

January 3, 2021 - Epiphany

Worship - Presbytery of Southern New England

*Welcome to this worship service which is offered to your congregation as a gift from the Presbytery of Southern New England. We have prepared worship services for Epiphany Sunday, January 3rd, to allow for your pastor and worship leaders to be able to take a break, and for your congregation to continue online worship during this time of Covid-19. These are complete worship services and the liturgies are adapted from the newly released book, *Liturgies from Below, 462 Acts of Worship: Praying with People at the Ends of the World* by the Rev. Dr. Claudio Carvalhaes of our Presbytery who teaches worship and liturgy at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. As you settle into worship today, I invite you to light a candle if you are able, to take a few deep breaths to center yourself, and to place your feet on the ground.*

Hear these words of welcome, in the three languages of our Presbytery....

Come, Let us Worship the Lord!
Venha, vamos adorar o Senhor!
와서 함께 주님을 예배합시다 !

Opening Meditative Music *Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence, Harp, April Stance*

Call to Worship

(p. 40)

People: God you are our refuge.

Leader: You are the shore in sight,
you are the hands that reach out,
you are the ground on which to rest.

People: God you are our strength.

Leader: You are the life we long for,
you are the refusal to give up on us,
you are the keys of the home we carry within us.

People: God you are our help in times of trouble.

Leader: We call on you from the ruins and the rubble,
we call on you from the wildness and the deep,
All: We call on you to meet us in this place!



Hymn #140 Once in Royal David's City

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild; Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God And Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern; day by day us he grew;
He was little, weak and helpless; tear and smiles like us he knew;
And he feels for all our sadness, and he shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Prayer for Telling the Truth

(p. 79)

Dear Lord,

Have you seen Your people who are lonely and faced with oppression?
Have you seen Your flock who are lost without a shepherd?
Have you seen Your sheep in danger?
Have you seen Your children whose faith is being challenged?

Send a good shepherd who leads them with your Your heart;
Send a good shepherd who is willing to be with them;
Send a good shepherd who will protect them;
Send a good shepherd who will sacrifice for them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

Assurance of God's Love

Spoken (traditional)

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Psalms 72: 1-7, 10-14

Children's Sermon

Erika Plank Hagan

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2: 1-12

Sermon “Epiphany Light”

Rev. Shannan R. Vance-Ocampo

Offering

For the offering today, you are invited to give through your normal channels of giving to your local congregation. If you wish, you may also give to the Presbytery, to support our anti-racism and reparation work at www.psne.org/donate

Offering Music

Trumpet, First Presbyterian Church of New Haven

Communion with Star Words

During our communion liturgy today we will select and then share star words for each congregation and ministry of our Presbytery. All clergy members in the Presbytery have received star words that have been mailed to them from me, and each congregation and ministry of the Presbytery has also received their star words by mail. The Rev. Susan Foster who first wrote about Star Gifts in 2009 offers these words about them:

“A star gift is simply a star-shaped piece of brightly colored paper with a word printed on it. On Epiphany Sunday you receive a star gift and are asked to reflect on that word for the coming year. You are invited to ponder what significance this word might have in your lives, and how God might be speaking to you through that simple message. The Magi who traveled great distances to offer their gifts to the newborn Christ-child were responding to the gift first given to them. They received God’s gift, then offered their gifts to God. As we commemorate the arrival of the Magi and remember their offerings, we delight in this star gift reminder that symbolizes God’s generosity in our lives.” (slightly adapted for this worship service by Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo)

Mary Remembers Her Son

A Communion Prayer (p. 129-130)

Five bullets and a hundred lashes on my son’s body;

I greet you still, *the Lord be with you.*

And also with you.

Five bullets and a hundred more they stopped his heart and cancelled my own,

I bid you still, *lift up your hearts:*

We lift them up to God.

Five times and hundred more I ask God if it is still right to God thanks and praise.

They asked him, “Are you who they say you are?” He told the truth. Upon him the anger of Rome and their obsession with their peace and their



order rained from their whips and fired from their guns. They have killed my son.

For they have forgotten the God who has breathed upon us the breath of Life, they have forgotten the One who gave life when they took his life away.

On the night that my son was to be given up for betray, desertion and Death, he took bread from the plate of pancit and gave it to me and said, "Take this and eat." And then he gave me something to drink and said, "Take this and drink. I will be going away, Mother. Somewhere you cannot follow. And when I return you will not have to work too hard and wash other people's clothes, and our family and friends will live better lives."

Breathe upon these gifts now again, O God, your breath of life so we may remember again how to live.

For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you will remember me and all the sons who have been taken from their mothers and wives.

For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you will remember all the daughters who have been snatched from their homes.

For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, my son calls to you, "Please remember me," until I come again.

Remember my Son.

Everyone who receives a star gift is encouraged to hang it up where they are sure to see it every day. Many people keep their star gifts from year to year, gradually accumulating a virtual constellation of wise words and encouragement displayed as a reminder of God's presence in our lives.

People allow these words to speak to them. They often start by looking the word up in the dictionary so that they are clear on its meaning; we hear the word grace all the time, but what exactly does it mean? A word that seemed unclear at the beginning may gain new meaning as the year goes on.

1. Noroton Presbyterian Church



2. First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich
3. Wilton Presbyterian Church
4. First Presbyterian Church of Stamford
5. First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield
6. First Presbyteian Church of New Canaan
7. Valley Presbyterian Church
8. Turn of River Presbyterian Church
9. United Presbyterian Church, Milford
10. First Presbyterian Church of New Haven
11. First Presbyterian Church of Hartford
12. Westminster Presbyterian Church
13. Crossroads Presbyterian Church
14. Connecticut Korean Presbyterian Church
15. St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
16. New Haven Korean Presbyterian Church
17. Martin Luther King Community Presbyterian Church
18. Calvary Presbyterian Church
19. First Presbyterian Church in the Meadows
20. Hyannis Brazilian Fellowship
21. Latinas in Action New Worshipping Community
22. Not so Churchy New Worshipping Community
23. Dunns Corner Community Presbyterian Church
24. Barrington Presbyterian Church
25. Greenwood Community Presbyterian Church
26. Providence Presbyterian Church
27. Calvin Presbyterian Church
28. Woodbury-Union Presbyterian Church
29. Babcock Presbyterian Church
30. Allendale Presbyterian Church in NJ (David Baer's congregation)

Then the Star appeared again, the same Star they had seen in the Eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of The Child. They could hardly contain themselves, they were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

May this Star Word be your guide as we begin 2021. May it offer a blessing to you and a prophetic and empowering Word from God for your ministry! Amen.

Prayer after Communion

(p. 133)

Unison: As we have been embraced by Christ at this table, we now turn to embrace one another. The peace we have received we now freely give. Amen.

Hymn #100, My Soul Cries out with a Joyful Shout (Canticle of the Turning)

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring, let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn. R*

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.

Benediction

(p. 65)

Go home in peace. Return no evil with evil but with the good that is in you. Conquer evil. Amen.

Sending

Peace be with you.

Closing Meditative Music

What is This Lovely Fragrance, Harp, April Stance

Worship Notes

- The opening and closing meditative harp carols are from the Rev. Dr. April Stace, Affiliate Professor of Pastoral Care at The General Theological Seminary in NYC and Director of Spiritual Formation at Brooklyn First Presbyterian Church. They are used with permission from her newly released harp album, *Something Like a Star: Harp Music for Christmas*. <https://aprilstace.net>
- The liturgy for both services is adapted from the newly released book, *Liturgies from Below, 462 Acts of Worship: Praying with People at the Ends of the World* by the Rev. Dr. Claudio Carvalhaes of our Presbytery. <https://www.claudiocarvalhaes.com>
- Thank you to Elder Stephen Hart, Moderator of the Presbytery and Erika Plank Hagan, our Communications Manager, who assisted with putting these services together and to Margaret Leupold, who handled the recordings.
- Thank you to Erika Plank Hagan for the Children's Sermons!
- *Star Words, Star Gifts* - are being used in the liturgy for January 3, 2020, Epiphany. More information about this practice can be read about at this link: <https://www.reformedworship.org/article/september-2009/star-gifts>
- Every congregation/ministry will receive their Star Word by January 3, 2021 in the mail, and all clergy in PSNE, and elders serving on PSNE committees and teams will also receive theirs this way.