

SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND COVENANT RENEWAL

Epiphany Sunday 7 January 2024

The Old Testament reaches out in longing for Christ who brings an end to its frustrations and brings to accomplishment its promises. —Vern Poythress

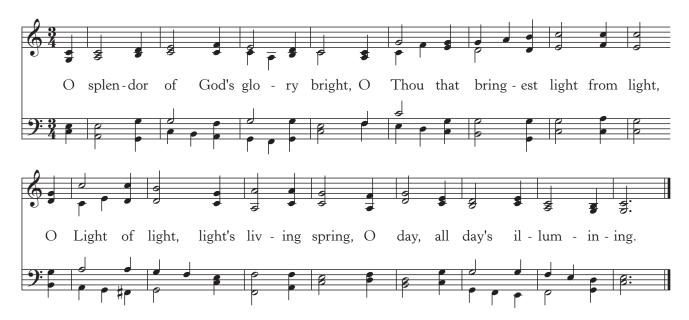
GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO WORSHIP

It is God Himself who calls His people to worship. We do not call ourselves, but it is the King who opens His gates and beckons us into His courts.

Gospel Invitation—Ephesians 5:14 (NKJV)

Awake, you who sleep: arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.

Sung Response—O Splendor Of God's Glory Bright, Vs. 1



Text: Ambrose of Milan, 4th Century, tr. Robert Bridges, 1899; Music: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, Michael Praetorious, 1609.

Call to Worship—based on Isaiah 60:1-5

Pastor: Arise, shine, for your light has come.

All: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

Reader 1: For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.

Reader 2: Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Pastor: Lift up your eyes all around and see.

All: We shall see and be radiant.

Pastor: Your hearts shall thrill and exult.

Congregational Hymn—Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise



Text: Walter Chalmers Smith, 1867; Music: ST. DENIO, Traditional Welsh Melody.

GOD SPEAKS TO HIS PEOPLE THROUGH HIS WORD

The Bible is the means by which God graciously reveals Himself to His people—so we listen, read, and study with expectant hearts. God particularly entreats us in His Word to sing psalms. And while all Scripture is appropriate for hymns and spiritual songs, there is a specific exhortation for us to make use of the Psalter as the church's songbook.

Congregational Psalm—Alleluia! How Blest The Man (Psalm 112)



Text: Psalm 112:1-4, 6-8, 10, *The Psalter of the United Presbyterian Church*, 1887, alt. Henry C. Haffner 2018; Music: POTTSVILLE, Henry C. Haffner, 2018.

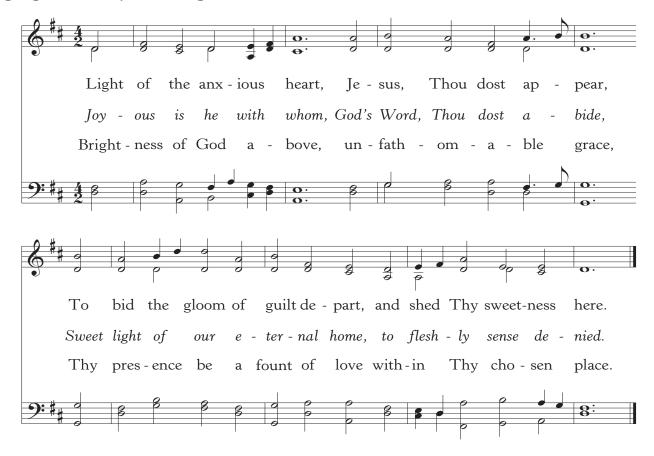
Scripture Reading—Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Elder: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Congregational Hymn—Light Of The Anxious Heart



Text: Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th century. tr. J. H. Newman, 1836; Music: SELMA, Robert A. Smith, 1825.

Reading of the Word—Hebrews 7:11-25

Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? ¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ¹³ For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

¹⁵ This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is witnessed of Him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸ For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

²⁰ And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹ but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to Him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" ²² This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sung Response—O Splendor Of God's Glory Bright, Vs. 2



Text: Ambrose of Milan, 4th Century, tr. Robert Bridges, 1899; Music: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, Michael Praetorious, 1609.

Sermon—The Forever-Priest Saves To The Uttermost

—Pastor, James Crampton

GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND RECONCILIATION

The people of God respond to His Word by confessing their sins, repenting of their sinful ways, and seeking God's favor through the reconciling work of Jesus, the Son of God.

Confession of Sin—based on Psalm 14:2-3, Romans 3:10

Pastor: Lord, we come confessing. You look down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

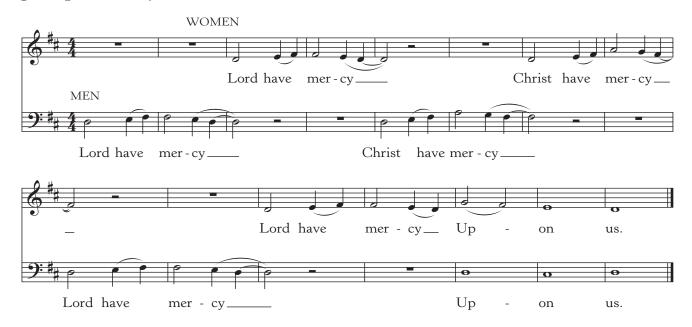
All: We have all turned aside; together we have become corrupt.

Pastor: None of us does good, not even one.

All: None of us is righteous, no, not one.

(Silent Prayers of Confession)

Sung Response—Kyrie



Text: Traditional; Music: Nathan George & Henry C. Haffner, 2012.

Assurance of Pardon—Romans 5:10-11; Matthew 11:28

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Pastor: This is the promise of God.

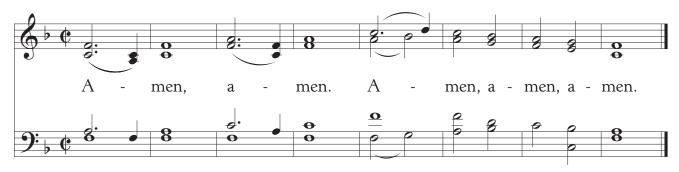
All: This is the Word of the Lord.

Pastor: He says to us, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

All: Thanks be to God.

Pastor: Amen.

Sung Response—Fivefold Amen



Text: Traditional; Music: Traditional African-American Spiritual, arr. Nelsie T. Johnson, 1988.

HEAVENLY GIFT—EUCHARISTO

As God beckons His people to the bounty of His table, they make joyous profession of their fealty to Him.

Profession of Faith—The Apostles' Creed

We believe in God:

The Father Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,

Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

Was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell.

On the third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into Heaven and now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

From whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit; the one holy church—both visible and invisible;

The communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;

The resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Sursum Corda

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

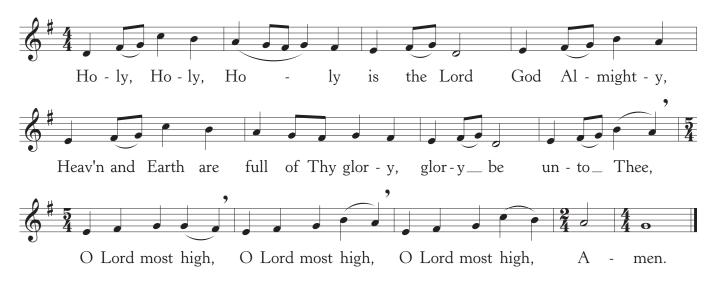
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You,

Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. Therefore, we praise You, Triune God, and we join our voices with the angels, the archangels, and the whole company of Heaven

in this hymn of eternal praise:



WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND THE LORD'S TABLE

This table is open to all baptized Christians who have made a profession of faith. You may come forward to receive the bread and wine or grape juice.

Congregational Hymn—Fairest Lord Jesus



Text: Gesangbuch, Münster 1677, tr. 1850, 1873; Music: CRUSADER'S HYMN (ST. ELIZABETH), Silesian Folk Song, Leipzig, 1842.

Congregational Hymn—From Babel To Zion



Text: Thomas Nelson, 1907; Music: D. O. Teasley, 1907, arr. Henry C. Haffner, 2016.

GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND IN GRATEFUL PRAISE, PETITIONS, TITHES & OFFERINGS

Our praying, serving, and giving are essential aspects of worship. It is here that our faith moves from our heads and hearts into our lives and callings.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession—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 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.

Congregational Hymn—As With Gladness, Men Of Old



Text: William C. Dix, 1860, Music: DIX, Konrad Kocher, 1838, arr. William H. Monk, 1861.

GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE OUT

After calling His people into His presence, forgiving their sins, instructing them in His Word, and providing a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb, God sends His people into the world to show His light in the darkness.

Benediction—Romans 13:11-12; Hebrews 13:25

Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Grace be with you all. *Amen*.

Sung Response—O Splendor Of God's Glory Bright, Vs. 5



Text: Ambrose of Milan, 4th Century, tr. Robert Bridges, 1899; Music: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, Michael Praetorious, 1609.

Announcements

Worship Notes:

Light has been a consistent motif found in Christmas celebrations throughout history. From the legend of St. Lucy's candle headdress which enlivens the winter solstice in Scandinavia, to the "star singer" processions of central Europe where children re-enact the visit of the Magi while singing hymns, these images point to Christ as "the true light" (John 1:9) and "a light for revelation to the gentiles" (Luke 2:32). On this Epiphany Sunday service (the feast which follows the traditional twelve days of Christmas), many of the scriptures and hymns reflect these themes as well. Isaiah 60 announces that our light has come and that nations will gather around to see it. We declare that God is the "Father of Light" (Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise), while the psalmist encourages us that "Light to the upright shall arise, though he in darkness be" (Alleluia! How Blest The Man—Psalm 112). We confess that Jesus is the "Light of the anxious heart" and the "Light of light, light's living spring," who shines brighter than "all the twinkling starry host" (Light Of The Anxious Heart; O Splendor Of God's Glory Bright; Fairest Lord Jesus). We are sent out with a blessing from Romans 13, reminding us that "the night is far gone; the day is at hand" and to "put on the armor of light." With the uncertainty that can sometimes accompany a new year, I pray that, as wise men hailed the guiding light of the star to Bethlehem, "so, most gracious Lord, may we ever more be led to Thee." —Henry C. Haffner

Key Words: Perfect, Weak, Priest, Life, Forever, Oath, Hope

Keystone Verse: Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since

He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)



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All Biblical quotes taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.