

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 31, 2017

THE SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY



GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

WELCOME

As the welcome pads are passed down your aisle, please help us to celebrate your worshipping with us today by signing the register.

PRELUDE *Break Forth O Beauteous Heavenly Light* arr. R. Schultz

A Thought as You Prepare for Worship

"Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth."

—William Faulkner

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The light of Christ has come into the world.

Immanuel, God with us.

So arise, shine, for your light has come!

And we will follow the light—

when it shines brightly in the night sky
when it glows dimly on the horizon.

We will follow the light—

when it leads down familiar paths to expected destinations
when the road is unfamiliar
and the star rests above a dubious-looking home.

We will lift up our eyes and look around.

***And when we see the Christ child,
may our hearts be overwhelmed with purpose and joy.***

Today's cover art is "The Beheading of John the Baptist" 1581, by Vincenzo Dante, above the South Door of the Baptistery of St. John in Florence, Italy.

An asterisk indicates that you are invited to stand in body or in Spirit as you feel led and are able.*

*Please join in speaking or singing all words printed in **bold italics**.*

We traditionally use the "debtors" and "debtors" form of the Lord's Prayer.

Because the calendar this year gives us only one Sunday between Christmas and the Baptism of the Lord Sunday, today's texts and liturgy meld Christmas and Epiphany.

Twice today we will sing verses of "Love Has Come," a new text set to the ancient French melody we know as "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella."

Today in Sunday School, Northminster's children (preschool through 5th grade) will be in a one-room schoolhouse marking the end of the year.

*OPENING HYMN *Angels from the Realms of Glory* Purple, No. 143

*OPENING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR NEED OF GRACE

***Merciful God, how many voices of challenge,
how many John the Baptists,
how many prophets of your light, have we ignored
because they were not what we were looking for?
How many times have we disregarded voices
crying in the wilderness,
"Prepare the way of the Lord;"
how many times have we breathed a sigh of relief,
and turned our backs on your messengers, because
they did not speak the message we expected to hear?
Help us hear anew the cry of those
who would lead us to faithfulness and goodness.
Tune our ears to your heralds,
that we might also testify to your light. Amen.***

ASSURANCE OF RESTORATION

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.
Let us declare the Good News!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

*RESPONSE *Love Has Come* Purple, No. 110, verse 1

*SHARING THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you. ***And also with you.***

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

PREPARATION *O Little Town of Bethlehem* Purple, No. 121, verse 4

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

***Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your
Holy Spirit that, as the Scriptures are read and your Word
is proclaimed, we many know that your reign of peace is
near and so be alert and abounding in hope for ourselves
and one another. Amen.***

SERMON READING John 1:19-34

NT, p. 92

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

The Voice: 30 C.E. Edition

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*HYMN

Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice

Purple, No. 163

JOHANNINE STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR EPIPHANY

Jesus Christ, brother of Light, we believe.

We believe

that in the beginning was the Promise

and the Promise was with God

and the Promise was God.

We believe

in the infinite, nurturing creativity of God,

in the incarnate, crucified humility of God,

in the intimate, inspiring liberality of God.

Jesus Christ, brother of Light, we believe.

Today's statement of faith was adapted from one written by Rev. Bruce Prewer, a noted liturgical author. It borrows themes from last Sunday's text and expands upon it.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

RESPONSE

Love Has Come

Purple, No. 110, verse 3

OUR WORSHIPFUL WORK TOGETHER

WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

Call to Offering

Offertory *Go! Tell It on the Mountain*

*Response *Prepare the Way of the Lord* Purple, No. 95

*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Generous One, whose heart abounds with gifts for creation, receive this offering and our very lives as signs of our intention to live surrounded by your mercy, open to the joy of your presence, living your generosity every day. Amen.

BEARING AND FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

In Luke's gospel, John the Baptist's father sings this song in joy at the promise of his child.

*CLOSING HYMN *Blest Be the God of Israel* Purple, No. 109

If you depart during the postlude, please be mindful of those still in in worshipful contemplation.

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE *Arise and Shine in Splendor* J. Brahms

The Chancel Flowers today are given by Sally & David Rutherford and Cynthia Clark & Bob Regan in Thanksgiving to God for the marriage of their children Whitney and Tom yesterday

TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

Preaching—Rev. Michael D. Kirby

Liturgist—Rev. Jessica Gregory

Musician—Dr. Christopher Owen

Choral Soloist—Johanna Moffitt, soprano

Usher—Steve Davies

Acolytes—Claire Smith & Maddie Sitz

Our Northminster Family at Work

PROGRAM AND WORSHIP STAFF

Rev. Michael D. Kirby—*Senior Pastor & Head of Staff*

Rev. Jessica C. Gregory—*Associate Pastor*

Rev. Ann Ohlrogge Johnson—*Parish Associate*

Dr. Christopher Owen—*Director of Music*

Paul Vander Weele—*Organist*

Kate Lee—*Director of Youth Music*

Margaret Parcell—*Director of Northminster Nursery School*

Meredith Rogowski—*Director of Children's Ministry*

Alex DeMarco—*Director of Youth Ministry*

Lisa Martinez—*Sunday Nursery Supervisor*

Carey Garrison—*Director of Mom's Morning Out*

Claudinetta Voltaire—*Mom's Morning Out Assistant/
Sunday Nursery Assistant*

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF

Sharyn Wilson Woods—*Parish Administrator*

Athina Sato—*Financial Secretary*

Davit Hovakimyan—*Facilities Manager*

Alex Villegas—*Sunday Sexton*

CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Greg Boyer—*Clerk of Session*

Tom Buess—*Moderator of Deacons*

Members—*Ministers*

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