

# Epiphany 2021 Ante Communion Service

## Opening Hymn

## Angels from the Realms of Glory

*Acapeldridge*

*Angels, from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story, Now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

*Shepherds, in the fields abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with man is now residing, Yonder shines the infant Light:  
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

*Sages, leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great Desire of nations, Ye have seen the Infant's star:  
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

*Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending, In His temple shall appear:  
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

*Celebrant* Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*A moment of silence for self-reflection*

*Celebrant* Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*People* **Gracious God, have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved  
our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;**

**that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways**

**to the glory of your name. Amen.**

*Celebrant* Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*People* **And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our holy house, and for all who offer their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.



All kings shall bow down before him, \*

**and all the nations do him service.**

For he shall deliver the poor who cries out in distress, \*

**and the oppressed who has no helper.**

He shall have pity on the lowly and poor; \*

**he shall preserve the lives of the needy.**

He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, \*

**and dear shall their blood be in his sight.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.**

**Second Reading**

**Ephesians 3:1-12**

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

## Sermon

### Hymn

### We Three Kings

*Robert Shaw Chorale*

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

*Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign. [Refrain]*

*Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high. [Refrain]*

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

*Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies. [Refrain]*

### Nicene Creed

*Said by all.*

**We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,**

**maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,**

**eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,**

**true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.**

**Through Him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come  
in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father  
and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### Prayers of the People

*Celebrant* With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church,  
those in need, and all of God's creation. In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

*Silence*

For this community, the nation, and the world;

**For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the peace and unity of the world;

**That a spirit of respect may grow among nations and peoples.**

For the just and proper use of your creation;

**For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all bishops and other ministers;

**For all who serve God in his Church.**

For all who love and trust in God, that divisions may cease;

**And that all may be one, as you and the Father are one.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

For wisdom in this time of pandemic;

**That our actions may protect the health of ourselves and others.**

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

*Silence. The People may add their own petitions.*

Hear us, Lord;

**For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. *Silence.*

We will exalt you, O God our King;

**And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence.* Lord, let your loving kindness be upon them.

**Who put their trust in you.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We pray together for Christ's presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.**

**I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.**

**Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart.**

**I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you.**

**Amen.**

*Celebrant:* While we long to receive the sacrament of Christ's Body,

*People:* **We become the sacrament of Christ's Body.**

*Celebrant:* Let your lives be manna to feed our hunger for communion.

*People:* **The love we share becomes bread for the world.**

## **Blessing**

May Christ, the Son of God, be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be in you, among you, and remain with you always. **Amen**

## **Closing Hymn**

### **In Christ There Is No East or West**

*Panoplyimaging*

*In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,  
but one family of thy love throughout the whole wide earth.*

*In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere their high communion find.  
His service is the golden cord close binding humankind.*

*Join hands, disciples in the faith, whate'er your race may be.  
All children of the living God are surely kin to me.*

## **Dismissal**

*The Lord Bless You and Keep You [Lutkin], Acapeldridge*

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The Rev. Cheryl Fox, Pastor and Vicar