

January 3, 2021 Bulletin – Epiphany Sunday

Prelude "One Fellowship of Love"
By John Johnson

Welcoming and Call to Worship

Carol "There's a Song in the Air" UMH #249

1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

2. There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth,
for the virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
for the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

3. In the light of that star lie the ages impearled;
and that song from afar has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing
in the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!

4. We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song
that comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
and we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Special Music "Hope, Peace, Joy and Love" Steve Grattan, Tom Norager,
By Joseph M. Martin Pearl Swanson, Cathy Grattan
Jackie Prause, flute

Scripture Readings Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing that comes from heaven. ⁴ God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in God's presence before the creation of the world. ⁵ God destined us to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ because of his love. This was according to his goodwill and plan ⁶ and to honor his glorious grace that he has given to us freely through the Son whom he loves. ⁷ We have been ransomed through his Son's blood, and we have forgiveness for our failures based on his overflowing grace, ⁸ which he poured over us with wisdom and understanding. ⁹ God revealed his hidden design^[a] to us, which is according to his goodwill and the plan that he intended to accomplish through his Son. ¹⁰ This is what God planned for the climax of all times:^[b] to bring all things together in Christ, the things in heaven along with the things on earth. ¹¹ We have also received an inheritance in Christ. We were destined by the plan of God, who accomplishes everything according to his design. ¹² We are called to be an honor to God's glory because

we were the first to hope in Christ. ¹³You too heard the word of truth in Christ, which is the good news of your salvation. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit because you believed in Christ. ¹⁴The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance, which is applied toward our redemption as God's own people, resulting in the honor of God's glory.

Matthew 2:1-12

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ²They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

³When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶*You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel.*"^[a]

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him." ⁹When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

Song

"Carol of the Epiphany"

FWS #2094

1. I sought him dressed in finest clothes, where money talks and status grows;
But power and wealth he never chose: it seemed he lived in poverty.
2. I sought him in the safest place, remote from crime or cheap disgrace;
But safety never knew his face: it seemed he lived in jeopardy.
3. I sought him where the spotlights glare, where crowds collect and critics stare;
But no one knew his presence there: it seemed he lived in obscurity.
4. Then, in the streets, we heard the word that seemed, for all the world, absurd:
That those who could no gifts afford were entertaining Christ the Lord.
5. And so, distinct from all we'd planned, among the poorest of the land,
We did what few might understand: we touched God in a baby's hand.

Message

"Where Is Jesus?"

Invitation to Give & Prayer of Dedication

As long-ago travelers laid their gifts before the Christ child, we too bring our gifts with great joy. Use our gifts for justice and righteousness, that oppression and violence may cease and peace may flourish. May the light of your love shine through our living, that suffering may end, and all may rejoice in your gift of life. Through Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Prayer of Confession (based on Psalm 72 and Matthew 2)

God of starlight, shine your love into the darkness of our lives. Preoccupied with ourselves, we forget the needs of others; we participate in systems that oppress; we accept violence as a way of life; we fail to respond to the cry of others. May your love fall upon us like rain on the mown grass. May your love wash away our indifference and water the tender shoots of our care and compassion. Nourished in the sunlight of your love, may we grow into people who live in righteousness and who work for justice for all your children. Amen.

Prayer After Communion

God of Light and Love, we cherish this table in this season when the nights are long and cold. Through this meal, the Christ, and our neighbors, our hearts have warmed. May the comfort in our souls sustain us through winter and nudge us to create welcoming spaces for our neighbors. With gratitude, we leave here energized to kindle your love in this world. Amen.

Carol

"Jesus, the Light of the World"

W&S #3056

See the Bright and Morning Star, Jesus, the Light of the World!
He has risen in our hearts, Jesus, the Light of the World!

Refrain:

Walk in the Light, beautiful Light; Come where His love and His mercy are bright.
Shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus, the Light of the World.

He's the Lamp that lights our way, Jesus, the Light of the World!
Step by step and day by day - Jesus, the Light of the World! Refrain

No more darkness, no more night - Jesus, the Light of the World!
He will shine forever bright, Jesus, the Light of the World! Refrain

Benediction

Postlude

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"