

Trinity-Grace United Church

January 5th, 2025

"Arise, Your Light Is Come"

Epiphany Sunday

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

Naoki Natsume

WELCOME

CANDLE LIGHTING

OPENING RESPONSES

One: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

All: The glory of God dawns upon us.

One: With rejoicing hearts, we open to the radiance of God's presence;

All: We respond in praise as we worship together this morning.

GATHERING PRAYER

Leader:

God of the journey,
as the Magi sought out the Christ-child
and offered their gifts,
so we seek you, and offer to you
our hopes, dreams, fears and trepidations.
Like the Magi, we too seek the beacon
of your wisdom and love.

In our worship today,
light our way again with your sacred story
and the inspiration of your spirit.

ALL: Amen.

HYMN: "A Light Is Gleaming" (v,1,2,4)

VU 82

Refrain:

*A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.*

When light comes pouring into the darkest place,
it hurts our eyes to see the glow.
Sometimes a word of hope reminds us of our fears,
our memories and tears. **Refrain**

When night is round us and every shadow grows,
a star is there to light our way.
It tells a story of Jesus who came near to say:
'God's light will ever stay.' **Refrain**

So let us live in the brightness God has giv'n,
and let us rise to see the dawn.
We trust that God is here asparkle and ablaze,
- warming all our days. **Refrain**

PRAYER FOR RELEASE & RENEWAL

One: God of new beginnings,
Like the Magi, you send us stars and stables
to reveal your presence and guide us,
sometimes onto new paths and into unexpected places.

We admit that we often want to follow the well-worn path,
the one we have carefully planned out or feel comfortable and safe on.
Sometimes this is holy and humble,
but there are days when a new path needs to be tread.
And while we wish that change could be easy for us,
more often than not, when your spirit whispers change to us,
we clench our fists and hold on tighter.

**All: Forgive us for resisting change that might be holy.
Forgive us for failing to notice the signs you send us.**

Time for silent prayer

A WORD OF GRACE

One: Friends in Christ,
we worship a God who is gracious beyond imagination
and meets us on every twist and turn of the road home.
Even in our worst moments, in our doubt and hesitation
and resistance to divine leading,
we are held by a love that will not let us go.
Thanks be to God.

SHARING PEACE

One: May the peace of Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you!

We take a moment to greet each other in the peace of Christ.

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

One: God of starlight,
we long to follow you.

So just as you guided the Magi, guide us.
Draw our attention to your Word.
Reveal what it is you want us to hear today.
With hope in our hearts we pray.

ALL: Amen.

READING: Isaiah 60: 1-3,6

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.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

READING: 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.

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

All: Open our hearts, Spirit of Life.

EXPLORING THE WORD

Reflection by Rev. Sandra Nixon

RESPONDING

HYMN: “When Heaven’s Bright With Mystery”

VU 93

During the hymn, the offering box is brought forward

New Year’s Star Words are distributed

If you are worshipping online and wish to receive a Star Word, please email Rev. Sandra at: rev@tqucvan.com

1 When heaven's bright with mystery
and science searches nature's art,

when all creation yearns for peace
and hope sinks deep in human hearts,
 appear to us, O Holy Light;
 lift from our eyes the shades of night.

2 When Herod barter power and lives
 and Rachel's weeping fills the night,
 when suffering's mask marks every face,
 and Love's a refugee in flight,
 reveal to us your word of grace
 and make us witness to your peace.

3 When fragile faith, like desert wind,
 blows dry and empty, hope erased,
 when withered grass and fading flower
 proclaim again our day's brief space,
 breathe on the clay of our despair
 and work a new creation there.

4 When heaven's bright with mystery
 and stars still lead an unknown way,
 when love still lights a gentle path
 where courts of power can hold no sway,
 there with the Magi, let us kneel,
 our gifts to share, God's world to heal.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Trinity-Grace is grateful for the many ways we are gifted and called to contribute to God's mission through this faith community.

Prayer of Dedication

One: God of light and love, we offer today the humble gifts of our labours and our hearts and ask that you bless them and help us use them for Christ's ministry of healing and justice.

ALL: Amen.

CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY

Announcements, celebrations & prayer requests.

PRAYERS OF GRATITUDE AND CONCERN (The Prayers of the People)

Periods of silence will be left for you to offer your own prayers

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES (The Lord's Prayer)

**ALL: Abba, our God,
Whom the heavens disclose:
may your name be held holy,
may your authority come.
May your longing be fulfilled
as in heaven, so on earth.**

**Give us today the bread of tomorrow,
and cancel our debts,
as we have already forgiven
our debtors.**

**Do not draw us towards sin
but set us free from the grip of evil;
for authority, power and glory
are yours alone, for ever and ever.
Amen.**

- Adapted from the Alternative Service Book, 1980

HYMN: "As We Gather At Your Table" (v.1,3)

VU 457

As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story

till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's victory known.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.

SHARING GOD'S FEAST In The Sacrament of Communion

Invitation

Communion Prayer (The Great Thanksgiving)

One: The Holy One be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to our loving God.

ALL: We offer our thanks and praise.

Leader:

It is indeed right, for you made us, O God,
and before us, you made the world we inhabit, and before the world,
you made the eternal home in which, through Christ, we have a place.

All that is spectacular, all that is plain have their origin in you;
all that is lovely, all who are loving – point to you as their fulfillment.

And grateful as we are for the world we know
and the universe beyond our reaches,
we particularly praise you, whom eternity cannot contain,
for revealing yourself in the person of Jesus.

For his life which informs our living,
his compassion which changes our hearts,
his clear speaking which contradicts our harmless generalities;
his confronting of the powers & principalities of this world, even unto death,
and his rising to life breathing forgiveness, we thank you.

Here too, our gratitude rises for the promise of the Holy Spirit,
who even yet, even now, is at work in us and the world,
attracting us to your truth and your presence.

Therefore we gladly join our voices to that of heaven and all creation
as we sing:

“Holy, Holy, Holy” (Sanctus) - VU p.932

**Holy, holy, holy are you,
God of power and might;
Heaven and earth are filled with your glory,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the One who comes in your name.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!**

Leader:

And now, as our praise rises, we remember,
To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example rooted in the experience
he shared with his disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem.

On the night before he was arrested, as they were sitting at a meal,
Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it.

Then he gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take this and eat it.

This is my body, which is broken for you.
Do this to remember me.”

Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said,
Drink this, all of you.
“This cup is the pouring out of my life for you.
Whenever you do this, remember me.”

Merciful God, send your Holy Spirit to settle on the humble elements
we bring to the table. And let that same Spirit now rest on us,
converting us from the patterns of this passing world,
shaping our lives into alignment with the love of the One whose meal we now
share.

All: Amen.

Sentences

One: Jesus Christ, a life offered in love,
bread for the journey.
Jesus Christ, a life poured out for the world;
the cup of new life.
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

COMMUNION

Communion is distributed - all are welcome to participate.

*In person: Please come forward to receive communion from the servers.
The bread (gluten free) and grape juice are consumed when you receive them.
You can put your glass back in the tray before sitting down.*

**If you are unable to come to the front, please remain seated and the servers will
come to you once they are finished the distribution at the front.*

*At home: Please consume the bread and juice on your own, or if you are with
others, you may wish to serve each other.*

Hymns during Communion:

“All Who Hunger”

VU 460

- 1 All who hunger, gather gladly;
 holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wandering.
 Here, in truth, we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness,
 all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
 Taste and see that God is good.

- 2 All who hunger, never strangers;
 seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
 Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
 in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
 Taste and see that God is good.

- 3 All who hunger, sing together;
 Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
 Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
 live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
 Taste and see that God is good.

“Eat this Bread”

VU 466

Eat this bread, drink this cup;
come to me and never be hungry.

Eat this bread, drink this cup;
trust in me and you will not thirst.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

One: Loving God,
you have met us at the table
and nourished us with the love of Christ.

All: **May your spirit live and move within us,
that we may have the courage to walk in your light
and serve Christ in all we meet. Amen.**

HYMN: "I Am The Light of the World"

VU 87

Refrain:

*"I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!"
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.*

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found
their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun: **Refrain**

To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth
and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above! **Refrain**

To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,

to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God's children everywhere! **Refrain**

To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth! **Refrain**

*The Christ candle is extinguished;
Our prayers rise and are received into God's heart.*

SENDING & BLESSING

One: Beloved, you are the light of the world,
for the Christ-light is in you.
As you go from this place,
may you follow, and love,
and learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

And may God's blessing be upon you
and remain with you this day and always.

Sung Response: "Go Now In Peace, Guided By the Light"

MV 211

1st time - soloist

2nd time - congregation

Go now in peace,
guided by the light of Christ,
so you may be
nourished by the word of life.

POSTLUDE

Feel free to remain seated or enjoy the music as you move to begin your fellowship time!