

WORSHIP AT ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

January 2nd, 2022 – Epiphany Sunday

Worship led by Alison Warner-Smith

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

Email sketchingalong4@gmail.com to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Hymn: VU 67 *Silent Night*, vv. 1 & 3

1. Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

3. Silent night! Holy Night!
Son of God, loves pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcome again to St. Andrew's United Church on the first Sunday of the new year, 2022. Yes, we worship together whether we are in person in the sanctuary or if we are joining online. We are all together in Christ.

I'd like to thank Suzanne Nykilchuk and Jill Bennett from the Worship Planning Team for preparing the liturgy and choosing the hymns for this service. Suzanne will be playing her guitar and singing for some of today's hymns, and Jen Bruneau who will also be singing with us. Jill is reading the scripture today – I love to listen to Jill's voice. It's so soothing. Thank you all. Thank you to Rev. Dave for his assistance, as well. And of course, I must thank Roger Pile and Mallon Appianing in the sound booth for making the magic happen, streaming this service to you.

If you are new here, please note the credits at the end of this worship on screen with contact information – Facebook, our website, email, and our phone number. You can contact us in many ways to say hello and allow us to get to know you. We also have a Virtual Fellowship time tonight at 7:00 with hosts Bev and Diane. Diane's email is also in the credits so you can request your Zoom link to Fellowship Time. Please join us. We'd love to see you there.

Inviting Holy Light

As we celebrate the coming of the Magi, we remember how the light of a bright star led them to the baby Jesus. For us that same star shines, it welcomes and guides all who need it. The light of Christ welcomes all of us into this worship.

[light candle]

Nurturing Safe Space

We seek Holy Spirit and Love to help us nurture safe space in this place where all can participate in worship and life regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Long before settlers came to this land we call Canada, many nations of people already lived on the land and cared for it. We recognize them as the First Nations. Here at St. Andrew's, we are

worshipping on the traditional territories of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. We recognize the long history of our First Nations and Metis peoples. We give thanks for their stewardship of the land throughout the ages. Let us, all of us, Treaty people, commit ourselves anew to the work of healing, justice, and reconciliation.

Call to Worship

A star shining brightly in the East,
discovered by those who have eyes to see the unusual and the challenging.

A journey into unknown territory,
taken by those who have courage and curiosity.

An encounter with an evil, commanding presence,
evil that was faced, yet resisted with care.

The Holy One recognized, despite humble origin,
the glory of the gifts, given to God's Chosen Child.

Come, let us worship.

Opening Prayer

God of life,
starlight is our night companion –
a gift of wonder –
that helped direct ancient ones on their journey,
and helps us reflect upon our own. Amen.

The Prayer Jesus Taught

This we pray along with the prayer taught to us by the beloved who loved, and called us to love too...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: VU 76 See Amid the Winter's Snow, vv. 1 & 5

1. See amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below,
see, the tender Lamb appears,
promised from eternal years.

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;
hail, redemption's happy dawn;
sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

5. Sacred infant, all divine,
what a tender love was thine,
thus to come from highest bliss
down to such a world as this.

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn;
hail, redemption's happy dawn;
sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Scripture Reading (Jill Bennett)

The Magi Come Seeking (Seasons of the Spirit paraphrase)

Based on Matthew 2:1-12, 16

Far from Jerusalem, high in the eastern mountains of Persia, strangers were watching the skies. They were magi – people so wise they seemed to possess magic.

The magi gathered wisdom and knowledge from every place. They were always reading, watching, listening, and wondering about the meaning of things. One night they saw a new star. At least it looked like a star. But it did not act like one. Instead of staying in one place, it went its own way, wandering like a planet. It was not on any of their star charts.

“What is it?” they wondered. “What does it mean? A star like that must tell of something important, like the birth of some great person.” They decided to follow it.

“We want to know the truth,” they said to one another. “How will we know unless we follow the light? The Creator of the Stars will show us the way.”

The magi followed that star all the way to Jerusalem. At home, they were used to dealing with kings and important people, so they went first to the palace of King Herod. Herod ruled the lands around Jerusalem, even though it was the Romans who really held the power. The magi told Herod about the star they had seen. They wondered if he knew anything about the birth of a new king.

“A new king?” Herod’s eyes narrowed. What if these strangers were right? Fear took hold of him – fear of losing his power. Herod did not want to know the truth. He just wanted information he could use. So he lied.

“Go and find this king,” he said. “When you do, be sure to come back and tell me so I can go and bow down to him.” But the magi were wise enough not to trust Herod.

The star led them to Bethlehem. When they found Jesus, they were overjoyed. They gave him the gifts they had brought with them. Gold, because it does not tarnish, and a true king values things that last.

Frankincense, for prayer, because a true king seeks wisdom through being still and listening for God. Myrrh, for healing and to anoint the dead, because a true king seeks to heal rather than harm. And a true king knows that death must come before new life.

After they had given their gifts, the magi went home by a different route. When they did not return, Herod flew into a rage. His advisors tried to calm him, but he would not listen.

All he wanted was to seek out and destroy Jesus. He caused great harm to innocent people. But in spite of his efforts to hold on to power, in the end he died alone and afraid.

On their way home, the magi talked about the star. How it caught them by surprise, roaming freely around the world. How it scattered its gift of light far and wide. How it broke open a story about one people, and made it a story for all people.

Let us pray:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,

to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Message: “Loving Our Diversity” (Alison Warner-Smith)

Message will be posted on the website when it is available.

Hymn: VU 87 I am the Light of the World, vs. 1

“I am the Light of the World!
You people come and follow me.”
If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun:

“I am the Light of the World!
You people come and follow me.”
If you follow and love, you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

Offering Our Gifts to God

Life is blessing. We know that, sometimes we don't see it easily.
As modern-day disciples, let us be the words and actions of our Creator. Let us come to offer our talents, our skills, and our very being as an offering for the call of Jesus to follow... and here we are!

Our gifts are many and varied, depending on the gifts God first gave us. We give locally, our volunteering and our treasures to bless the ministries of St. Andrew's. We give globally, towards ministries in Canada and around the world, through the United Church's Mission and Service. Thank you for all you do, your generosity and joy in giving.

Offering Hymn: VU 96 Will You Come and See the Light, vv. 1, 5

1. Will you come and see the light from the stable door?
It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.
It will be your guiding star, it will show you who you are.
Will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

5. Will you travel by the light of the babe new born?
In the cradle lit at night there's a gleam of dawn,
and the darkness all about is too dim to put it out:
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Prayer of Dedication

As the magi brought gold,
so we bring these gifts.
As the magi brought frankincense,
so we bring our prayers.
As the magi brought myrrh,
so we bring our lives to you, O God. Amen.

Prayers of the Community

God of compassion, we bring our prayers to you for all the precious gifts we receive: moments of beauty; love from family and friends; food from the earth; encounters that cultivate hope. Receive our gratitude for all this and more.

[silence for reflection]

We bring our prayers to you for all those we have concern for: lives burdened by loss or heartache; those struggling with illness or pain; countries devastated by violence or conflict; all those carrying hidden sorrows. Grant strength and healing.

[silence for reflection]

We bring our prayers to you for all those who, like the magi, are searching for something: some for new meaning; some for the right path; some for community; some for your presence. Grant a kind and guiding light.

[silence for reflection]

We bring these prayers to you, along with all those which remain unspoken, trusting that you have received them all with mercy and grace.

In silence now we offer our individual prayers for people and situations of concern to us in this silent moment. *[silence]*

Together we pray, Creator, you loved the world without limit, enough to be born among us. Come, Jesus come, and make things right. Bring reconciliation and justice, and let us help. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 59 *Joy to the World*, vv. 1, 2, 4

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Let earth receive her King.

Let every heart prepare him room,

and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth, the Saviour reigns!

Let all their songs employ,

while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,

and makes the nations prove

the glories of His righteousness

and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders, of His love.

Blessing

May God be a guiding star before you,

a glorious song above you,

a gentle path below you,

a galvanizing voice behind you

wherever you may journey. Amen

Benediction Hymn: VU 74 *What Child is This*, vs. 3

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;

come, one and all, to own him.

The King of Kings salvation brings;

let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the King,

whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

haste, haste to bring him laud,

the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Postlude

All **Prayers and Responses**, unless otherwise noted, come from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Advent Year C. ©2021 Wood Lake Books Inc.

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