



Children ages 4 to 12 years are invited to join us in the Kid's Classroom after Children's Time. This week we will be learning about Epiphany and the Magi.

Worship Notes.

Music licenses: One License with license #A-733437, and CCLI License #A-2267261 and Streaming #CSPL169342, Size A

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
5 Summer St. Lynnfield MA 01940
781-334-3050 www.Centre-Church.org
We Welcome Everyone: An Open and Affirming Church

Rev Thomas Bentley, Pastor
Douglas W. Hodgkins, Organist/Choir Director
Leah O'Brien, Director of Tower Day School



Epiphany Sunday

Rev. Thomas Bentley

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
5 Summer Street, Lynnfield, Massachusetts

January 7, 2024

10:00 am

Prelude "Morning Star" Arr. Wells

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship (from Isaiah 60:1-3) Kathi Martin

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

People: The glory of God has risen upon us!

Leader: For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples,

People: But God will rise upon us, and God's glory will appear over us.

Leader: The light of God is with us;

People: All the nations' leaders will be drawn to the light of God.

Leader: God's light now dwells with us;

Leader & People: Come, worship God, and shine God's light to the world!

Opening Prayer (in unison) Kathi Martin

Holy God, we come to You knowing that we do not always believe we are created in Your image. We don't believe we are good enough. We don't believe we are worthy of Your love. At times, we deny the image in others. We don't believe they are good enough or worthy. We refuse to accept them. We abandon them, forgetting they are children of God. Forgive us for not believing in Your love, the love that is for all people, for You so loved the world You sent us Jesus. Call us back to Your ways of love, that we may love our neighbors as ourselves, for You have loved us. In the name of Christ, who is Love, we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn "As with Gladness, Those of Old" #159

"Who Would Think That What Was Needed" p.153

1. Who would think that what was needed to transform and save the earth might not be a plan or army, proud in purpose, proved in worth? Who would think, despite derision, that a child should lead the way? God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

2. Shepherds watch and sages wonder, monarchs scorn and angels sing; such a place as none would reckon hosts a holy, helpless thing. Stable beasts and passing strangers watch a baby laid in hay: God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

3. Centuries of skill and science span the past from which we move, yet experience questions whether, with such progress, we improve. In our search for sense and meaning, lest our hopes and humor fray, God surprises earth with heaven, coming here on Christmas Day.

“As with Gladness Those of Old” # 159

1 As with gladness those of old
did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, true Morning Star, may we
evermore your splendor see.

2 As with joyful steps they sped
to that lowly manger bed,
there to bend the knee before
One whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
ever seek your mercy-seat.

3 As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger plain and bare;
So may we with holy joy,
pure, and free from sin’s alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you from whom they spring.

4 Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and, when mortal things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds your glory hide.

**New Testament Reading
Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6**

**Kathi Martin
The Message**

I take it that you’re familiar with the part I was given in God’s plan for including everybody. I got the inside story on this from God himself, as I just wrote you in brief.

Only in our time has it been made clear by God’s Spirit through his holy apostles and prophets of this new order. The mystery is that people who have never heard of God and those who have heard of him all their lives (what I’ve been calling outsiders and insiders) stand on the same ground before God. They get the same offer, same help, same promises in Christ Jesus. The Message is accessible and welcoming to everyone, across the board.

Children’s Time

Children ages 4-12 will leave to go to the Kid’s Classroom and will return for Communion to sit with their families.

Call to Offering

Offertory

“Good News”

Sleeth

***Hymn of Praise**

Tune: Old Hundredth

**Praise God from whom all blessing flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Living God, whom we adore.**

Prayer of Dedication

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer (in unison)

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

Gospel Reading
Matthew 2:1-12

Kathi Martin
pages 877-878 in pew Bible

Message: “God’s Promises for Everyone”

Sacrament of Holy Communion
INVITATION

Rev. Tom Bentley

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Most loving and gracious God. Forgive our sins; those we commit knowingly and those we do without perception of how they hurt others. Open our hearts to your Holy Spirit to hear your truth, to understand our failure and to reach a new level of understanding. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: Anyone in Christ becomes a new person altogether; the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new.

All: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven

COMMUNION PRAYER - Rev. Tom Bentley

Pastor “...and so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise you name and join their unending hymn:

All: 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.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Pastor: Let us unite in the words of remembrance...

All: We remember and give thanks for such love and Goodness, and mercy.

WORDS OF BLESSING

HOLY COMMUNION

The pastor will offer instructions as how to receive the elements, and when to eat the bread and drink the unfermented wine

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION (unison)

Almighty God, we give thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world and courage and peace rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Closing Hymn “ Who Would Think That What Was Needed” #153

Benediction

Postlude “Christmas Morning Song” Blake



Our Ushers today are
David Bjorkman
Jeff Langill
Kathi Martin
Jeff Law

Please join us for coffee hour,
hosted by Peter and Laurel Caputo