

PEACE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



January 2, 2021

Prelude "Angels from the Realms of Glory" Henry T. Smart/arr. Faye Lopez
(inspired by Mozart's Allegro in B Flat Major, K.3)
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Welcome

Opening Words Worship Ways adapted

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**

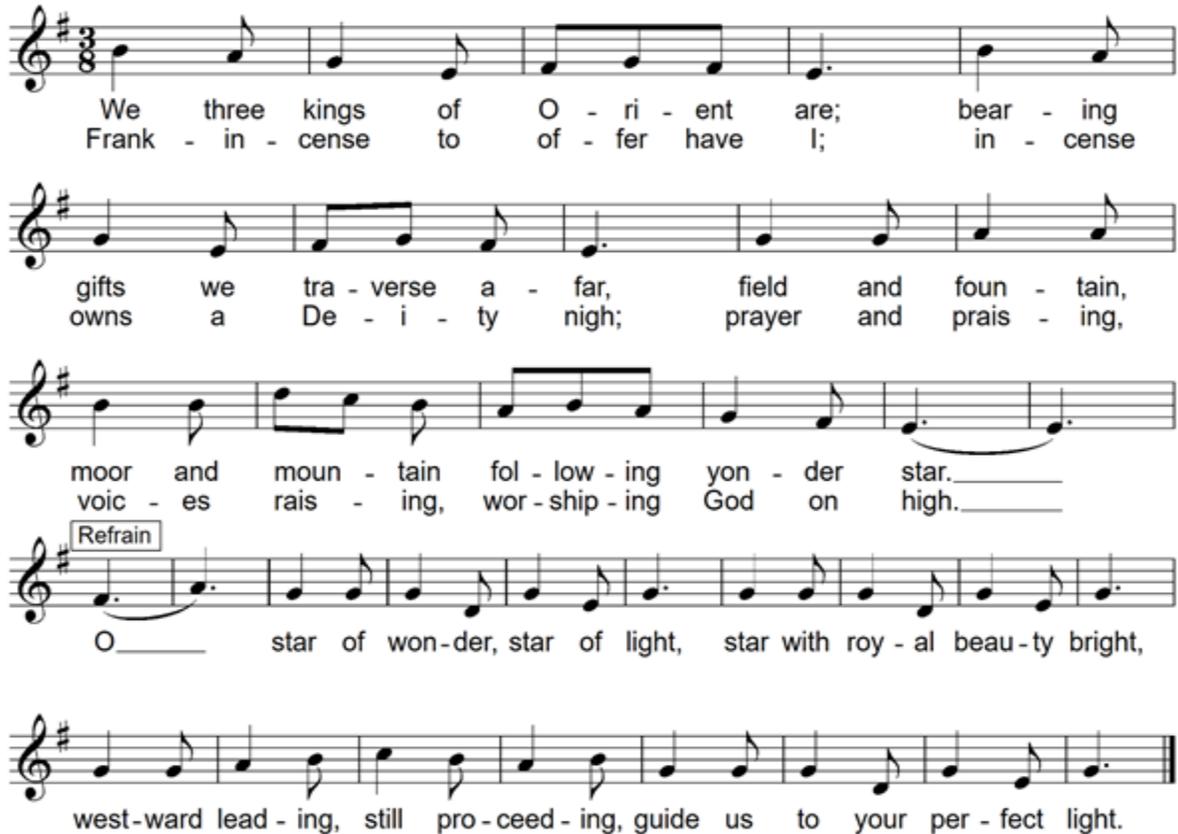
One: We gather in the Light
that is God's continuing gift
and live into the Light's new wisdom.

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 Response “We Three Kings”



We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing
Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense
gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
owns a De - i - ty night; prayer and prais - ing,
moor and moun - tain fol - low - ing yon - der star.
voic - es rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God on high.
Refrain
O star of won - der, star of light, star with roy - al beau - ty bright,
west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to your per - fect light.

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.

The Witness of Music Ann Fessenden

"Fantasia on Greensleeves" Ralph Vaughan Williams/arr. Watson Forbes
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Readings:

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise people 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 people 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.

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 "As with Gladness Those of Old"



As with glad-ness those of old did the guid-ing star be-hold;
As with joy-ful steps they sped to that low-ly man-ger bed,
Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-ery day keep us in the nar-row way;

As with joy they hailed its light, lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;
There to bend the knee be-fore One whom heaven and earth a-dore;
And when mor-tal things are past, bring our ran-somed souls at last

So, true Morn-ing Star, may we ev-er-more your splen-dor see.
So may we with will-ing feet ev-er seek your mer-cy seat.
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glo-ry hide.

Joys and Concerns

Prayer

Creator, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come, your 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 yours is the kin-dom, and the power,
and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Communion

Prayer: 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.

Pray of 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 join God's work in the world?

Gracious God, we give thanks and ask your blessings on the many and diverse gifts we bring to join you in your work in the world.

Benediction

Postlude "The First Noel" Traditional/arr. Fay Lopez
(inspired by Mozart's Polonaise in D Major from Twelve Little Pieces)
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