

Trinitarian Congregational Church
TakeOut
Epiphany Day (observed)
January 3, 2021

Bells <https://youtu.be/-6qZ9A6GFik>

Announcements Rev. Rosemary

Prelude “The Virgin’s Slumber Song”
Martin Boelitz and Mac Reger/Rollin Smith
<https://youtu.be/GkIRtYj6k98> Lynne Walker

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, let us join together in the search for all God brings to light.
We are the church, committed to an encounter with mystery.

People: God has sent light to dispel the darkness.

The glory of God has risen upon us.

Leader: The gospel of Christ reveals the depth of God’s love.
We share in the life of Jesus Christ.

People: We gather together and lift up our eyes.

Our hearts thrill to the sight and our lips rejoice.

Leader: Through us, the wisdom of God will be made known.
God’s rich blessings are available to all.

People: The radiance of grace surrounds us.

Boldly and confidently, we approach our God.

Music The First Nowell Piper Pichette, harp
<https://youtu.be/SETIRD3GwZQ>

Gathering Prayer

We come to your light, Eternal God, seeking to experience your presence at work among us and within us. In our poverty of spirit we reach for the inexhaustible riches of Christ. Amid our narrowness of vision we long for an outpouring of your all-inclusive love. From our advantaged position in your world we seek a deeper compassion for the needy and truer service in your ministry. Move us from our spirit of complacency that we may live more fully as you intend for us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Gloria Patri <https://youtu.be/OLz3R1hnUjs>

Scripture

Isaiah 60:1-6

² Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;

but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift 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.

⁵ Then 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.

⁶ A 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.

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men 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 at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ '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.'"

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men 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 at its rising, 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.

Special Music

"Auld Lang Syne,"

traditional, arr. Juanita Tommy

<https://youtu.be/IALSClyUPXI>

Chris Harris and Lynne Walker

Sermon

Where is He?

Where is he? Do you ever ask that question? Sometimes when I ask 'where is he' I am saying 'Where is my husband, Greg', or maybe 'where is he' referring to my dog, Tucker. Sometimes I may even ask 'where is he' about David, my brother. But sometimes when I ask 'where is He' it is with a capital H – God.

Have you ever asked that question? Many times we ask "where is He' when we are grieving and feel abandoned. Sometimes we ask 'where is He' when we are overwhelmed and afraid, or feel lost and directionless. But sometimes we ask 'where is He' with God when we do have hope and we want to discover a new joy, or we are eager to grow in faith and we want more of God's wisdom. Sometimes we ask 'where is He' because we are grateful and we want to delight in God's presence.

Today in Scripture we hear some folks asking that same question; Wise Men, from the east, enter Jerusalem asking ‘where is He? Where is the one born King of the Jews?’ It was a good question, one born of hope and faith, courage and commitment. They asked because they had begun a journey of discovery after seeing a star, a portent in the sky, a sign of God’s purpose and direction. And so they set out with what they knew, and trusting in what they didn’t know, to find out ‘where is he’, because they desired to pay homage to him, to honor him and even to worship him.

And they were given an easy answer- for us, what seems an obvious answer – ‘in Bethlehem of Judea’. And we are glad to stop right there. We have the name of a place – yet we contently stay in our Jerusalem. But have you considered what Bethlehem really is? Is it just a backwater village?; the ancestral home of David – that place of family history and honored traditions? Well it is that, but remember it is also the place of prophetic promise. It is Bethlehem – the house of bread; a name that signifies the place of sustenance, the place of nurture, the place of satisfaction.

Bethlehem is the place you go - and discover the living presence of God- as a child in a manger, or as the man who God’s Messiah. Bethlehem is the place where your question ‘where is He, where is God’, finds its answer – God with us. God is here. God is with you. Today and always. Here and everywhere.

Did the magi have to travel so far to discover God with us? Yes they did; but not just because they ‘came from afar’, a distant land that did not know much about the God of Israel. Rather they had to travel because the spiritual journey is as journey that travels far to discover the wonder that ‘God is so very near, even at your door’.

Today, this weekend, marks the beginning of a new year- a year I hope, of faithful journeying for us as a church. You have already asked so many questions. And you have already journeyed far as a people. You have a long family history, from the days of DL Moody, and a long, honored tradition sometimes called ‘but we’ve always done it that way’. But you are also a people who long for God’s guidance for the future and have an intention to pursue God’s purpose.

And that means we need to find, or travel to, our own Bethlehem, to answer the most important question of all- ‘where is He’. Because the church, if nothing else, is first and foremost a place of promise, prophetic promise, that God is here, that God is ready to meet you and bless you, to guide you and transform you, to enrich you and claim you. The church is a place, a Bethlehem place, where you may just see the face of God in the one named Jesus.

Have you been to Bethlehem lately?

Amen.

Moment of Reflection

What questions are you asking of God?

Where have you found God’s answer?

Where have you seen the face of God (the presence of God)?

EPIPHANY

234 Wise Men, They Came to Look for Wisdom

1 Wise men, they came to look for wis-dom, find-ing one wis-er
 2 Pil-grims they were, from un-known coun-tries, search-ing for one who
 3 Ma-gi, they stooped to see your splen-dor, led by a star to
 4 Guests of their God, they o-pened treas-ures, in-cense and gold and

than they knew; rich men, they met with one yet rich-er—
 knows the world; lost are their names and strange their jour-neys,
 light su-preme; prom-ised Mes-si-ah, Lord e-ter-nal,
 sol-lemn myrrh; wel-com-ing one too young to ques-tion

King of the kings, they knelt to you: Je-sus, our wis-dom
 famed is their zeal to find the child: Je-sus, in you the
 glo-ry and peace are in your name: Joy of each day, our
 how came these gifts, and what they were: Gift be-yond price of

from a-bove, wealth and re-demp-tion, life and love.
 lost are claimed, a-liens are found and known and named.
 song by night, shine on our path your ho-ly light.
 gold or gem, make a-mong us your Beth-le-hem.

WORDS: Christopher Idle (1938-)

NEUMARK

Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use.

Prayers of the People

Holy God, we thank you and praise you for loving us so deeply. Thank you for coming to us in Jesus Christ that we may know you so fully. And thank you for the Holy Spirit who leads us in our journey to you. We are overwhelmed with joy, O God, that we can meet you as we are and know that you will care for us and transform us into your children and servants.

And so we pray, for your church and for this congregation. May this be a place where all can know your presence and grace, and where we can share with one another and with the world your great compassion and love.

We pray for our world and its leaders. May they sense your greatness and power, and know their responsibilities to serve your holy purpose for justice and peace. We pray also for those who are in need. May the forlorn find hope, the forsaken obtain vindication, and the weak gain strength. Grant also your healing to the ill, your comfort to the mourning and your aid to the needy. We especially lift up our hearts in gratitude for... and ask your continued care for.... Lead us in your way, that we may honor you with our words of praise here, and in our works of ministry in the world.

We praise you, Glorious God, for all your goodness to us, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray... Our Father ...

The Lord's Prayer

Choral Response

https://youtu.be/lAivVHv_abc

Offering

God has gifted us with the riches of heaven and earth. God calls us to share in the joy of giving. Here we present our homage to the one who came as a needy child and as a faithful son. May we, like sages offer the best we have to the glory of God. Let us dedicate our gifts with joy.

O God, we offer our gifts in the spirit of those who long ago sought you and honored you with costly treasures. We give in response to your great love for us, and we acknowledge your compassion for the lowly and poor and oppressed. Bless these gifts and our lives that we may be servants of your light and love to all who are in need. Amen.

Doxology

<https://youtu.be/5I7PEGUPAXQ>

Communion

Hymn

“Bread of Heaven”

https://youtu.be/2ltEUyxk_4w

This is a different tune than in the bulletin,
but you can read it on the YouTube clip

Invitation

Great Thanksgiving

Consecration and Service

The Bread

The Cup

Prayer of Gratitude

Common Commission

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Music

What Child is This (Greensleeves)

Piper Pichette, harp

<https://youtu.be/4AJZ4qInSA4>

Benediction

Go now into the world

and may God, who is merciful and tender ... cause the bright light of salvation to rise upon us...
to shine from heaven...and guide our steps in the path of peace. Luke 1:78-79 TEV adj

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Postlude

“Go Tell It On the Mountain,”
arr. Patsy Ford Simms (ASCAP)

Lynne Walker

<https://youtu.be/FhTPhX5q818>