

[Offering collected]

Many Voices: Generous God, sometimes it seems our world is determined to extinguish hope and light. We admit that there are times when we feel the bleakness is just too prevalent, too strong, and hope is just wishful thinking. May our generous giving be a rejection of scarcity and despair and a fierce witness of joy, hope, and compassion. Amen.

Reading Scripture Lay Reader
Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12 (NRSVUE)
Reader: May God add blessing to the reading, hearing, and living of these words.
Many Voices: Amen.

Proclaiming "A Curious People" Pastor Dave

Singing "The King of Glory Comes" TFWS #2091

Sending Forth Pastor Dave

Exiting Music Accompanist

**Stand if you are able.*

Leaders in Today's Worship Service

ACCOMPANIST: JILL KOHLER
LAY READER: MARI KIRSCH
SONG LEADERS: GAIL GIRARD & RUTH SATORIUS

**Minooka
United Methodist
Church**

**Rev. Dave Buerstetta,
Pastor**

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Welcome to Minooka United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 17th, 2023

11:30AM

Matthew 2:1-2, 7-12 (NRSVUE)

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage."

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ 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." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ 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. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Entering Music Accompanist

Welcoming Pastor Dave

Preparing Accompanist

***Gathering** Lay Reader

Reader: The joy of this Sunday is in finding a safe place. Many have crossed borders, travelled into unknown territory, moved against the crowd, found themselves in uncertain places.

Many Voices: This Sunday we all cross borders, we all find ourselves in unknown territory. For we all travel towards the place of incarnation, towards the light that shines through the bleakness, guiding all who have no place to go.

Reader: The season of Advent challenges us to see God's vision of what is yet to be, to hear God's voice calling anew, to smell the scent of God in our world.

Many Voices: Let us worship together in the fierce joy of Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the Liberating King!

***Singing** "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" UMH #203

Lighting the Advent Wreath The Nischke Family

Reader: Advent is a time of waiting and preparing. We are here today as people who are surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, breaking down barriers, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting resilient joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

Many Voices: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as followers of God in the Way of Jesus.

Reader: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, and our deep joy. May our lives shine with the tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the arrival of God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

[Light two purple candles then the pink candle as the response is sung.]

Sung Response "Light the Advent Candle" TFWS #2090, v1-3

Blessing Children

Singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" UMH #230

Praying Lay Reader
[Silent, centering prayer that we may become present in this moment to the Holy One]

Reader: Migrant God, You move around creation disregarding boundaries erected by humans. Borders, walls, checkpoints—all established to separate and divide. Increase our awareness of our human family. Allow us to see past our human constructions of division looking instead for the divine image of inclusion.
[silent prayer]

Reader: Ever-flowing Spirit, help us imagine that family so long ago, forced to migrate, walking to safety, leaving their homeland behind. Leaving everyone they knew to protect a baby boy that would change the world. You were refuge for them. Be refuge now for those longing for your care. We know we are charged with the providing welcome and rest. Open our hearts, our minds, and our doors to travelers in need.
[silent prayer]

Reader: Prince of Peace, there are people forced from their homes due to war, loss of health, and loss of income. From all this loss help them find peace. We also pray for wandering souls. For people who have lost their way. Help our congregation and our community be a beacon of light, a safe place of faith available for all.
[silent prayer]

Reader: Source of Life, we pray for your creation that also suffers destruction due to war, and human irresponsibility. Grant us will-power to be swift to do what is right.

Our prayer continues as Jesus taught us, saying... [Lord's Prayer, UMH #894]

***Singing** "We Three Kings" UMH #254, v1-4

Giving Pastor Dave

Blessing our Gifts with Music and Prayer Accompanist & Lay Reader

The King of Glory Comes

Refrain

The king of glory comes, the nation rejoices.
Open the gates before him, lift up your voices

Verse 1

Who is the king of glory; How shall we call Him?
He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.
(Refrain)

Verses 2

In all of Galilee, In city or village,
he goes among his people curing their illness.
(Refrain)

Verse 3

Sing then of David's son, our savior and brother;
In all of Galilee was never another.
(Refrain)

HYMNS

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Verse 1

Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son! Hail in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free; to take away transgression, and rule in equity.

Verse 2

He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong; to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong; to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light, whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.

Verse 3

He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth; love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth. Before him, on the mountains, shall peace, the herald, go, and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.

Verse 4

To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend; his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end. The tide of time shall never his covenant remove; his name shall stand forever; that name to us is love.

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Light the Advent Candle

Verse 1

Light the Advent candle, one:
Now the waiting has begun;
We have started on our way,
Time to think of Christmas day.

Chorus

Candle, candle, burning bright,
Shining in the cold winter night;
Candle, candle, burning bright,
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Verse 2

Light the Advent, candle two:
Think of humble shepherds, who
Filled with wonder at the sight
Of the child of Christmas night. (Chorus)

Verse 3

Light the Advent candle, three;
Think of heavenly harmony; angels singing
"Peace on earth" at the blessed Savior's birth. (Chorus)

Mary Lu Walker

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O Little Town of Bethlehem

Verse 1

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Verse 2

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing
to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

Verse 3

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Verse 4

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

CCLI Song # 27879

Lewis Henry Redner | Phillips Brooks

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CCLI License # 11359127Light of the World

We Three Kings

Verse 1

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse 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.

Verse 2

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign. (Refrain)

Verse 3

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.
(Refrain)

Verse 4

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.
(Refrain)

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John Henry Hopkins Jr.

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