

Order of Worship for at Home Use

January 3, 2021



Happy New Year, and welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w4Mm6GqX9w>

May God's peace fill Your heart and mind as we enter, with intention, into our time of worship this week. We continue to live in a strange time, yet, God is with us. God is for us. God will never leave us. It is right, then, that we can rest in His presence, seek His face, and rely on His grace throughout all of life.

As we prepare for our worship this week, you are invited to open yourself to the Holy Spirit as we, together, follow the star of old. The wise men followed the star of Bethlehem and found there the Messiah. We invite you on this Epiphany Sunday to follow a star...which, we pray, will deepen your spiritual walk with God...and help you seek Jesus.

Star words are a contemporary tradition, which give us intentionality in our prayer life and life in the community of faith. Most years, in worship, we pass a basket filled with star words, and each person chooses (without looking) their own star. This year, since many of us are not gathering, the staff will choose a star word for you and send it to you. These words are an invitation to us to focus on one idea or concept or character trait...pray over it, look it up in a dictionary, and then to watch and see how God will speak and lead us in the next year. You may choose to hang your star somewhere that you will notice occasionally. We will continue to discuss these words as we worship and, if you have a story you would like to share about a past star word, we would love to hear it! To receive a star word, contact the church office via phone (702.384.4554) or email Leslie at leslie@gracepclv.org, and they will send it to you.

Again this week you are encouraged to find a place where you can center your heart and mind on Christ, you might light a candle, bring your bible and take a deep breath as you join in our time of worship. Today, we gather at the table, so please take a moment to gather your communion elements - the bread and cup - as we enter into our time of worship.

Let us worship God together!

With God's love,

Pastor Dana

We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude "The Old Year Has Passed Away" W. Held Dr. David Dorway, organist
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEsPXVkVHFY>

Welcome Pastor Dana Pope
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjAEKlq4HHE>

Welcome to worship with Grace Presbyterian Church. We are a family that worships together. When we gather, whether in person or virtually over the internet to worship God we are connected by God's grace and His real presence. Let us worship God together this day and claim the promise we are not alone.

Call to Worship Pastor Dana Pope
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lR_moc7jAc

One: The Magi had a dream.

All: They dreamed of a Messiah.

They dreamed of just rulers.

They dreamed of a new day for all people.

One: The Magi had a dream, and this dream led them to action.

All: They journeyed to unknown places.

They followed a star.

They walked for days to get to Jesus.

One: So may we be like the Magi,

All: May our dreams inspire action.

May we worship the one true God. Amen.

Hymn "In Christ Alone" K. Getty & S. Townsend Praise Team
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_nv8J8ZjEg

Sharing the Peace of Christ **not in video**

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...

and also with you.

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you."

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxg_lmGt1v8

Holy God, we love to worship you. It is easy when the stars are bright above us, when the sun warms our skin. We love to worship you when the sky is clear, and the breeze just right. We love to worship you when the journey to Bethlehem is an easy one. Yet, unfortunately, as you know, this journey of life, love, and faith is rarely easy. Forgive us when we falter because we can't see You working. Forgive the way we panic when the stars disappear behind clouds of worry, pain, grief, or despair. Help us continue to walk in faith, even when our feet get blisters, and the journey seems far too long and lonely. Forgive us for giving up quickly. Forgive us for allowing the dream to die and for taking the shortcut home. We want to be as brave as the Magi. We want to persevere. Guide our feet. Show us the stars.

Holy One, as we come to You in prayer today, bless those who suffer with illness or separation. Provide Your healing and miracles to cure diseases and provide comfort and peace. Energize us, as Your people to be Your hands and feet, that we might bless others in Jesus name.

As we begin this new year, 2021, we continue to pray for health and wellness for our world; understanding and the light of truth to shine in all of the dark places in our hearts; and for the Holy Spirit to fill us with peace and purpose and life abundant. You make all things new so as we walk into this new year we rely on Your grace and mercy to reign down and for the Holy Spirit to lead us into Your dreams with wisdom and vision.

Gratefully we pray in the name of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray:

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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.

We Listen to God's Word

Hymn/Praise

“Jesus Loves Me”

not in video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>

Children's Message

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4AiVAwyVGM>

Well, Christmas has come and gone so i want to ask the children what was your favorite gift this Christmas? Tell someone in your house what is your favorite gift this Christmas and why. What is special about that particular gift?

Today is Epiphany Sunday. On this Sunday we retell the story of the three wisemen that come to see the baby Jesus. One of the things that is interesting about this story is that the wisemen are the first people to bring gifts to Jesus. They bring gold, frankincense and myrrh. These seem like strange gifts, but they teach us a lot about the people who give the gifts and a lot about the baby Jesus who receives the gifts.

Gold: We all know that gold is very valuable; but, did you know that in the time of Jesus only rich and powerful people like kings and queens could afford gold jewelry. The wise men must have known that Jesus was going to be a king. They must have known Jesus was the Son of God our heavenly king.

Frankincense: Frankincense was made from a Boswellia tree. It is very rare. In the time of Jesus was used as incense in religious services. The wise men who gave Jesus Frankincense must have known that Jesus was going to be a religious leader.

Myrrh: Myrrh is also an incense. The ancient Egyptians began using this to prepare bodies for burial after a person had died. It was a way to prepare the body for it's trip to the afterlife (heaven). The wise men who visited Jesus must have known Jesus was going to die for His people so they brought this special gift for him.

The wise men knew a lot about Jesus so when God showed them the way to Jesus' house, they followed and they came prepared with special gifts. Today we remember this story in hopes that we too will know about Jesus and be ready when God shows us our way to meet Him.

Special Music “Were You There on That Christmas Night?” N. Sleeth
Dr. Lisa Elliott, soprano
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq02ioMR5y8>

Reading of the Word Matthew 2:1-12 Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIBjNlnYwNA>

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Message “Dreamers...Persevere” Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhqfC2t1wlg>

Today is epiphany. Well actually epiphany is January 6th, but because this is the closest Sunday to epiphany we will celebrate today in worship. Epiphany means enlightenment. It is the ah-ha moment in the Bible. An epiphany is that moment when Wiley Coyote has the light bulb appear over his head and he knows he has a good idea that will lead him to catch that darn roadrunner. In our lives, we have an epiphany when the light comes on over our heads and we finally get it. For the New Testament church, the epiphany of Christ is when the world sees the baby born in a stable as the true Son of God who came to save the world. This happened when the wise men came and worshiped at the infant messiah's side when he was a child. You see, the wise men, for most Christians, represent the outside world. Through them the world came and worshiped when Christ was still a baby.

To emphasize this, the early church celebrated epiphany, the coming of the wise men, the baptism of Jesus and the Nativity all at the same time. They celebrated these sacred moments at the feast of Epiphany. Today the Orthodox church still celebrates this way.

So, today as we celebrate Epiphany, it seems that we should ask, "who were the Magi, these wise men, and why do they receive so much attention?" When we look at them in the Bible we see that there is much more about them that we don't know than what we do know. We know the Bible calls them Magi, which means wise men, however there was also a group of people that called themselves Magi or the tribe of Magi who lived in Persia. They were worshippers of an ancient religion that had developed centuries before. However, we don't know if these men were part of that tribe or not. We do know that they had come from the East. They could have been Persian, or from anywhere in the world east of Palestine.

While we are not sure when they came. We do know that they came before Herod's death and that it must have been before the child was two years old because that was the age of the children Herod had put to death. He must have feared a child who was younger than two years would usurp his throne.

We don't know if these wise men were kings. The song says that there were three kings, but we don't know that. We don't really know there were three. There could have been more. We do know that they were rich. They brought gold, the sign of tremendous wealth. They may have been royalty to have that kind of wealth, but we don't know that. They also brought Frankincense and Myrrh. Myrrh was an ointment reserved only for the most respected leaders and for religious ritual while frankincense was a burial spice. The gifts the Magi brought showed that they understood whom Christ was and his mission. They must have known that Christ was to be honored as the Son of God, the King of Heaven, but they also knew he was going to die and be buried for the sins of His people. The gifts of the wise men showed that they knew he was the messiah. Moreover, the fact that they came to worship Him means no matter who they were, they were faithful.

So, since we do not know much about these wise men, we ought to ask, what do we know? Why have they been given such a prominent place in history?

Well, first of all, we know that the biblical writer thought them wise. They were wise and they were not Jews, they came from the east. They were wise. What makes someone wise?

Wisdom, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is defined as:

"1 a: Accumulated philosophic or scientific learning : knowledge; b: Ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : insight; c: Good sense : judgment d: Generally accepted belief <challenges what has become accepted wisdom among many historians — Robert Darnton>. d: A wise attitude, belief, or course of action. e: The teachings of the ancient wise men"^[1].

Well, I think wisdom is so much more than Webster's definition of knowledge. You can know something, but unless you put that knowledge to use, it is wasted and the thought is no better than a fantasy. Until you put your knowledge to work, it is not wisdom. In fact, keeping knowledge to yourself is a waste of the gift of knowledge God has given you. I would say that true wisdom is the ability to put the knowledge God has given you to the use that God intends. I support Deborah Rozman's definition that says;

"It is no longer enough to be smart -- all the technological tools in the world add meaning and value only if they enhance our core values, the deepest part of our heart. Acquiring knowledge is no guarantee of practical, useful application."

Not only were these guys wise and understood prophecy, they also were faithful. That is, when they knew or thought God was speaking, they acted. When there was a heavenly sign they acted. They followed the star. They were faithful and they took action following signs from God and knowledge given by the prophets.

In my hand I can hold a device that contains more information and power than Einstein, Aristotle, Copernicus, Augustine, Descartes and Leonardo DaVinci combined. Yet, it does not make me wise or faithful. It is the application of knowledge that determines if one is wise. Think about it. If you knew how to cure cancer, you would not be wise to keep it to yourself. Wisdom is letting the secret out. True wisdom and faith imply action. Wisdom not applied is wasted thought, but wisdom put into action changes things.

The wise men knew the star they were following would lead them to God. They had faith and they took action. They had brought gifts that were fit only for the messiah, not any ordinary king. They knew they had worshiped at the foot of God Almighty when they knelt down at the bed of God's child. And so what did they do with that information, that knowledge. They did not turn the baby in to Herod, instead they went home and they took the news of the messiah's birth with them.

We can only assume they shared the news with their people. They were the outsiders who had been let into the kingdom of God and they took the message home with them. God's grace did not die at Herod's hands because these guys were wise enough to keep it alive and to keep Him alive.

The wise men were wise because when they had encountered God Almighty, it changed them and they then put their knowledge of God to work. They took the Good News of Jesus Christ home. They brought the Good News to the world. They were willing to listen to God's message when it came and they were ready to act! The first action was a little step of faith, follow the star.

In honor epiphany, the moment where the world sees God's grace and the moment where the faithful take action, we are starting a new tradition at Grace. Actually, last year we began the idea of star Sunday at West Campus. What we are doing on this Sunday, Epiphany Sunday, is giving stars with words of grace on them. The words are stars are randomly chosen so as to give God's Spirit room to speak. For each person who wants a star, the church office will send you one with your word on it. We are asking that when you receive your star, look at the word on your star. Then prayerfully lift that word to God asking Him to reveal His grace to you in the year to come. Continue to pray through the year and be on the lookout for how God will reveal Himself to you through your star word. As you become aware of God's work in your life over the year to come, be ready to take action and follow your star.

If you would like to be part of Star Sunday and have the church send you a star with your star word, simply call the church at 702-384-4554, or visit the website at www.gracepcly.org.

The wise men were wise because they listened to God's word, they followed God's signs and they acted when they understood God's message. Today our challenge is the same as that of the wise men of old. We are to know God's word, follow God's signs and act when we have God's call. Today, this epiphany, I know God is sending his light to you. My prayer is that you are ready to follow.

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFHqJ9YuW5c>

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents as well as our resources...this is not about funding the church or fund-raising, it is an act of worship. We respond to God's Word, His love for us, and His mercy by giving of ourselves. We give all sorts of things, including our hearts, our finances, our time and our gifts. Let us now participate in God's kingdom by returning God's tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link: <https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”

R. Founds

Kathy Koch & Family

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcZrGvpwWqE>

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDCCJ6Nx00A>

Holy God we are grateful for how richly you have blessed us. You have given us time, talent, resources and relationships. Out of our gratitude we return these tithes and offerings. We ask that you bless and receive these gifts. Use these gifts for the work of your kingdom. Use these gifts to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, bring hope to the hopeless and use these gifts to further your grace in our world. Amen

The Service of Communion

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SruJ4lGB3s>

Beloved, in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Supper we celebrate today is the joyful feast of God. A time of remembrance, of communion, of hope. Our Lord Jesus invites all who believe in Him to come and be nourished at His table.

Today, as we begin the new year, Jesus' table is set, not only in the sanctuary, but also in our own homes. As we come to the table today we come with praises on our

lips and hope-filling- our hearts as we look with expectation for God's redemption and His goodness to fill the New Year.

As we come to the table today, please, pause if you need to, that you might prepare your communion elements.

As we gather today it is appropriate that we take a moment to reflect on the past year. It is one for the history books. In addition to all we have gone through globally, in our nation and community, we each have personal struggles and experiences on which we can reflect. We come to the table, as always, calling to mind all that we have done and left undone that is not a part of God's will, remembering once again we have turned from God's ways and gone our own way. But as we have confessed our sins and been forgiven, and because of God's eternal covenant of grace, we are accepted back into God's presence...into His family. And we are given the grace of hope and in the eyes of faith the ability to look with expectation to the new year and all of the blessings and surprises that God has in store for us.

We come to the table to commune with this same Christ who has promised to be with us always. Christ is the true Bread which nourishes us and the Vine in whom we must live if we are to bear fruit. The Holy Spirit unites us into one body and in communion with all the saints. So we receive this meal in Christ's love and our affection for one another. We come in hope believing that as surely as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we will be raised from the dead into eternal life. This is the Lord's Table. Come, for all is prepared.

Let us pray.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, almighty and everlasting God. You created the heavens and the earth; you preserve us with your care; you revealed the fullness of your love for us by sending Your Son, Jesus Christ. By his life, death, and resurrection you have reconciled us to yourself. With the heavenly host and with the saints of all times and places, we lift up our hearts in joyful praise, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Gracious God, send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray that the bread which we break and the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Accept the gift of our lives that we may live in you and serve your kingdom. Bless us with the ability and vision to step into Your dreaming for us and for our world. Being joined together in Christ, may your whole church be one; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

On the night of his arrest, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread and after giving thanks to God he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, Take, Eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup saying: this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord until he comes. The gifts of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God! Come, for all is prepared.

As you share the bread and cup, you might say: “This is the bread of heaven” and “This is the cup of the new covenant.” or “This is Christ’s body broken for you.” This is Christ’s blood shed for you.”

Communion Meditation “Panis Angelicus” C. Frank

Dr. David Dorway, organist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ai4gW-zaPW4>

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn #290 “As With Men of Old” vs. 1 & 2 Dr. Lisa Elliott, soprano

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34J4fz9_hv4

Benediction

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVUdZfNjjKc>

Go in peace, and know that you go nowhere by accident,
It is God who is sending you.
So, go with the power of God Almighty,
go with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; and,
with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
Go, and for heaven’s sake, make a difference!

Postlude “We Three Kings” arr. R. Lind Dr. David Dorway, organist
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsAbLXgDSkI>

Acknowledgements
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEJtLzEl5gw>

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people
in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Buswell,
Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark, Tanner Cordon, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan,
Rosamaria Duenas, Jill and Robert Eaton, Pennie Everhart, Joice Franklin,
Mary Gafford, Terry Glaser, Charlene Harper, Greta Hougnon, Pam Kodey,
Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon, Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Maggie O'Donnell,
Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Taylor Palmer, Mary Phillips, Russ & Pat Reid,
Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon, Marty Swartout, Nick Vogelzang,
Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020
Randy Innis 3/18/2020
Clark Trapp 3/18/2020
Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020
Ted Phillips 4/1/2020
Violet Cross 4/4/2020
Bill Franklin 5/4/2020
Greg Holt 5/7/2020
Carol Mohr 5/25/2020
Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020
Louis Romero 8/8/2020
Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020
Gary Oiler 8/23/2020
Donna Gibson 9/14/2020
Audrey Mitchell 12/1/2020
Alice Black