

† SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION †
Epiphany Sunday Observed
January 3, 2021

PRELUDE

I Wonder as I Wander

Robert Rowland-Raybold

INVOCATION and CONFESSION (*Congregation rising*)

P In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us first confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

INTROIT (*from Psalm 72*)

P Endow the King with Your justice, O God, the royal Son with Your righteousness.

C He will judge Your people in righteousness, Your afflicted ones with justice.

P The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to Him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present Him gifts.

C All kings will bow down to Him and all nations will serve Him.

P For He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.

C He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

P May His name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun.

C All nations will be blessed through Him, and they will call Him blessed.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray:

C O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the nations. Lead us who know You by faith to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 60:1-6

¹Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

Ephesians 3:1-12

¹This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles – ²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE (*Congregation rising*)

P Alleluia. These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

C We have observed His star at its rising, and have come to worship Him. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:1-12

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "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." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea..." ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then 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." ⁹When 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. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

What Child is This

Samuel Wellman

SERMON

"Reflections on the Reading: Matthew 2:1-12" (insert)
Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

THE APOSTLES' CREED (*Congregation rising*)

C I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P Joining our voices with the songs of the faithful, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

P Glorious God, fill Your church with joy. Give wisdom and courage to Your people that we may speak of our faith with boldness and confidence. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Place wonder into the hearts of those who search the skies and explore the heavens. Let this season of growing light remind us of all the ways You renew the created world. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Bring all nations and rulers to the splendor of Your dawn. Raise up advocates for the vulnerable and inspire leaders to be generous with abundance, that all people might live in stability and freedom. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Come with Your healing power to all who seek love, support, and restoration. Dispel fears and shadows. Restore broken relationships and mend broken hearts. Bring relief to those who are sick or struggling. We pray especially for all on our prayer line and those we remember before You now...(PAUSE). Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Send traveling mercies upon all who journey towards home. Guard refugees and immigrants, and protect families fleeing conflict in their homelands. Tend to those who have no place to lay their heads. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P According to the boundless riches of Christ, You draw all Your saints to Your heavenly places. Comfort those who are missing loved ones, and make all things new again in the splendor of Your glory. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P God of mercy, we lift these and all our prayers to You in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

† HOLY COMMUNION †

PREFACE (*Congregation rising*)

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them up to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. As the glory of Your presence once filled Your ancient temple, so in the incarnation of Your Son, You manifested the fullness of Your glory in human flesh. We give You thanks that in His most Holy Supper You reveal Your glory to us. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood so that we may one day behold Your glory face to face. Hear as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

C 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION and SIGN OF PEACE

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

P Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

C Lord, have mercy upon us and grant us Your peace.

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

P The gifts of God for the people of God.

C Thanks be to God.

DISTRIBUTION

P Take and eat, the body of Christ given for you...
(*We eat the bread*)

P Take and drink, the blood of Christ, shed for you...
(*We drink the cup*)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

P Everlasting God, the radiance of Your gracious presence comes to all who seek You. Fill the world with Your glory, and show Yourself to all the faithful through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, who is the True Light and the bright Morning Star; for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C **Amen.**

P Go in peace to serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

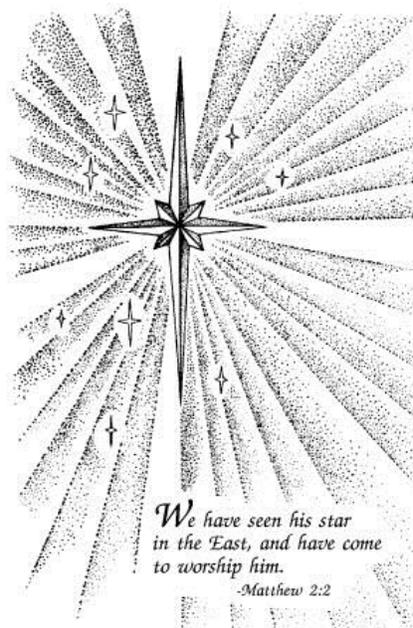
Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow

Karl Osterland

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Please wait for the pastor to proceed out of the sanctuary, then exit out of the building. Please also dispose of bulletins and used communion containers in the receptacles provided.

If you have any prayer requests or other information to share with the Church Office, you can fill out the back side of the Attendance Form and place it in the offering plate by the Jesus Fountain.



News and Notes:

Sunday School is off this week and will resume remotely for families at home on January 10. There is a special Children's Message by Nora Podoll in this week's recorded home worship service. If you have any questions, please contact Superintendent Sarah Gleason at chrisnysarah@netscape.net or 914-610-0822.

Winter Worship Schedule - The Saturday service has been temporarily suspended and will resume in late winter/early spring. We continue with two services on Sunday at 9:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Prayer Conference Call will resume on **Tuesday, January 5, at 6:00 p.m.** The call-in number is **(1) 732-434-3982**. If you have any prayer requests, please fill out the back side of the Attendance Form or contact Kim Rapillo, Church Office Administrative Assistant, at 914-337-0207 x1003 or KRapillo@VLC-NY.org.

Confirmation Retreat - Our annual Confirmation Retreat will be held virtually on **January 8-9, 2021**. Details and sign-up information available from Sarah Nunes and Pastor Geminn. Contact Pastor Geminn by email to SGeminn@VLC-NY.org or call 914-337-0207 x1021.

Lunch and Learn: Which Side Would You Choose? This is a very political time in history and there are strong views from many perspectives. But this is not the only time. **Historian and VLC Member Richard Forliano** shares a fascinating look back at the American Revolution and the challenging choices that were made by both sides. Join via Zoom or Conference Call on **Tuesday, January 12, from 12 noon - 1 p.m.** Enjoy your own socially distant lunch as you learn with friends. For information on how to join, call the church office at 914-337-0207 (1003).

SOUP KITCHEN MEALS: On the second Wednesday of every month. Prepare food at home, using the aluminum trays provided, and drop off at church on the day of delivery. Our next date will be **January 13**. To volunteer or get more information, please contact Nelly Palumbo at 347-538-2909 or NPalumbo@thechapelschool.org.

Women's Bible Study/LWML Group meets in person on the third Saturday of the month in the **MPR at 9:00 a.m.** The next meeting will be on **Saturday, January 16**. All women are welcome! For more information, please contact Deacon Wendy Krolides (914-391-9356) or Terry Vidal (terry.n.vidal@gmail.com).

Kids Yoga is starting mid-January 2021: VLC and Chapel School families are invited to try some Kid's Story Time Yoga fun, a 30-minute Zoom class to keep those kids moving! The cost is \$8 per class and a portion will be donated to VLC. For more information and to sign up contact Cathleen Elliott by email to Cathleen@flyleafdesign.com.

Blessing Basket/Food for ECAP: We continue to collect food donations for ECAP through the church. Bring items with you or drop off on the third Thursday of each month in the Concordia parking lot from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. The next **drop-off date** is **Thursday, January 21**.

Zoom Book Discussion - "Meant for More: In, With and Under the Ordinary" - On **Monday, January 25, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.** Pastor Hartwell will be exploring this new book with the author, VLC member and Concordia College President Dr. John Arthur Nunes. Copies of the book are available to pick up at church. Suggested donation is \$15. You are invited to join via the Zoom video platform or dial in by telephone. For information on how to access the discussion, call the church office at 914-337-0207 (x1003) or email VLCMAIL@VLC-NY.org.

Pandemic Potluck Cookbook - Thanks to everyone who contributed their recipes and stories. This January is the perfect time to try making a new dish, or to get inspired by someone else's cooking ideas. If you did not receive a copy, or if you would like additional copies, feel free to pick one up at the welcome table or send a request to Kim Zwisdak in the Development Office, by email to KZwisdak@TheChapelSchool.org or call (914) 337-0207, x1040.

Prayer Line: We pray for the sick and those experiencing any kind of difficulty: Andis Akerfelds, Joan Bevers, Andy Boron, Frank Clark, Lillian DiMucci, Lenny Gress, Annabella Hansen, Deacon Joe Lamoureux, Marci Paul, Linda Roth, Steve Smith

Bereavement Prayer Line: We pray for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

- † **Leo Dudin**, long-time friend of the congregation and Good News Coffee House, who passed away on December 22, 2020
- † **Rev. Arthur Downing**, retired Atlantic District Pastor, who passed away on December 17, 2020

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