

of our desire
from the despise
of the nations
never on the throne
In found foundation, cast of corner for
Rejected joiner making many one
— a king who comes to give away his crown

**An Agape Liturgy for the
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
CHRISTMAS**

Zoom
Facebook Live

10:30 a.m.
January 3, 2021

Gathering: Liturgy of the Word

Prelude

“Hasten to Bethlehem”

John Marsh

Opening Hymn

#96 Angels We Have Heard on High

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Angels We Have Heard on High

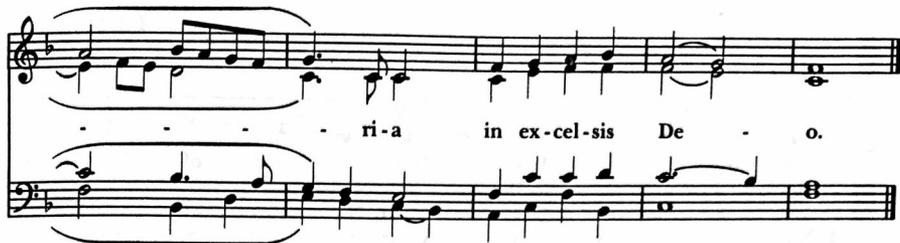
1 An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why these songs of hap - py cheer?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;
4 See him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels praise a - bove;

and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.
What great bright - ness did you see? What glad tid - ings did you hear?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.

Refrain

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -



Words: French carol; tr. James Chadwick (1813-1882), alt.
Music: *Gloria*, French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958)

77. 77 with Refrain

The Bidding

All stand, and the Officiant greets the people with these words:

Officiant: Dear friends in Christ, in this season of Christmas let us praise and worship God who has called us together. Let us celebrate God's majesty, and delight in the wonder of God's love. Together we shall confess our sins and receive assurance that we are forgiven. As the scriptures are read, we can allow the experiences of God from our Ancestors to speak to us, and ponder its meaning in our lives. In our prayers, we give thanks for God's goodness, we pray for others as well as for ourselves and we offer our lives anew in Christ's service. All this we do because we believe in the presence among us of our Savior Jesus Christ, and in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit.

Silence follows for a time.

Officiant: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The following sentence of scripture may be read:

Behold, I bring you good news of great joy; for to you is born in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (*Luke 2:10, 11*)

The Confession

As we worship we ask God's forgiveness for things done and things left undone and things done on our behalf so that we are reconciled to God and each other.

Officiant: Let us in silence remember our need for God's forgiveness.

Silence is kept for a time.

Officiant: God of mercy,

People: We have sinned against you and against others. We have sinned in what we have done, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, forgive us all that is past and raise us to newness of life. **Amen.**

We are assured of God's forgiveness and love:

Officiant: Almighty God, who pardons all who truly repent, forgive your sins, strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Hymn of Praise

#107 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

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Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss; Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
 He hath o - pened hea - ven's door, and we are blest for ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Words: John Mason Neale (1818-1866), alt.

Music: *In dulci jubilo*, German carol, 14th cent.; harm. Charles Winfred Douglas (1867-1944)

66. 77. 78. 55

Officiant: Let us glorify the Holy One as we say:

People: O Light of the world, first-born of creation, radiance of glory, light from light begotten; God self-revealing, holy, bright and blessed, you shine upon us. Day's light is fleeting, your light is eternal, and we look to you our light within the shadow. We sing to you O Creator, Christ and Spirit, you shine before us. Light of the world, O Jesus Christ, we bless you; giver of life and Child of God, we praise you. Here with us the universe proclaims your glory, as you shine among us. *Amen.*

Collect for Purity

Officiant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open,

People: all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Collect of the Day

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Officiant: Let us pray: O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever . *Amen.*

The Readings

The First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7 – 14

Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame, those with child and
those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.
Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

The Response: Psalm 84

- 1 **H**ow dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! *
My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts,
my King and my God.
- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *
they will always be praising you.
- 4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.
- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place
of springs, *
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.
- 6 They will climb from height to height, *
and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

- 7 LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; *
 hearken, O God of Jacob.
- 8 Behold our defender, O God; *
 and look upon the face of your Anointed.
- 9 For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my
 own room, *
 and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God
 than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- 10 For the LORD God is both sun and shield; *
 he will give grace and glory;
- 11 No good thing will the LORD withhold *
 from those who walk with integrity.
- 12 O LORD of hosts, *
 happy are they who put their trust in you!.

The Epistle: Ephesians 1:3–6, 15–19a

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

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We Three Kings of Orient



1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, bear - ing
 2 Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I: in - cense
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and

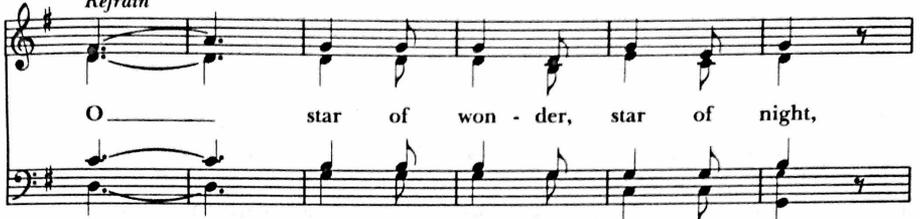


1 gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
 2 bring to crown him a - gain, King for ev - er,
 3 owns a De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,
 4 life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
 5 God and Sac - ri - fice; heaven sings al - le -



1 moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 2 ceas - ing nev - er o - ver us all to reign.
 3 glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship him, God Most High.
 4 bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 5 lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.

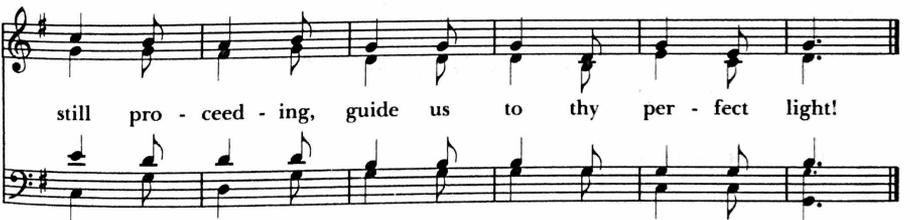
Refrain



O ——— star of won - der, star of night,



star with roy - al beau - ty bright; west - ward lead - ing,



still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

The Gospel: Matthew 2:1–12



Officiant: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ
according to St. Matthew.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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.

Officiant: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

Rev. Annette Joseph

Affirmation of Faith

Originally the entire service was viewed as our confession of faith. Since the sixth century, however, the church has recited either the Nicene Creed or the Apostle's Creed at the Eucharist. The word "creed" comes from the Latin *credo*, for "I believe" or "I lend my heart to." Either the Nicene Creed, the Apostle's Creed, or the following may be used:

Officiant: Let us affirm our faith. Do you believe in God?

People: We believe in God the Father the almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

Officiant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

People: We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Officiant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

People: We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Prayers of the People

Lector: Make your ways known upon earth, O God; Your saving power among all people. [*Silence.*] Renew your Church in holiness; and help us to serve you with joy. [*Silence.*] Guide the leaders of this and every nation; that justice

may prevail throughout the world. [*Silence.*] Let not the needy, O God be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away. [*Silence.*] Make us instruments of your peace, and let your glory be over all the earth. [*Silence.*]

Lector: In this holy season in which God joins heaven to earth, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all those in need. Bless all those who are entrusted with Christian ministry; that your Word might be proclaimed with truth and courage across our world. [*Silence.*]

Lector: Draw near to those who find this season a source of pain or grief, and to all who are suffering or sick, especially those we remember in our own hearts ... (Names may be offered). [*Silence.*]

Lector: Give us grace to follow your holy ones in lives of faith and commitment, that we may join with the hosts of heaven in singing the praises of this holy day. [*Silence.*]

Lector: All these things and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, O God... [*Additional prayers may be offered silently or aloud.*]

Officiant: In this holy season, draw us into the mystery of your love. Join our voices with the heavenly host, that we may sing your glory on high, that we may find the one for whom we have waited, Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendor of eternal light, God forever and ever. *Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer

Officiant: Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, and gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Savior taught us:

People: 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Agape

While sharing a common Eucharistic celebration is not possible at this time, this liturgy expresses our longing for a time when we can once more share and gather together at the Eucharistic table. This practice of giving thanks for bread, wine and food is ancient, going back to the hospitality our ancestor Abraham showed to his visitors. While not the full celebration of the Holy Eucharist, there is a relationship, in much the same way that giving thanks over water is a reminder of our Baptism.

The Officiant and people give thanks for the gift of wine.

Officiant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

People: You create the fruit of the vine; we long for the day when you will once again refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Glory to you for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Officiant and people give thanks for the gift of our daily bread.

Officiant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

People: You bring forth bread from the earth; we long for the day when we may once again partake of the bread of life the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. As grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power forever and ever. *Amen.*

The Officiant and people give thanks for the gift of food.

Officiant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

People: You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the Eucharistic fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Thanksgiving

Officiant: Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

People: We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care, which surrounds us on every side.

Officiant: We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

People: We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Officiant: Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

People: Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. *Amen.*

The Peace

The Peace is exchanged.

Officiant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

We greet each other in the name of the risen Christ.

Here at Christ Church, we consider gratitude and generosity to be spiritual disciplines. While we can't be together to pass the collection plate to one another in church at this time, we encourage you to offer your gifts and service in any way that makes the most sense to you.

[Click here](#) to contribute to our ongoing ministry by donating online.

Final Hymn

#100 Joy to the World

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Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re -
2 Joy to the world! the Sa - vior reigns; let us our
*3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the

ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room, and
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, re -
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow far
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness, and

heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
as the curse is found, far as the curse is
won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

1 and heaven and na - ture sing, and
2 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
3 far as the curse is found, far
4 and won - ders of his love, and

The Sending

Officiant: Our worship is ended. Our service in the world now begins. Go now to love and serve the Lord. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*

People: We go in the name of Christ. Thanks be to God!
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude “Regent Square” Janet Linker

A simple meal may now be shared.

Servers

Priest-in-Charge
Lector
Organist
Choir Director
Ministry Intern

Rev. Annette Joseph
Matthew Heisserer-Miller
Mary Miller
Randyn Heisserer-Miller
Joshua Smith

Bulletin Cover Image

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The King Who Came to Give Away His Crown
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Notes on the Service

Second Sunday after Christmas

Jer. 31:7-14 • Ps. 84 • Eph. 1:3-6, 15-19a • Matt. 2:1-12

This Wednesday will be the Epiphany, which will conclude the Christmas season as it commemorates the showing of Christ to the wise men, so some churches may condense the calendar by anticipating the Epiphany today. Indeed, the story of the wise men is provided as one of today's Gospels.

Those who adhere to the calendar will find today's collect sums up the meaning of Christmas. God "destined us in love to be his children" states today's epistle; so Pope Leo the Great epitomized it, "the Son of God became the Son of Man that the sons of men may become the sons of God." The collect, translated from a seventh century book of prayers attributed to Leo, echoes Leo's dictum, [may we] "**share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity.**"

Jeremiah's "new covenant" chapter 31 promises that Israel's joy when they return from exile will compensate for all their suffering in defeat and deportation. This lyric passage about the return of the Diaspora to Zion shows God calling himself the "father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn." The New Testament will see Jesus as the personification of Israel, and Christian devotion will use this passage to celebrate the redemption of Israel. The verses immediately following this excerpt are Jeremiah's lament about Rachel's weeping for her children, to be quoted by Matthew in his story of the massacre of the Innocents of Bethlehem, deleted from today's Gospel.

Jeremiah's vision of the returnees' "singing aloud on the heights of Zion" is re-stated of pilgrims by today's Psalm 84, one of the "Songs of Ascents" for those en route to Mt Zion's temple. The party of pilgrims which included the holy family as described in Luke 2 (one choice for today's Gospel) could have used Ps 84. Imagine the Boy Jesus there reciting, "blessed are they who dwell in thy house," or even, "look upon the face of thine Anointed."

Ephesians opens with thanks that God destined us to be his children (a thanks which is repeated by the proper preface for Christmastide). God's children should know, first, what is the hope to which they are called; second, what are the riches of Christ's inheritance; third, what is the greatness of God's power, all topics to be discussed further in the text of Ephesians.

Of the four Gospel writers only Matthew tells of the Gentile sages with gifts for the Jewish Child. King Herod the Great's consultants cite a post-exilic passage from Micah expecting a new king to come from their first king's hometown, Bethlehem. As the wise Gentiles adore Jesus, their three gifts are emblems, gold for a king, incense for a god, myrrh for a corpse: epiphanies all.

Rev. Stephen Weissman
Saint Louis, Missouri