

Sunday, January 3, 2021
Epiphany of the Lord Sunday
Order of Service

Gathering Song..... **“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”** (*Hymnal, #334*)

There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it’s the spirit of the Lord; There are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord. Sweet holy Spirt, sweet heavenly Dove, stay right here with us filling us with your love; and for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise; without a doubt we’ll know that we have been revived when we shall leave this place.

Greeting/Call to Worship..... **Cynthia**

Leader: Lord, we seek you like the Magi.

People: Gifts, ready, destination murky.

Leader: We ask the advice of the powerful

People: But they know not the way.

Leader: Only by stars and dreams can discern you.

People: Vulnerable and poor, we kneel before you.

Leader: Holy, Holy, holy Lord.

People: We rise this morning reoriented, to chart a new course.

Hymn of Praise..... **“Holy, Holy, Holy”**
(sing along with Piano Accompaniment)

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| 1 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed trinity! | 3 Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee, though the eye of sinfulness thy glory may not see, only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity. |
| 2 Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be. | 4 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty! All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed trinity! |

Prayer of Confession and Assurance (*Unison*)

God who would lead us in new ways, we confess we like the way things are. Even if we’re on the receiving of trouble, we’d rather have you tell us to endure than to change ourselves or to change our world. Change is difficult, it requires practice, and we don’t like to fail. And we know your way will present many opportunities to fail in the eyes of the world, but also, we fear,

in your eyes as well. Free us this morning from slothful inaction that we may rise in strength of love in this new year. May we live into such abundant life as individuals, congregations, communities, and nations in the year of 2021.

The Invocation

Song of Meditation — “**More than Enough**” (*featuring the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir*)

The Prayer of Illumination (*Unison*)

Holy Spirit settle our hearts and minds as we read the scriptures today Help us to hear them in a “NEW” way. May our meditations and actions be acceptable to God and may the peace of Christ be with us. **Amen!**

Scripture Reading #1

(Isaiah 60:1–6, Common English Bible)

60 Arise! Shine! Your light has come;
the LORD’s glory has shone upon you.
²Though darkness covers the earth
and gloom the nations,
the LORD will shine upon you;
God’s glory will appear over you.
³Nations will come to your light
and kings to your dawning radiance.
⁴Lift up your eyes and look all around:
they are all gathered; they have come to you.
Your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters on caregivers’ hips.
⁵Then you will see and be radiant;
your heart will tremble and open wide,
because the sea’s abundance will be turned over to you;
the nations’ wealth will come to you.
⁶Countless camels will cover your land,
young camels from Midian and Ephah.
They will all come from Sheba,
carrying gold and incense,
proclaiming the LORD’s praises.

Scripture Reading #2

(Ephesians 3:1–12, Common English Bible)

Paul, apostle to the Gentiles

3 This is why I, Paul, am a prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles.

²You’ve heard, of course, about the responsibility to distribute God’s grace, which God gave to me for you, right? ³God showed me his secret plan^[a] in a revelation, as I mentioned briefly before (⁴when you read this, you’ll understand my insight into the secret plan^[b] about Christ). ⁵Earlier generations didn’t know this hidden plan that God has now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit. ⁶This plan is that the Gentiles would be coheirs and parts of the same body, and that they would share with the Jews in the promises of God in Christ

Jesus through the gospel. ⁷ I became a servant of the gospel because of the grace that God showed me through the exercise of his power.

⁸ God gave his grace to me, the least of all God's people, to preach the good news about the immeasurable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. ⁹ God sent me to reveal the secret planst that had been hidden since the beginning of time by God, who created everything. ¹⁰ God's purpose is now to show the rulers and powers in the heavens the many different varieties of his wisdom through the church. ¹¹ This was consistent with the plan he had from the beginning of time that he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In Christ we have bold and confident access to God through faith in him.

Scripture Reading #3

(Matthew 2:1–12, Common English Bible)

Coming of the magi

² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴ He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ *You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel."*

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him." ⁹ When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

Doxology – "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here be low; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. **Amen.**

Psalter — Psalm 24

Response: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Leader: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,

People: the world and those who dwell therein;

Leader: for God has founded it upon the seas,

People: and established it upon the rivers.

Leader: Who shall ascend the fill of the Lord?

People: **And who shall stand in God’s holy place?**

Leader: Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,

People: **who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully.**

Leader: They will receive blessing from the Lord,

People: **and vindication from the God of their salvation.**

Leader: Such is the generation of those who seek the Lord,

People: **who seek the face of the God of Jacob.**

Response: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Leader: Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the Ruler of glory may come in.

People: **Who is the Ruler of glory?**

Leader: The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

People: **Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the Ruler of glory may come in.**

Leader: Who is the Ruler of glory?

People: **The Lord of hosts, the Lord is the Ruler of glory!**

Response: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of your glory!

The Affirmation of Faith — “The Apostles’ Creed”

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried:
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church; the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. **Amen.**

The Gloria Patri – “Glory Be to the Father”

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. **Amen.**

Children / Youth Moment**Sister Jaime**

Hymn of Preparation — “Change” (*featuring Tramaine Hawkins*)

“A New Way of Giving”

Praise and Prayer Concerns

Invitation / Altar Call

Invitation Selection — “Order My Steps” (*featuring Maiya Sykes*)

The Great Thanksgiving for New Year, Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord, or Covenant Reaffirmation

The pastor stands behind the Lord’s table.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,

always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

Father Almighty (*almighty God*), creator of heaven and earth.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth,

from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God.

You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,

and spoke to us through your prophets.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,

in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation.

[You sent a star to guide wise men to where the Christ was born;

and in your signs and witnesses, in every age and through all the world,

you have led your people from far places to his light.]

or

[In his baptism and in table fellowship he took his place with sinners.
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.]

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (*God*), now and for ever.

Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. **Amen.**

BREAKING THE BREAD

The pastor breaks the bread in silence, or while saying:

Because there is one loaf,
we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The pastor lifts the cup in silence, or while saying:

The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

The bread and wine are given to the people, with these or other words being exchanged:

The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.
The blood of Christ, given for you. Amen.

The congregation sings hymns while the bread and cup are given.

When all have received, the Lord's table is put in order.

The following prayer is then offered by the pastor or by all:

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
in which you have given yourself to us.
Grant that we may go into the world
in the strength of your Spirit,
to give ourselves for others,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

Announcements

Benediction

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Go forth in peace.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all. **Amen.**



Happy Birthday and Anniversary January Members



Happy New Year

Greetings to the St. Mark's Family,

My prayer and desire for the year 2021 for each of you is that God would bless you with the strength to continue to persevere in the pursuit as a Disciple for Christ. Also, may the continued presence of **IMMANUEL**, "GOD WITH YOU" abide with you throughout this year.

Be Blessed, Pastor Matthews

Announcements

Pray Daily at Noon

Please remember to pray daily at NOON. Some areas to include in your prayer, can include the pandemic, racial healing, government leaders, educational challenges, and most importantly for our sick and shut-ins and each other.



Wednesdays (7:15 p.m.) — Wednesday Night Experience. Call-in Information: 712-770-4010 (Access code: 331960)

Sunday, January 17th — Human Relations Sunday, see information attached. This is a special offering Sunday.

Note from Finance: First, let us give a big thank you to all that have been giving. This is a reminder that there are several ways to get your offering to the church:

1. You can drop it off at the church, place in the mailbox (Cynthia and David Burley check it regularly) *(This will save you postage)*
2. You can mail it to the church (601 Eighth Street, Laurel, MD 20707)
3. You can use on-line giving (Give–St. Marks — <https://www.shelbygiving.com/app/giving/stmarks/md>)
4. Reach out to member of finance, they will try to accommodate you.

Again, thank you. Just remember, even during the pandemic, the church building still has obligations that need to be met.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY



When you support Human Relations Day, your gift builds community leadership and resources. For example in Chicago, churches are in partnership to engage in community based alternatives to juvenile incarceration. In the Philippines, community organizations are strengthening family resiliency to address substance abuse, particularly with those who are living in the Manila North Cemetery. And in West Congo, United Methodist Churches are working with ecumenical partners to provide pastoral support and advocacy for children and youth who are in prison.

These are the words of some of the leaders who have received funding for community ministries through the Human Relations Day offering:

“In this multi-Asian, multiethnic, multigenerational church, I’ve lost count of the number of times people have said they were drawn to Buena Vista for two primary reasons: 1. The congregation’s tremendous hospitality and openness; and 2. Its social activism, born out of firm values as the body of Christ. This congregation’s slogan is, ‘Building Beloved Community.’ They take it to heart, and they do it very well.”

— LYNETTE LEE, CHAIR, BUENA VISTA COMMUNITY INSTITUTE, ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

“The Beacon Center is a tool to build consciousness of the need to serve and walk with people whom Howard Thurman would call the disinherited, the people who the church turns its back on, the people of who Jesus ministered to . . . creating wholeness, ministering to those in the community physically, mentally, emotionally, relationally, economically—holistically.”

— THE REV. JOSEPH DANIELS, EMORY FELLOWSHIP UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C.

“Motor sports is a tool that meets all the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) requirements . . . This program teaches youth not only to set goals, but (also to) map out the course to achieve that goal. During field trips, they hear success stories in different careers and see firsthand what that looks like.”

— JAMES HARPER, GRACE COMMUNITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RESOURCE AND EMPOWERMENT CENTER INC., CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY!

One of six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church, Human Relations Day give us an opportunity to make an impact in communities where people struggle because they don't have the tools or resources to reach their God-given potential.

During the challenges of the past year, we have seen how systemic inequality affects the most vulnerable people. When neighbors experience poverty and live in communities that have less access to community resources, as a denomination, we can do so much more together than we could ever do on our own.

Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens. As society begins to recover from this health and financial crisis, these programs are vital in strengthening communities that are most impacted.

Please write your check to your local church with "HRD" written on the memo line and place it in the offering basket. To give online or set up monthly giving, go to [UMC.org/SSGive](https://www.UMC.org/SSGive).



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The people of The United Methodist Church®



*“Proclaiming Christ to the generations...
Equipping disciples to transform the world”*

Special Prayers / Sick and Shut-In List: If you hear of anyone that is in need of special prayer or is taken to the hospital, please contact: Rev. Eugene Matthews (443.257.2730 (cell), 410.379.0600 (home), reveugene@comcast.net)

Eric Smith, Brian Bailey, Rayvon Roy, Joyce Gibson, Tony Tingle, Mitchell Talley, LaKisha Thomas, James (Stoney) Carroll, Marva Thomas, Nena Hughes, Deysha Gibson, Gloria Thomas, Sharon Thomas, Rev. George F. DeFord, Wanda Dumas, Sherman / Erica Roy, Janeen Thomas, Eunice Harding (Gemma's Mother), Tyrone / Pat Mundell, Samuel / James Briggs (Cynthia Burley's brothers), Charles Burley, Joan Moore, Larry Powell, Veronica Miller, Jeanette Reeves, Ernestine Gibson, Mildred Awkward, Grace Elaine Catchings, James Matthews, Birdie Walker, Paul Browder, Laura Dotson, Phillip Reese, Lamar Payne, Kevin Miller, Nancy Daniels, Eunice Parker, Hannah Polk, Delores Tyler

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Eric Smith's story: https://www.spotfund.com/story/5700aa0f-3368-4593-92ac-1cbcad6fa551?created=true&fbclid=IwAR22RY6XyC06K4w5c6Sy-3x29Pn7pZ29akpYwLOMgjuJCoNSItaIe1mQSWM&referral_id=032c0c58-c7d8-4ca8-a181-4d44d1b3b971