



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship January 12, 2025 9:30am
Baptism of the Lord Sunday

Gathering

PRELUDE

“How Brightly Shines the Morning Star”

Linda Dover, organist

J.S. Bach

arr. Frank W. Asper

In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.

WELCOME /ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Karen Wright

CHORAL INTROIT

“What Star Is This?”

Puer Nobis Noscitur, 15thc. carol

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

arr. and adapt. by Craig Curry

Jill Endaya-Allen ~ Keith Langabee, percussion

What star is this, with beams so bright, more lovely than the noonday light?

It shines to herald forth the King, glad tidings of our God to bring.

See now fulfilled what God decreed: “From Jacob shall a star proceed.”

And lo! the eastern sages stand to read in heaven God’s command.

The guiding star above is bright; within it shines a purer light

that leads them on with force benign to seek the Giver of the sign.

True love can brook no dull delay though toil and danger lie their way;

and yet, their home, their friends and all they leave at their Creator’s call.

O while the star of heav’nly grace invites us, Lord, to see thy face,

may we no more that grace repel, or quench the light that shines so well!

To God the Father, God the Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One,

May ev’ry tongue and nation raise an endless song of thankful praise!

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.

Congregation sings the refrain of We Three Kings

Hymn 151, Refrain each time

KINGS OF ORIENT

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

ONE: King Herod and all of Jerusalem were frightened. The chief priests and scribes told Herod what had 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.'

Congregation sings the refrain of We Three Kings

ONE: Herod called us to learn the time when the star appeared. He sent us to Bethlehem to search for the child. He also told us to bring word when we found the child so he could pay him homage as well. We set out with the star before us. When it stopped, we were overwhelmed with joy.

Congregation sings the refrain of We Three Kings

ONE: We saw the child with Mary, his mother, and knelt down to pay him homage. We offered gifts gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, we left for our country by another road.

Congregation sings the refrain of We Three Kings

*HYMN 744

“Arise, Your Light Has Come”

FESTAL SONG

744 Arise, Your Light Is Come!

1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
 2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
 3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
 4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun - tains burst in song!

show forth the glo - ry of your God, which shines on you to - day.
 pro - claim the cap - tives' lib - er - ty, good ti - dings to the poor.
 bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
 Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Echoing imagery from Isaiah 61:1-2 and other passages, this text was created as an inclusive-language alternative to an older hymn using this late 19th-century tune. Because it is a song of encouragement rather than a song of praise, it is not directed to God but to people.

TEXT: Ruth Duck, 1974
 MUSIC: William H. Walter, 1894
 Text © 1992 GIA Publications, Inc.

FESTAL SONG
 SM
 (this tune in a lower key, 815)

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Emily Nelson-Dixon

The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Let us confess our sin to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of grace, you have given us Jesus, the light of the world, but we choose darkness and cling to things that hide the brightness of your love. Immersed in ourselves, we have not risen to new life. Baptize us with your Spirit, that,

forgiven and renewed, we may preach your Word to the nations and tell of your glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our light forever. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. To all who have received him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: **And also with you and all others!**

*HYMN 155, *sung twice*

“Raise a Song of Gladness”

JULBILATE DEO

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

155 Raise a Song of Gladness

Jubilate Deo



Raise a song of glad-ness, peo-ples of the earth.
Ju - bi - la - te De - o om - nis ter - ra.



Christ has come, bring-ing peace, joy to ev - ery heart.
Ser - vi - te Do - mi - no in lae - ti - ti - a.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, joy to ev - ery heart!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, in lae - ti - ti - a!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, joy to ev - ery heart!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, in lae - ti - ti - a!

**May be sung as a canon.*

The Latin text here, for which the musical setting was originally composed, is from Psalm 100:1. The English paraphrase gives this verse a Christian interpretation, much as Isaac Watts did when he paraphrased Psalm 98 to produce "Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come" (see no. 134).

TEXT: Taizé Community, 1978
MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1978
Text and Music © 1979 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

JUBILATE DEO
Irregular

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 3:15–17, 21-22

Kevin Johnson

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

SUNG PRAYER

"Pilgrims' Hymn"

Music by Stephen Paulus

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers Words by Michael Dennis Browne

*Even before we call on your name to ask you, O God.
When we seek for the words to glorify you, you hear our prayer;
Unceasing love, O unceasing love, surpassing all we know.
Glory to the Father ... and to the Son ... and to the Holy Spirit.
Even with darkness sealing us in, we breathe your name.
And through all the days that follow so fast, we trust in you.
Endless your grace, O endless your grace, beyond all mortal dream.
Both now and for ever ... and unto ages ... and ages ... Amen.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 43:1–7

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight and honored and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the

earth--everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Through the Waters"

Rev. Karen Wright

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

arr. Mary McDonald

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"
Chris Krug, piano ~ Linda Dover, organist

RECOGNITION OF REBECCA PRATER

Sending

*HYMN 463

"How Firm a Foundation"

FOUNDATION

(st. 1 All ~ st. 2 High Voices ~ st. 3 Low Voices ~ st. 4 & 5 All)

463 How Firm a Foundation

1 How firm a foun - da - tion, ye saints of the Lord,
 2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call thee to go,
 4 "When through fi - ery tri - als thy path - way shall lie,
 5 "The soul that on Je - sus hath leaned for re - pose,

is laid for your faith in God's ex - cel - lent Word!
 for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
 the riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;
 my grace, all suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;
 I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;

What more can be said than to you God hath said,
 I'll strength - en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
 for I will be near thee, thy trou - bles to bless,
 the flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign
 that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
 up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.
 and sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress.
 thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine.
 I'll nev - er, no, nev - er, no, nev - er for - sake."

It seems odd now to think of singing this text to ADESTE FIDELES, but mainline churches did so well into the 20th century because of a cultural bias against shape note music. The vigor of the present tune seems especially right for the final line's reference to Hebrews 13:5.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

SUNG BLESSING

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You”

Music by Peter C. Lutkin

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

Text from *Numbers 6:24-26*

Rebecca Prater, director

*The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord lift his countenance upon you;
and give you peace, and be gracious unto you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you, be gracious, the Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.*

POSTLUDE

“Postlude in G Major”

G.F. Handel

Linda Dover, organist

arr. Walter E. Buszin

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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