

## Epiphany COCU8C

6 January 2019

*The church is fitted with a hearing loop which covers the body of the church. Hearing aid wearers are advised to switch their aid to T-setting.*

### THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

#### ORGAN PRELUDE

*The people stand for the entrance of the Bible*

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you...even though nations are still in darkness...on you the light of God will shine...the brightness of God's presence will be with you.

*Based on Isaiah 60:1,2*

Magi, braving distance and desert to find the Christ-child, allowed light to be their guide. Bewildered shepherds, compelled by an angel's invitation, allowed light to be their guide. And it is still the light that calls us to God, present with us now: the light of beauty that whispers its truth in surprising ways and places; the light that seeks to shine within us, and through us into the dark corners of our world; the light of joy that glows even in the darkness of grief and suffering.

**Lead us now and always into your marvellous light, O God.**

Let us worship God!

#### HYMN

#### WELCOME and GREETING

In the West, the Feast of the Epiphany on 6 January marks the coming of the magi to Jesus, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. It marks the universality of Jesus, and his light that floods the world.

pass the peace blurb

#### PRAYER OF THANKS

Merciful and loving God, for the year that has passed with its sorrows and joys, we give you thanks; for in every moment of it, you remained faithful to us, rejoicing and struggling with us, though often we were slow to recognize you there. And with thanks for this past year, we now release it. May its treasures

inspire us, but never bind us in nostalgia; and may its troubles teach us, but never hold us captive. For you who have created are still creating...making all things new, including this day. Amen.

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The coming of Christ was not, and is not, widely welcomed.  
Wherever there is epiphany there will also be darkness:  
the darkness of old superstitions and dogmas which refuse to fade away easily;  
the darkness of pride in the half truths that have masqueraded as wisdom;  
the darkness of entrenched evil that hates the light and tries to dispose of it;  
the darkness of apathy that cannot be bothered to open the shutters.  
Let us make our confession together.  
Most holy and most loving God, we admit to you and to each other,  
that we are creatures who either through foolishness or wilfulness  
often choose darkness instead of light.  
Lord, have mercy/**Lord, have mercy**  
Here and now we surrender to you our fears and proud opinions,  
our short-sighted folly and our pompous wisdom,  
our deep seated sins and our apathy towards change and renewal.  
Christ, have mercy/**Christ, have mercy**  
Grant forgiveness for any darkness and pain we have inflicted on others,  
and restore the light-starved hopes and ideals within our own souls.  
Lord, have mercy/**Lord, have mercy**  
Trusting your grace, we earnestly pray: "Create in us a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within us." *A silence is kept*

#### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Yearning for a new way will not produce it.  
Only ending the old way can do that.  
You cannot hold onto the old, all the while declaring that you want something new.  
The old will defy the new. The old will deny the new. The old will decry the new.  
There is only one way to bring in the new. You must make room for it.  
*(Source: Neale Donald Walsch)*  
Friends, Epiphany is good news!  
The Light comes not to sear and blind us but to save us.  
Take up forgiveness with thanksgiving,  
and live without shame or anxiety.  
**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ enables us. Amen!**  
*(Bruce Prewer)*

#### THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

##### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

We come to hear the stories of other people  
in another world long ago.  
We come to hear the stories  
that are also about us today, in this place.  
**God, grant us fresh insight, ears to listen, eyes to see,  
minds to wonder - and ponder, and hearts to accept. Amen.**  
*(Source: Joanna Harader)*

##### FIRST READING

Isaiah 60: 1-6

In this is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 72: 1-7, 10-14 (Read responsively)

1the King thy judgements, O God

**and thy righteousness unto the King's son.**

2shall he judge thy people according unto right

**and defend the poor.**

3mountains also shall bring peace

**and the little hills righteousness unto the people.**

4shall keep the simple folk by their right

**the children of the poor, and punish the wrong doer.**

5shall fear thee, as long as the sun and moon endureth

**one generation to another.**

6shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool

**even as the drops that water the earth.**

7his time shall the righteous flourish

**yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.**

10kings of Tharsis and of the isles shall give presents

**the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts.**

11kings shall fall down before him

**all nations shall do him service.**

12he shall deliver the poor when he crieth

**the needy also, and him that hath no helper.**

13shall be favourable to the simple and needy

**and shall preserve the souls of the poor.**

14shall deliver their souls from falsehood and wrong

**and dear shall their blood be in his sight.**

SECOND READING Ephesians 3: 1-12

In this is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

SOLO

*Please stand for the gospel*

A reading from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, Lord**

GOSPEL READING Matthew 2: 1-12

The gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

HYMN

SERMON

**THE RESPONSE TO GOD IN WORD AND ACTION**

HYMN

*During the singing of this hymn our offering will be received.  
Remain standing for the dedication prayer.*

### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Instead of gold and frankincense and myrrh, we bring to you, O God, the treasures you have first given to us - our hearts, minds and bodies, to be used in your service. We offer these gifts - of money and our lives - as signs of our total giving, praying that they will be used to herald the coming of your reign. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

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.

*We offer our silent prayers for others as we reflect on our world and its people.*

We believe, O Trinity of Love,  
that you draw us into your dance of life.  
You fill us with the Holy Spirit  
and call us to share in Christ's ministry -  
living and praying for the world day and night  
until rivers run in the deserts  
and all people find their place  
gathered around the feast of your table.

For the care of the earth:  
that mining, industrial and farming practices  
might safeguard soil, air and water...  
Lord, hear us/ **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For reconciliation and justice,  
that those who have plenty may live more modestly  
so that others who have little may have enough...  
Lord, hear us/ **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those whose lives have been devastated  
by natural disaster or political violence;  
that their suffering might be answered  
with compassion and restoration...  
Lord, hear us/ **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our brothers and sisters in Christ  
whose needs are close to our hearts at this time...  
Lord, hear us/ **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Bless us in the midst of our daily joys and struggles. *A silence is kept.*  
(Source: UCA Worship Working Group)

We offer the prayers of our hearts in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(printed inside cover of hymn book)*

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

### THE INVITATION

In the name of the One who said, 'I am the bread of life',

I invite you to come and eat.

In the name of the One who said, 'I am the true vine',

I invite you to come and drink.

In the name of the One who said, "Love one another, as I have loved you",

I invite you to the table of Jesus Christ.

### THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God be with you/ **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts/**We lift them to God.**

Let us give thanks to God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We give you thanks, O God, for making your love evident since the very beginning of time when you spoke the word which replaced the darkness of chaos with life-giving light. A light which has nurtured generations of people, and plants and creatures, great and small. A light which also revealed the fear and powerlessness caused by corrupt and evil actions. You spoke the Word which would once and for all dispel the darkness of chaotic lives. Through your love for the world the Word became flesh and lived among us full of grace and truth. The angels carolled glory to you in the highest heavens and peace to all people on earth, and we join with them and with all people to praise your holy name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy God, as the travellers with their treasures were overwhelmed with joy on finding Jesus, so we also are overwhelmed on finding out the depth of his love for us. For Jesus showed just how beloved we are to him, by loving us and giving himself for us. On that night when he gave himself up for us, as he sat at the table and broke bread with his friends, he said: 'Take and eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Remember me each time you do this.' *The bread is broken*

After they had eaten, he took the cup, and said: 'Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you - the beginning of a new relationship with God.' *The cup is lifted*

Send the power of your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine, O God, that we may experience the presence of the Word-made-flesh - Jesus Christ. Breathe your Spirit in us that we may be one body with him - living out his ministry in the world today and every day. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

*(Communion liturgy by Moira Laidlaw, Liturgies Online)*

### PRESENTATION OF THE ELEMENTS

#### DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*All are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please come forward in double file down the centre aisle to receive the elements, and return by the side aisles. If you are unable to come forward for communion, please indicate to the ushers who will arrange for communion to be brought to you. There is wine in the chalice and grape juice in the glasses. Please place empty glasses in the baskets.*

#### COMMUNION MOTET

#### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of love, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this meal.

Send us from here to reveal your love in the world.

Inspire in us the resolve and the courage, the compassion and the passion,  
to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Amen

## THE SENDING FORTH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

### HYMN

*(please remain standing for the benediction)*

### BENEDICTION

In Jesus we are blessed with the most remarkable epiphany.  
As we go our separate ways, we each carry the light of that revelation with us into the world.  
May the God of all grace be the strength in your hands,  
May the Christ of all light be the guide for your feet,  
May the Spirit of all truth be the integrity in your deeds.

**Amen!**

The incomparable blessing of the three person'd God  
will be with you this day and ever more. **Amen!** *(Bruce Prewer)*

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*You are invited to be seated for the playing of the organ postlude,  
or to leave at this point without disturbing those who wish to listen.*

### POSTLUDE

*Please stand as the Bible is taken from the church*

Presiding Minister  
Scripture Reader  
Soloist  
Organist

Rev Sandy Boyce

The Choir of Pilgrim Church  
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***Please join us for tea or coffee and fellowship in the Lounge  
after the service.***