



GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Service of Worship January 2, 2022 9:30am
Epiphany/Star Sunday

Gathering

PRELUDE "We Three Kings," "Silent Night," "Shepherds" arr. Wilbur Held
"Gloria for the Flutes" arr. Alice Jordan
Linda Dover, organ

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT "Pastoral" by Domenico Scarlatti
Kat Mason, flute – Bob Dover, clarinet Transcribed by B. Nestling

*CALL TO WORSHIP *(spoken together)*

People of the world, it is time to celebrate new beginnings.

Let us step into the new year with faith!

People of faith, it is time to look ahead in hope.

Let us step into the unknown with hope!

People of hope, it is time to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Let us step forward together as God's family!

*HYMN 152 "What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright" PUER NOBIS NASCITUR
(Stanzas 1 & 4 All ... Stanza 2 Men ... Stanza 3 Ladies & Children)

What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright 152

Capo 2: (C) (Am) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G) (C) (F)
 D Bm A D G D A D G

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more
 2 'Tis now full-filled what God de-creed, "From
 3 While out-ward signs the star dis-plays, an
 4 O Je-sus, while the star of grace im-

(C) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G)
 D A D G D A

love-ly than the noon-day light? 'Tis
 Ja-cob shall a star pro-ceed"; and
 in-ward light the Lord con-veys and
 pels us on to seek your face, let

(Am) (D7) (G) (C) (F) (C) (Dm)
 Bm E7 A D G D Em

sent to an-nounce a new-born king, glad
 lo! the east-ern sa-ges stand to
 urg-es them, with ten-der might, to
 not our sloth-ful hearts re-fuse the

(G) (C) (G) (C) (F) (G) (C)
 A D A D G A D

ti-dings of our God to bring.
 read in heaven the Lord's com-mand.
 seek the giv-er of the light.
 guid-ance of your light to use.

This 18th-century Latin text calls attention to three kinds of light: the light of the star leading the Magi to the Christ-child, the inward light inspiring their journey, and Christ who is the Light of the world. The simple unison melody unites everything in a gentle arc.

TEXT: Charles Coffin, 1736; trans. John Chandler, 1837, alt.

MUSIC: Trier ms., 15th cent.; adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1609; harm. George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1910

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

LM

(alternate harmonization, 254)

PRAYER FOR EPIPHANY (*responsive*)

We thank you God that you know what it is to be human, fragile, and vulnerable, searching for ways to stay alive in dangerous and complicated times.

We thank you that you know the struggles and temptations of living in darkness.

And we thank you that you give light to the world.

We confess that sometimes it's easier to stay in the shadows, where things can stay hidden, where people can't see our cracks and flaws.

Cast your light on our darkness and forgive us, God of love.

We confess that we have at times brought darkness into the world by our anger, our selfishness, our violence.

Cast your light on our darkness and forgive us, God of love.

We confess that we are sometimes skeptical of light and find it easier to trust its absence.

Cast your light on our darkness and forgive us, God of love.

And now in this silence,

bring the confessions that are on your heart and mind into the light of God's love

[*silence*]

We know in faith that God restores and renews, and that our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE & SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you and all others!

*HYMN 144

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

CRANHAM

(Stanza 1 All ... Stanza 3 Ladies & Children ... Stanza 4 All)

In the Bleak Midwinter 144

1 In the bleak mid-winter, frost-y wind made moan;
 2 Our God, heaven can-not hold him, nor earth sus-tain;
 3 An-gels and arch-an-gels may have gath-ered there;
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as i-ron, wa-ter like a stone;
 heaven and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign:
 cher-u-bim and ser-a-phim thronged the air;
 If I were a shep-herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall-en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid-winter a sta-ble place suf-ficed
 but his moth-er on-ly, in her maid-en bliss,
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part;

‡ in the bleak mid-winter, long a-go.
 the Lord God in-car-nate, Je-sus Christ.
 ‡ wor-shipped the be-lov-ed with a kiss.
 yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

Equipping

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 2:1–12

(CEB)

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

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

*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.”*

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He 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.” When 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. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They 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. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“We Three Kings”

by John Henry Hopkins, Jr.

“I Saw Three Ships”

English Traditional

Christopher Callender, guitar

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 60:1–6

Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the LORD’s glory has shone upon you.

Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations,

the LORD will shine upon you; God’s glory will appear over you.

Nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning radiance

SERMON

“Good News/Bad News”

Rev. Mitch Trigger

Sending

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

The Great Thanksgiving

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

*HYMN 136

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”
(Stanzas 1 & 3)

GO TELL IT

136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain $\text{♪} = \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$

Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
3 Down in a low - ly man-ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.

*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Joy to the World”
Linda Dover, organ

arr. Donna Williams

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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