

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

Hours: Mon, Tues and Thurs. 9:30-1:30

Church Office: 610-868-4441 Fax: 610-868-7918

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Pastor Todd Fennell

Matt Miller, Consistory President

Susan Wright, Director of Music



January 3, 2021
Epiphany Sunday

“Moving Forward United in Faith”

“Committed to Christ, United by Love. We are about God, Christ, the Word, and the Future. No matter who you are or where you are on Life’s journey, you are welcome here. We are Bethany United Church of Christ.”

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January 3, 2021

10:45 AM

We welcome our friends and visitors to this Service of Worship. May this be a time of blessing for you. **Please sign and pass the "Know Your Neighbor Pads"** which are located in the pew by the center aisle. We encourage our visitors to include their name, address, and phone number in the Guest Book at the top of the steps and come again. If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to become part of the community of faith and mission here at Bethany.

**(*) PLEASE STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE
(Bold Text is said or sung by everyone)**

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: "We Three Kings" ...Hopkins, arr. K. McChesney
Handbell Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: We have come to praise God, Who has done wonderful things among us.

All: In Jesus, the Christ, God has shown us love, giving light for our darkness, and strength for all our days.

Pastor: Sing praise to God's name, bow before God in prayer, open your hearts to God's saving word.

All: Arise, shine, for God's light has come!

HYMN: #233 "We Three Kings of Orient Are"

Vs.1 w/refrain-All vs.2 women vs.3 all vs. 4 men vs. 5 w/refrain- All

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Too often, God, we are people of the dark. We choose to live in darkness and move under the cover of darkness. We believe that our deeds are secret and we can do

deeds that adversely affect the lives of others without our complicity being known. O lord, by Your Light dispel the darkness of our sins and lead us to that place of wholeness and renewal. Hear now our silent petitions for Your mercy and grant us Your forgiveness. (pause)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #485 “Into My Heart”
Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus; come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.

PASSING OF THE PEACE:

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this; he has opened heaven’s door, and we are blest forevermore. Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

READING OF SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3-14

Matthew 2:1-12

Leader: This is the Good News

People: Thanks be to God

SERMON: “Only Love Can See The Star”

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING OF OUR TITHES and GIFTS

OFFERTORY "The First Noel" ... Trad. arr.,
Alexander/Bradley Piano/organ Duet

OFFERTORY RESPONSE "In the Bleak Midwinter"
What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb, if I were a wise man, I would do my part. Yet what I can I give him; give my heart.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)
As sages from the East offered you their very best, so may we honor Christ with our highest visions, our finest energy, and our best gifts. As you gave light to those who followed you on earth, so may our gifts enable your light to shine upon those who live in darkness. Generous God, we have many gifts placed into our hands. Receive the gifts we offer as a sign our gratitude and our willingness to share. Amen.

CALL TO PRAYER: LITANY FOR THE NEW YEAR

P: O god of the beginning, by your Spirit you created order out of disorder and life out of nothingness.

C: We praise you that our lives begin and continue in you, our God.

P: Gracious God, you have fashioned us in your own image and do desire that we grow in your likeness.

C: Let your glory be reflected in our lives.

P: Father of us all, you are the source and sustainer of life, we praise you for our creation and preservation.

C: Sustain us by your power that we may live life fully.

P: From the beginning, o God, you have created us for peace and for love.

C: Guide us in the ways of peace as we become more and more those who love.

P: Eternal God, you created us for joy and adventure.

C: We rejoice in our adventure with you.

P: As we begin this new year, we recognize that you are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, who was and is and is to come.

C: In you all things are held together.

P: We know that you are working all things together for good for all who believe.

C: Work in and through us to fulfill your purposes.

P: O God, you make possible new beginnings for us and lead us toward a new day.

C: We would lay aside the weight of the past and move into the promise of the future.

P: Grant to us wisdom to journey forward with you, confident in your guidance and grace.

C: Lead us on.

P: As we make our new resolves, grant us courage to live in conscious obedience to and imitation of Jesus Christ.

C: Lord Jesus, we would follow in your steps.

P: The journey is long and the way is not sure, O Lord, but we trust in you, knowing you are able to show us the way.

C: Lead us forth toward promise in sure hope with joy.

All: Amen.

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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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 and ever. Amen.

HYMN #229 "The First Noel" vs.1,2,3

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION #236 "As with Gladness

**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 evermore your splendor see.

POSTLUDE “O Morning Star” ...Nicolai, arr. J. S. Bach

Our worship ends, our service begins!



AUDIO & VIDEO RECORDINGS If you or anyone you know would like to receive the link to the audio recording of the worship service, please let Bill Rumble know at wrumble@ptd.net. A copy of the bulletin is included with the audio link.

If you have an Instagram account, you can follow us @BethanyUCCBethlehem. We also invite you to tag the church in your posts and use the hashtag #BethanyUCCBethlehem to share posts and photos on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter! Thank you, Bill, for making sure we are able to see and hear the services.

CHURCH CANCELLATIONS

If worship is cancelled due to weather conditions, announcements will be on TV Channel 69 – WFMZ. Also, if we have your email address, an email will be sent out.

THIS WEEK AT BETHANY

TODAY, JANUARY 3 – Epiphany Sunday

10:45 AM Worship with Handbells

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6 – DAY OF EPIPHANY

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 10 – First Sunday after Epiphany

10:45 AM Worship

Scriptures

Ephesians 1:3-14 NRSV

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ 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, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.



Matthew 2:1-12 NRSV

The Visit of the Wise Men

2 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:

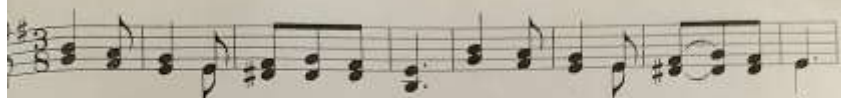
⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

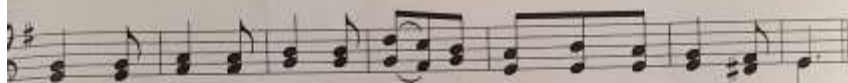
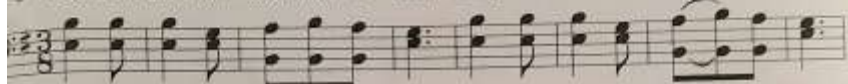
⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

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.

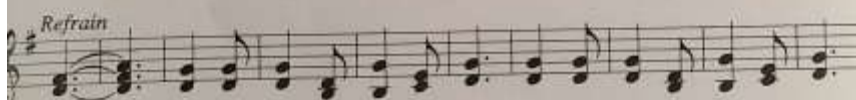
We Three Kings of Orient Are 233



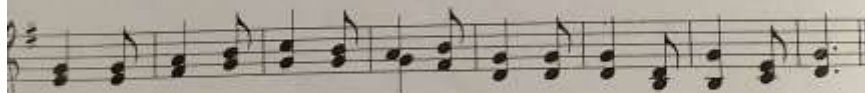
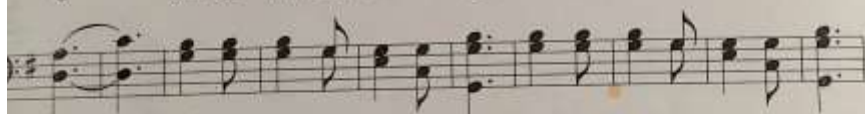
- 1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far,
 2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I bring to crown him a - gain,
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, in - cense owns a de - i - ty night;
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom:
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;



field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er o - ver us all to reign.
 prayer and prais - ing, voic - es rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God on high.
 sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! sounds through the earth and skies.



O star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light.



The First Noel

229

1 The first No - el, the an - gel did say, was to cer - tain poor
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing in the
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
 4 This star drew nigh to the north - west, o'er Beth - le -
 5 Then en - tered in those wise men three, full rev - erent
 6 Then let us all with one ac - cord sing prais - es

shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing their
 east, be - yond them far, and to the earth it gave great
 came from coun - try far, to seek for a king was their in -
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop and
 ly up - on their knee, and of - fered there in his pres -
 to our heav - en - ly Lord, who hath made heaven and earth of

Refrain

sheep, on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
 light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No -
 stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.
 sence their gold, and myrrh, and frank - in - cense.
 naught, and with his blood our life hath bought.

el, No - el, No - el, born is the King of Is - ra - el.