

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024

First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

'EPIPHANY SUNDAY'

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP *(from Isaiah 60)*

One: Arise! Shine! for your light has come,
All: **and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.**
One: Though darkness covers the earth
All: **and thick darkness the peoples,**
One: the Lord will shine upon you;
All: **God's glory will appear over you.**
One: Nations will come to your light
All: **and kings to your dawning radiance.**

***OPENING HYMN** "As with Gladness Men of Old" GtG 150

1. As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led to thee.
2. As with joyful steps they sped,
Savior, to thy lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
thee, whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy seat.
3. As they offered gifts most rare
at thy manger, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.

4. **Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.**

Words: William Chatterton Dix, ca. 1858
Tune: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1838; abr. William Henry
Monk, 1861; harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906
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UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, Light of the world, we confess that we have not resisted the darkness of sin. We bear grudges against our neighbors, while it is your nature to forgive. We hold tightly to our possessions, while Christ blesses the poor. In him you have spoken peace, yet we live in turmoil. We care little for this planet, which you in goodness created for our habitation. In mercy forgive us, and help us to amend our ways that we may shine with the light of your saving grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *(from Isaiah 7, John 3, & Matthew 1)*

- One: The light shines in the darkness with the truth of Immanuel: that God is with us.
- All: **The Good News is this: “God loved the world so much that God gave God’s only Son.”**
- One: Friends, let us believe the Good News of the Child born in Bethlehem: his name is “Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
- All: **So let us rejoice and be glad! For in Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen!**

THE PEACE

- One: The peace of Christ be with you.
- All: **And also with you.**
- (From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)*

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS Isaiah 60:1-6
Matthew 2:1-12

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON “Light-RRRR” by Pastor Bill Vincent

***HYMN “Lord, the Light of Your Love Is Shining” GtG 192**
(Shine, Jesus, Shine)

**1. Lord, the light of your love
is shining,
in the midst
of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the World,
shine upon us;
set us free by the truth
you now bring us.
Shine on me; shine on me.**

Refrain:

**Shine, Jesus, shine;
fill this land with the Father’s glory.
Blaze, Spirit, blaze;
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow;
flood the nations with grace
and mercy.
Send forth your word, Lord,
and let there be light.**

**2. Lord, I come to your
awesome presence,
from the shadows into
your radiance;
by the blood I may enter
your brightness.
Search me; try me;
consume all my darkness.
Shine on me; shine on me.**

Refrain:

**3. As we gaze on your
kingly brightness,
so our faces display
your likeness;
ever changing from glory to glory,
mirrored here may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me; shine on me.**

Refrain:

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***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *(from “A Declaration of Faith”)*

God sent God’s Son
to proclaim release to those who are bound,
to announce that God's promised kingdom is at hand,
to urge everyone to repent and believe the good news.

The Lord is moving toward the time
when the glorious liberty of the children of God
will be manifest throughout the whole creation.

We testify God is at work here and now
when people obey Christ's commission
to witness to him and make disciples of all nations,
when they spread the good news by their words
and embody it in their lives.

We believe that God sends us
to tell all nations
that Christ calls everyone to repentance, faith, and obedience.

We are to proclaim by word and deed
that Christ gave himself to set people free
from sin and self-hatred,
from ignorance and disease,
from all forms of oppression,
and even from death.

We are to offer them in Christ's name
fullness of life now and forever.

We must not distort the gospel
by weakening its promises or demands,
by identifying it with oppressive structures,
by pointing to ourselves instead of Christ.

We must not restrict our proclamation
to persons just like ourselves.

We invite people everywhere
to believe in Christ and become his followers.

We urge them to join us in telling others the good news
and in struggling for justice, compassion, and peace.

“A Declaration of Faith” is Copyright 1977, 1991, the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); adopted (1977) “as a contemporary statement of faith, a reliable aid for Christian study, liturgy, and inspiration, with the clear understanding that” it is not approved as a part of the *Book of Confessions*.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: And so we lift up our prayers to you...
All: ...Gracious God, Lord of Light.

THE EUCHARIST

OFFERING

Invitation

Reflection

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

Loving God, we give you thanks for the light of the world, Jesus Christ. Receive the gifts we offer that they may bring glory to you in the ways they bear your love into the world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(The prayer continues...)

The Lord's Prayer (Traditional)

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

(With the passing of the bread, please wait until all have been served so that we may partake together, reminding us of our participation in this sacrament as a community.)

(With the passing of the cup, please partake as soon as received as an expression of our personal relationship with Christ.)

Prayer

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** “Come! Live in the Light!” GtG 749

**1. Come! Live in the light!
Shine with the joy
and the love of the Lord!
We are called
to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom
of the city of God.
We are called to act with justice;
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.**

**2. Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy
to all those in fear!
We are called
to be hope for the hopeless
so hatred and violence
will be no more.
We are called to act with justice;
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.**

**3. Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day
when all will be one!
God will reign,
and we'll walk with each other
as sisters and brothers
united in love.
We are called to act with justice;
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.**

Words and Music (WE ARE CALLED): David Haas, 1988

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

One: ...And let the gathered people of God say...

All: ...Amen.

POSTLUDE

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