, O God! Amen.*

PASSING THE PEACE

TIME WITH CHILDREN

OFFERING OUR GIFTS BACK TO GOD

OFFERTORY SONG (see insert) *Song of the Stable* David Haas

OFFERTORY PRAYER

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 2:1-12 NRSV

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.

SERMON The Rev. Jana R. Reister

FOCUS SONG *Go Tell It on the Mountain* arr. James Taylor

(Refrain) *Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere ~
Go, tell it on the mountain, That Jesus Christ is born.*

Shepherds were watching, Over their flocks by night,
When out of the darkness, Shone a heavenly light.
They feared and they trembled; High above the earth
Sang out an angel chorus, Telling of the Savior's birth.

(Refrain)

Yes, I was a seeker ~I sought him both night and day.
Asked the Lord to help me; He showed me the way.
Down in a manger, The humble Child was born;
God sent salvation, On that Christmas morn.

(Refrain)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

CLOSING SONG (see insert) *The First Nowell* English Carol

BLESSING THE PEOPLE

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Sources for today’s liturgy: Gathering - David Haas, *To Give You A Future With Hope*; Renewing the Covenant - David Sparks, *Prayers to Share, Year B*.

If you feel called to serve God by researching, writing or speaking liturgy in future services, please feel free to talk with any of the worship leaders or drop a note in the offering plate.

Fresh Spirit Prayer Request cards and offering envelopes are available in the black fellowship pad folders. If you have a prayer request, concern or joy you wish to share, please fill out a card and place it in the offering bags. All concerns and joys are welcome!

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