



*"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."*

~ Matthew 2:2 (NRSV)



"Adoration of the Christ Child by the Three Wise Men," Correggio, 1489-1534.

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

“LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE”

(vs. 1-3)

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly-minded,
for with blessing in his hand,
Christ, our God, to earth descendeth,
our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords in human vesture,
in the body and the blood
he will give to all the faithful
his own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
spreads its vanguard on the way
as the Light of Light, descendeth
from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanquish
as the darkness clears away.

GREETING

PRESIDER

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Magi had a dream.

They dreamed of a Messiah. They dreamed of just rulers.

They dreamed of a new day for all people.

The Magi had a dream, and this dream led them to action.

They journeyed to unknown places. They followed a star.

They walked for days to get to Jesus.

So may we be like the Magi,

May our dreams inspire action.

May we worship the one true God. Amen.

What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ, the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ, the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Presider

God, we love to worship you when the stars are bright above us.

We love to worship you when the sky is clear, and the breeze just right.

We love to worship you when the journey to Bethlehem is an easy one.

Unfortunately, this journey of life, love, and faith is rarely easy.

Now and again, the stars disappear, our feet get blisters,
and the journey is far too long and lonely.

On these days, forgive us for giving up quickly.

**Forgive us for allowing the dream to die
and for taking the shortcut home.**

We want to be as brave as the Magi.

We want to persevere.

Guide our feet. Show us the stars.

Amen.

We pause for a few moments of silent confession.

Presider: Friends of God, as we have been faithful in confessing our sins, God has promised to be faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from unrighteousness. In faith we receive God's forgiveness, **Amen.**

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

You are invited to pass the peace to each other by waving or by typing in the chat function in Zoom.

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

Let us share this peace with one another.

Service of the Word

POEM

“WRING OUT MY CLOTHES”

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

(as interpreted by Daniel Ladinsky)

The subject of this poem is ecstatic with the downpouring of love he feels from his Creator. For light is love and wisdom made visible, and he is drenched in it.

Such love does
the sky now pour,
that whenever I stand in a field,
I have to wring out the light
when I get home.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

MATTHEW 2:1-12

NRSV

A reading from the Gospel according to 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.

Hear what God is saying to the people. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

DR. GREG CAREY

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

In the darkness before creation, you made all that lives and breathes.
In the darkness of Mary’s womb, you formed Jesus, bringer of light.
In the darkness of our world your spirit sustains us.

O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

Under the cover of darkness, Magi followed the star to the Christ-child.
We come from the East and we come from the West,
following you on our different roads,
following the same star to the same place.

O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

In the stillness of the dark,
we pray for all who need God’s presence in a special way—
people who cannot find work, who cannot pay their bills,
who have no place to live, people who are discouraged and hopeless,
people who have become cynical and bitter.

O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

We live in this world in our bodies, we rejoice in life and breath,
yet when sickness or pain cripples us,
we lose our bearings, we feel lost and bewildered.
We need your presence to keep us safe.
Be with those who are sick

O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

Thank you for moments of inspiration, for moments of clear vision
where we see who we are and who we are meant to be,
where we see where we are, and where you want us to go.
Give us courage to take the journey that you call us to,
and give us strength on the road.

O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

Your presence sustains us, help us to go from worship this morning,
having seen your face, having done homage to your goodness,
**We are confident in the work you are doing in us and through us,
for your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.**

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

“WE THREE KINGS”

INSTRUMENTAL

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Holy One be with you

And also with you

Open your hearts to the One who is Love

We open our hearts to you, O God

Let us give thanks to God, who welcomes the stranger

**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

You move in mysterious ways, 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 Creator, 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 trespassed against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever.

Amen.

Presider leads the assembly in partaking of their elements.

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.**

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

CLOSING SONG

“WHAT CHILD IS THIS”

(vs. 3)

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

This, this is Christ, the King
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“JOURNEY OF THE KINGS”

SICILIANO

Cover Art: "Adoration of the Christ Child by the Three Wise Men," Correggio, 1489-1534, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20210629183572607&code=ACT&RC=57077&Row=7> [retrieved June 29, 2021.]

Call to Worship: <https://fairstreetreformedchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Morning-Worship-for-January-3-2021.pdf>

Prayer of Confession: <https://fairstreetreformedchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Morning-Worship-for-January-3-2021.pdf>

Poem: Housden, Roger. *For Lovers of God Everywhere* (p. 74). Hay House. Kindle Edition.

Prayer of Illumination: <http://www.caldwellpresby.org/docs/resources/Prayers%20for%20Illumination.pdf>

Prayers of the Community: <https://carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship/church-year-epiphany/>

Communion Liturgy: created by enfleshed.com. [Epiphany Communion Prayer » #ResistHarm](#).

Music: All music reprinted under Onelicense.net #A-707825.

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

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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.