

Prelude

Welcome

Opening Words adapted Worship Ways

One: We gather in the Light
that was before, is now, and ever will be,
seeking the Light's wisdom

Many: **You have Come Emmanuel**

One: We gather in the Light
that is God's continuing gift
and live into the Light's new wisdom.

Many: **You have Come Emmanuel**

One: We gather in the Light
that is our own, emerging anew each day,
seeking to share this wisdom,
nurtured in the Light from Bethlehem's cradle.

Many: **You have Come Emmanuel**

Opening Hymn Hymnal #159 (verses 1,2,and 4) "As With Gladness Those of Old"

Prayer of Invocation (Worship Ways)

God of Light and Love,
in this very moment the star still beckons.
Gather us and let the star call us to new ways
of healing and hope,
restoration and renewal,
as we discover again Christ's call to discipleship. Amen

Musical Response: Hymnal #136 "Jesus, Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child"

Children's Time

Word in Song:

8:30 Children's Choir

11:00 Chancel Choir

Sacred Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus' birth – which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod – wise people from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage.” At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

“In Bethlehem of Judea,” they informed him. “Here is what the prophet has written: ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, since from you will come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Herod called the wise people aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, “Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me – so that I may go and offer homage, too.”

After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay. They were overjoyed at seeing the star and, upon entering the house, found the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another way.

The Christmas Story by Robin Richstone

We know by heart these stories
of a cold world, unwelcoming inn,
the murderous tyrant,
Mary on a donkey, escape,
how cruel, how long ago, how far
from what we mean to sing,
O Come, O Come,
to the weary, the terrified,
Mary's heart beating fast,

her grip on the baby,
the strains of it fill the shops,
the streets, flow down rivers,
cross seas, cross borders,
the refugee mother kneels
to change her infant in an open field,
the shepherds gone, the angels quiet,
her safety now
completely up to us.

For the wisdom contained in these holy words we give thanks. Amen.

Sermon Rev. Wendy Bruner

Hymn Hymnal #128 (verses 1, 3, and 4) “In the Bleak Midwinter”

Prayers of the People (Lord’s Prayer in front of binder)

Communion

Minister: As we gather around the table to be nourished
by this meal we remember that this is not our
table this is God’s table and that means all are
welcome at this table. The bread is gluten free
and there is grape juice in the cup.

Gathering around the table as we celebrate
life together we remember so many stories
shared around tables;

Liturgist: Tables where bread is broken and cup is
poured out, where families gather and
generations share, where stories are
remembered, refined, reshaped.

Minister: Gathering around the table this morning,
we break the bread and
touch the mystery that in our brokenness
we become whole;

Liturgist: We fill the cup and remember
the abundance discovered in each new sharing
of our sacred stories. Together, around the
table, we pray:

Many: Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.
Bless all of us in our eating and drinking
that our eyes might be opened,
that we might recognize the risen Christ
in our midst, indeed, in one another.
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Communion Response Hymnal #526 “Siyahamba”

Let us pray with thanksgiving

Gracious God, you have once again shown us your love
by bringing us to this meal.
We go from here renewed in faith,
renewed in courage,
and strengthened by your presence.
Thank you for loving us so tenderly.
Thank you for challenging us
to know you better and to receive you more fully. Amen

How Shall We Do God’s Work in the World

“This Little Light of Mine” Binder #20

Prayer of Dedication (in front of binder)

Gracious God, we give thanks.
We ask your blessings on these gifts of time,
talent, and treasure as we use them to do
Your work in the world. Amen

Hymn Hymnal #151 “Twas in the Moon of Wintertime”

Benediction

Postlude