

Order of service
January 3, 2021

Welcome
Announcements, concerns, & celebrations

Warm-up song: *When Heaven's bright*
(VU 93; tune: The Sussex carol [Key of G])

1

When heaven's bright with mystery
and science searches nature's art,
when all creation yearns for peace
and hope sinks deep in human hearts,
 appear to us, O Holy Light;
lift from our eyes the shades of night.

2

When Herod barter's power and lives
and Rachel's weeping fills the night,
when suffering's mask marks every face,
and Love's a refugee in flight,
reveal to us your word of grace
and make us witness to your peace.

3

When fragile faith, like desert wind,
blows dry and empty, hope erased,
when withered grass and fading flower
proclaim again our day's brief space,
breathe on the clay of our despair
and work a new creation there.

4

When heaven's bright with mystery
and stars still lead an unknown way,
when love still lights a gentle path
where courts of power can hold no sway,
there with the Magi, let us kneel,
our gifts to share, God's world to heal.

Call to worship

Opening prayer and confession

Assurance of pardon

The Lord's Prayer Song

Invitation to the offering

Dedication of the offering

Hymn: *The first Nowell*
(VU 91)

1

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

2

They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. R

3

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. R

4

This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,

right over the place where Jesus lay. R

5

Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. R

6

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. R

A time for all God's children

Children's hymn: *We three kings*

1

We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we travel afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Refrain

O – star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign. R

Frankincense to offer have I
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising,
Worshipping God on high. R

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in a stone cold tomb. R

Glorious now behold him arise;
King and God and sacrifice:
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Sounds through the earth and skies. R

Scripture: Matthew 2: 1-12

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

May God bless to our understanding this reading of Holy Scripture. Amen.

Gospel hymn: *What child is this*
(VU 74)

1

What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain

This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

2

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.

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.

Sermon

Pastoral prayer

Benediction

Gospel hymn: *All poor ones and humble* (VU 68)

1

All poor ones and humble and all those who stumble,
come hastening, and feel not afraid;
for Jesus, our treasure, with love past all measure,
in lowly poor manger was laid.
Though wise men who found him
laid rich gifts around him,
yet oxen they gave him their hay,
and Jesus in beauty accepted their duty;
contented in manger he lay.

Refrain

Then haste we to show him the praises we owe him;
our service he ne'er can despise;
whose love still is able to show us that stable,
where softly in manger he lies.

2

The Christ Child will lead us, the Good Shepherd feed us
and with us abide till his day.
Then hatred he'll banish; then sorrow will vanish,

and death and despair flee away.
And he shall reign ever, and nothing shall sever
from us the great love of our King;
his peace and his pity shall bless his fair city;
his praises we ever shall sing. R