



# Order of Worship

Epiphany Sunday

January 5, 2024

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**Gathering and Welcome** *We Three Kings*

**Prelude** *Mary Had a Baby – Spiritual*

Jessye Whitis, pianist

**\*Call to worship** (Jeremiah 31)

For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;

**Proclaim, give praise, and say ‘Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.’**

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,

**Among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together;**

A great company, they shall return here.

**With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back.**

**\*Opening Hymn # 151** *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

**\*Call to confession** (Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-16)

Wisdom delivers a holy people from a nation of oppressors. She enters the soul of a servant of the Lord, withstanding dread kings with wonders and signs.

As we confess that our strivings for Holy wisdom fall short, we lament the oppression of the nations. As we confess that we don’t always act as though our servant souls are imbued by God’s wisdom, we lament the power of dread kings.

Let us offer, therefore, prayers of lament and confession.

**\*Prayer of confession** (Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-16\*)

**Redeem your world, O Lord. We lament the destruction caused by worldly rulers extending their power through force. We lament the ways that the tendrils of oppression have taken hold among your people, your creation.**

**Redeem your people, O Lord. Too often, we fail to act in ways that reflect your love. Too often, we fail to speak your truth.**

**When it is easier for us to do nothing, help us act. When it is easier for us to say nothing, give us words to speak. Turn us away from sin, liberate us from the grasp of oppression, and lead us towards new life in Christ. Amen.**

*\*The Wisdom of Solomon is considered by Protestants to be part of the Apocrypha -- deuterocanonical writings.*

**Assurance of pardon** (John 1:16)

The Gospel of John reminds us that “from Christ’s fullness, we have all received grace upon grace.” Hear this good news with joy: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and, in Him, all things are being made new. **Amen.**

**Choral Anthem** *Were You There on that Christmas Night?*  
-- by Natalie Sleeth

**Prayer for illumination** (John 1:1-5)

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him. As we read and reflect on your Scriptures, O Lord, we pray that your Spirit will move among us so that we might hear your Word, your light shining in the darkness. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Scripture readings** Matthew 2: 1 - 12

**Sermon** *My Whole Soul Is In It*

Rev. Kathy Vineyard, H.R.

**Affirmation of faith** (Inclusive Language Text of the Confession of 1967)

**“In Jesus of Nazareth, true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of sinful men and women. But his complete obedience led him into conflict with his people. His life and teaching judged their goodness, religious aspirations, and national hopes.**

**Many rejected him and demanded his death. In giving himself freely for them, he took upon himself the judgment under which everyone stands convicted. God raised him from the dead, vindicating him as Messiah and Lord. The victim of sin became victor and won the victory over sin and death for all.”**

**\*Hymn of Response # 150** *As with Gladness Men of Old*

### **Call for the offering** (Ephesians 1:3-4)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.”

We respond to the gifts that God has given us with gratitude and by using our gifts in service to God and neighbor. Giving thanks to God, let us collect our tithes and offerings.

### **Offertory** *All Through the Night* –arr. Penny Rodriguez

Jessye Whitis, pianist

### **\*Doxology # 606 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Come**

### **Prayer of dedication**

We thank you for all of the spiritual and material gifts that you have given us, O Lord. We dedicate these gifts to you in gratitude and in hope for the day where all will be fed, all will be sheltered, and all will be safe. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Installation of Church Officers**

### **The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

### **Prayers** (Jeremiah 31:9)

You created the earth and all that is in it, O Lord, and declared it good. And yet your creation is in pain. As we face the ecological challenges of the contemporary world, we pray that you turn us towards our call of being good stewards of your creation.

One: With weeping they shall come

**All: and with consolations I will lead them back.**

You continue to gather your children as your church and in churches. And yet many of us are navigating the reality that we cannot do what we once could. Many of us are struggling to answer your call to feed, to shelter and to serve. Many churches are pursuing goals that are at odds with this call. Turn your church and your churches towards our call to serve, guiding us by the power of your Holy Spirit.

One: With weeping they shall come

**All: and with consolations I will lead them back.**

Many of us are sick. Many of us are carrying heavy burdens.  
Many of us miss someone. Many of us are tired.

Be with the caretakers and those being cared for. Bring comfort  
and healing and peace. Surround us with a community to lean  
on and help us lift up others as we're able.

One: With weeping they shall come

**All: and with consolations I will lead them back.**

**\*Hymn # 135 *There's A Star in the East***

**Charge and benediction** (John 1:12)

Children of God, go forth into the world and join God's work.  
May the God of all times and places continue to guide you here  
and now; may the Holy Spirit that swept over the waters of  
creation continue to give you strength; and may the light of  
Christ, through who all things came into being, continue to  
shine through each of you until we are all gathered together  
again. Go in peace.

**Postlude** *Behold That Star*

Jessye Whitis, pianist

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Liturgy written by Tommy Carrico.*