

Epiphany Sunday

January 5, 2025

Organ prelude: Fugue on “As with gladness men of old”

Bruce Nasmith

***ProceSSIONal Hymn: As with gladness men of old**

No. 172

1. As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright:
so, most gracious Lord, may we
ever more be led to thee.

2. As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
thee, whom heaven and earth
adore,
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy seat.

3. As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly
King.

4. Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way,
and when earthly things are
past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to
guide,
where no clouds of glory hide.

5. In that heavenly country bright
need they no created light:
thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not
down;
there forever may we sing
hallelujahs to our King.

Welcome, Announcements & Worship Theme

CALL TO WORSHIP:

“They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.” (Isaiah 60:6)

“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.” (Matthew 2:11)

We gather to worship because we want to open ourselves to the energy flow of Love who is God.

We gather to worship because we want to grow in our faith, our hope and our love as we engage the world around us.

We gather for worship because we want to connect what we believe with how we live, and we want to become inspired and empowered to live as we believe.

ALL: Let us worship God together!

***Hymn: What star is this**

No. 170

1. What star is this, with beams so bright,
more lovely than the noonday light?
'Tis sent to announce a newborn King,
glad tidings of our God to bring.

2. 'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed,
'From Jacob shall a star proceed,'
and lo! the Eastern sages stand to read in heaven the Lord's command.

3. O Jesus, while the star of grace
impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts refuse
the guidance of your light to use.

4. To God the Father, God the Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One,
may every tongue and nation raise
an endless song of thankful praise.

Prayer of Approach, Confession & The Lord's Prayer

**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 trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

The Peace of Christ be with you all;

And also with you.

(Children are invited to join in programming following the Passing of the Peace)

Special Music: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

Monsell

1. Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness;

Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;

With gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,

Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name!

2. Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness;

High on his heart he will bear it for thee,

Comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,

Guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

3. *Fear not to enter his courts, in the slenderness
Of the poor wealth thou canst reckon as thine;
Truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness,
These are the offerings to lay on his shrine.*

4. *These though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
He will accept for the Name that is dear,
Mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
Trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.*

5. *O Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness;
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
Kneel and adore him, the Lord is his name.*

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12 Wanda Fischer

INTRO: Our first scripture reading comes from the prophet Isaiah. A great vision is proclaimed. The people will return to their land from which they have been exiled. The light of God shall lead them and the light of God shall abide with them. So bright will be this light that peoples from many nations will see it and come to share in it, bringing many gifts. Listen:

Isaiah 60. 1-6

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 God's 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. Amen.

INTRO: our second reading comes from the gospel of Matthew. The ancient prophecy of Isaiah has come to fulfillment in a special way when Jesus is born. A divine light will lead them once again and they will come to behold the divine light embodied in a child. They will also, once again, bring gifts. Listen:

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, ²asking, '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.' ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They 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."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then 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.' ⁹When 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. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Amen.

We are listening, O God;
Speak to us!

Sermon: IS GOD A CHRISTIAN?
(Silent Meditation)

Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis

Special Music: A Shelter

Jim Nasmith

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Pastoral Concern

***Hymn: We three kings**

No. 173

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 of royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.**

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)**

3. Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh,
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshipping God on high. **(Refrain)**

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

5. Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and sacrifice:
hallelujah, hallelujah, sounds through the earth and skies. **(Refrain)**

Benediction

***Threefold Amen**

Organ postlude: Variations on “What star is this” Bruce Nasmith

**Remain seated if you are more comfortable*

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***We invite you to join us for coffee hour and some light
refreshments in our adjacent hall after the service.***

All are welcome!

~

OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH:

**To become the hands, feet, voice and heart of Christ for
each other and in the world.**

Ministers

The Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis, hathan1964@hotmail.com

The Rev. Rebecca Jess, rebecca@armourheights.org (On
Maternity Leave)

Ministers-in

The Rev. Dr. Carol Loudon,

Association

The Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll & The Rev. Dr. Glynis Williams

Minister Emeritus

The Rev. William Middleton

Clerk of Session

Michael Nettleton, clerk@armourheights.org

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Christian Ed.

Hannah Athanasiadis, education@armourheights.org

Coordinator

Music Director

Bruce C. Nasmith, brucenasmith@gmail.com

Coming Events

Sunday, January 5

Epiphany Sunday

Sunday, January 12

Baptism of Jesus Sunday – Dr.
Carol Loudon

Friday, January 17

PA Day Camp

Sunday, January 19

Epiphany 2 Sunday
Open Mic, 7:30pm via zoom

Wednesday, January 22

Ancient Prayer practice: *Lectio
Divina*, 7:30pm

Friday, January 24

Youth Group, 7-9pm

Sunday, January 26

Epiphany 3 Sunday

Tuesday, January 28

Book Club, “Remarkably Bright
Creatures” by Shelby Van Pelt,
7:30pm via zoom

Wednesday, January 29

Winter Study begins: The Gospel
of John, 7:30pm

Sunday, February 2

Epiphany 4 / Sacrament of Holy
Communion
Intergenerational Band
rehearsal, 12 noon

Sunday, February 9

Epiphany 5 Sunday
Intergenerational Band
rehearsal, 12 noon

Sunday, February 16

Intergenerational Worship with
special guest Guy Smagghe,
executive director of PWS&D



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