

THE WORSHIP OF GOD
JANUARY 3, 2021
EPIPHANY SUNDAY

PRELUDE

Meditation on 'Wie schön leuchtet'

David Bedhall
(b. 1979)

As the prelude is played, prepare your home, yourself, and your family to enter into this time of worship.

OPENING PRAYER (IN UNISON)

Father, you revealed Your Son to the nations by the guidance of a star. Lead us to your glory in Heaven by the light of faith. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN NO. 216

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
Chancel Choir

ES IST EIN ROS

1. Lo, 'how a Rose e'er bloom-ing from ten-der stem hath
2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in
3. O Flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, as those of old have
mind; with Ma - ry we be - hold it, the Vir - gin Moth - er
air, dis - pel in glo - rious splen - dor the dark-ness ev - ery -

sung. It came, a flower - et bright, a - mid the
kind. To show God's love a - right, she bore to
where. True man yet ver - y God, from sin and

cold of win - ter, when half spent was the night.
us a Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
death now save us, and share our ev - ery load.

CALL TO CONFESSION

The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Savior Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own. In light of that good news, let us confess our sins.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (IN UNISON)

Most holy and most loving God, we admit to you and to each other that we are creatures who, either through foolishness or willfulness, often choose darkness instead of light. Here and now, we surrender to you our fears and proud opinions, our short-sighted folly and our pompous wisdom, our deep-seated sins and our apathy towards renewal. Please forgive the darkness and pain we have inflicted on others, and restore the light-starved hopes and ideals within our own souls. Trusting your grace, we earnestly pray: "Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us." Through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen!

PERSONAL CONFESSION AND MEDITATION (IN SILENCE)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: My friends, Epiphany is good news! The Light comes not to sear and blind us but to save us. Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners.

So, in his name you are forgiven!

People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you too are forgiven!

All: Glory to God. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (IN UNISON)

O God, by your Spirit tell us what we need to hear, and show us what we ought to do, to obey Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

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, 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." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'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. 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." 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. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON

"The Unopened Gift"

Rev. Ross Carter



CALL TO PRAYER

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Minister: Let us pray.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

GIVING



OFFERTORY

Joy To The World (Unspeakable Joy)
Aldersgate Praise Band

Chris Tomlin

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

BENEDICTION

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Study and Coffee with a Pastor: Join Pastor Patrick on Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. via Zoom for a Bible Study. This study will be ongoing with Pastor Patrick hosting the gatherings in January. If you would like to participate but are unable to join us on Wednesday mornings, these gatherings will be recorded and posted on our website and available to view at a time that suits you.

Conference-Wide Leadership Training: In a time of adaptive strategies and new approaches, the 2021 January leadership training, usually held in the districts, will now be conference-wide and virtual on **January 10**. Whether you are starting a new leadership role, or have been serving in church leadership for years, this model of leadership training will prepare you for your much-needed ministry. Laity and clergy in partnership with one another is the key to a church's success in making disciples. Visit <https://nccumc.org/leadership/training/> for more details and to register.

January Food Drive: Front Street's Backpack Ministry supplies food for children at Eastlawn Elementary who would otherwise go hungry over the weekend. In the month of January, we are asking for the following specific food items which will be used to support our Backpack Ministry.

- pasta
- canned beans
- canned meat
- rice
- pasta sauce (no glass jars please)
- cans of corn or mixed vegetables
- cans of fruit
- snack packs (Jell-O or fruit cups)

Please deposit your donations in the Welcome Center. This collection will continue **through January 31.**

The Upper Room: The January-February issue of The Upper Room is available. Please feel free to stop by the church and pick up a copy. Copies are located in the Welcome Center.

Sanctuary Flowers: The **2021** flower calendar is available in the Welcome Center. If you are interested in placing flowers in the Sanctuary in honor or in memory of a loved one, please write your name on the Sunday you wish to put flowers in the church. For more information, please contact Linda Paul at 336-543-5081(cell) or kpaul5@triad.rr.com (email).

WORSHIP NOTES

Prelude

David Bednall is a British organist and composer who is recognized as one of the leading choral composers of his generation. He studied composition with John Pickard (b. 1963), earning a PhD in Composition at the University of Bristol, and organ with Dr. Najji Hakim (b. 1955) and David Briggs (b. 1962). He has an extensive freelance career as a performer as well as being Sub Organist at Bristol Cathedral. The "Meditation on 'Wie schön leuchtet' ("How lovely shines" [the morning star])" is based on a tune of the same name, which can be found in *The United Methodist Hymnal* at No. 247. In a year when there has been so much talk about the great conjunction between Saturn and Jupiter, this piece seemed most appropriate for Epiphany Sunday. Its harmonic language shows the influence that French composers, especially Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) and Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986), have had on his musical style.

Hymn No. 216

This German carol, set to a familiar sixteenth-century melody, is based on Isaiah 35:1-2 and in its extended form related all the events in Luke 1 and 2 and Matthew 2 about the birth of Jesus. It combines themes of the root of Jesse, the prophecy of Isaiah, the Virgin mother Mary, and Christ as the rose dispelling darkness and death. The text first appeared in a Cologne Catholic hymnal (*Speierischen Gesangbuch*, 1599), and consisted of twenty-two stanzas! The current version contains three stanzas. The first two are from

Theodore Baker's 1894 translation, while the third is from *The Hymnal 1940* that apparently was adapted from a translation by Harriet Reynolds Spaeth of a nineteenth-century German text by Friedrich Layritz. The traditional melody, with its subtleties of rhythm, is usually sung to the famous harmonization by Michael Praetorius (1571-1621).