

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinabek Nations, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

This territory is also covered by the Toronto Purchase, Treaty 13 of 1805, and the Williams Treaties of 1923. Today, our community is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We gather by these territorial lands and waters to worship, listen, learn, share, and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

The Feast of the Epiphany

Bright and Glorious

January 7, 2024



AN EPIPHANY BLESSING OF THE HOUSE *we gather in the narthex*
GREETING

May peace be to this house and to all who enter here. By wisdom a house is built and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. (Proverbs 24:3-4)

READING

As we prepare to ask God's blessing on this house, we read these words of scripture.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (John 1:1-4,14,16)

INSCRIPTION

This inscription is made with chalk at the entrance

20 + C + M + B + 24

The Magi of old, known as

C Caspar,

M Melchior, and

B Balthasar

followed the star of God's Son

who came to dwell among us

20 two thousand

24 and twenty-four years ago.

+ Christ, bless this house,

+ and remain with us throughout the new year.

PRAYER

Let us pray:

O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star.

We pray that you bless this place and our ministry that extends to this community and your world to worship and serve wherever we are. **Amen.**

We move to the worship space

HYMN ELW #301 BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS IS THE SKY VERSES 1 AND 2

Bright and glorious is the sky, Radiant are the heavens high

Where the golden stars were shining And their rays to earth inclining,

Beckon us to Heaven above, Beckon us to Heaven above.

On that holy Christmas night Through the darkness beamed a light

All the stars above were paling, All their luster slowly failing,

As the wondrous star drew nigh, As the wondrous star drew nigh.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,

Who stretches out the heavens, who sends light to the nations,

Who gives breath to us all.

Amen.

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

Silence for reflection and self-examination

Loving God,

**We confess that we have turned from your way
to follow our own ways.**

Forgive us for the times we have spoken or acted too quickly;

we have not spoken or acted at all;

we have hurt those closest to us;

we have hurt those we have yet to know;

we have thought more about ourselves than others;

we have thought less of ourselves than we ought.

Turn us around, and give us a fresh start,

so that we can live again as your children. Amen.

Even when we have done wrong, God makes us right.

Even when we have messed up, God puts us together.

God's love never runs out.

God never tires of calling us beloved children.

Hear God say to you now; your sins are forgiven,

For the sake of + Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

GREETING

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

CANTICLE OF PRAISE ELW 310 SONGS OF THANKFULNESS AND PRAISE

VERSES 1 AND 4

Songs of thankfulness and praise,

Jesus, Lord, to you we raise,

manifested by the star to the Magi from afar,

branch of royal David's stem,

in your birth at Bethlehem.

Anthems be to thee addressed,

God in flesh made manifest.

Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,

present in thy holy word.

Grace to imitate thee now And be pure, as pure art thou;

that we might become like thee

at thy great epiphany

and may praise thee, ever blest,

God in flesh made manifest.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God, the radiance of all faithful people, you brought the nations to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all the world through him who is the true light and the bright morning star, your Son Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

ISAIAH 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 72

Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.
May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound,
until the moon is no more.

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,

may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

May all kings fall down before him,

all nations give him service.

For he delivers the needy when they call,

the poor and those who have no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy,

and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence he redeems their life;

and precious is their blood in his sight.

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 ACCLAMATION ELW #301 BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS IS THE SKY
VERSES 3 AND 4**

**Sages from the East afar, When they saw this wondrous star,
Went to the find the King of nations, And to offer their oblations
Unto Him as Lord and King, Unto Him as Lord and King.**

**Him they found in Bethlehem, Yet He wore no diadem;
They but saw a maiden lowly With an Infant pure and holy,
Resting in her loving arms, Resting in her loving arms.**

The holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

MATTHEW 2:1-12

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, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN #302 AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD

As with gladness men of old,
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to Thee!

As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to Thy lowly bed;
There to bend the knee before
Thee, whom heaven and earth adore.
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek the mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At the cradle, rude and bare;
So may we with holy joy,
Pure, and free from sins alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls, at last,
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds thy glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down;
There for ever may we sing
Alleluias to our King.

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the 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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**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 again 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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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

With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

A brief silence

Guide the whole church with your wisdom, revealing God. Bring bright and glorious ecumenical and interreligious understanding around the globe, especially in places of ethnic and religious strife. We pray for Lutheran World Relief and other organizations that provide humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and health care.

God of grace.....**Hear our prayer.**

Restore your glory to the earth, creating God. Protect fragile ecosystems: rainforests, coral reefs, wetlands, prairies, and shorelines. Guide us to treasure the rich variety of animals and plants that share the world with us. May our love for the earth shine with bright and glorious care.

God of grace.....**Hear our prayer.**

Bring the nations into the way of justice and peace, righteous God. Strengthen those who work for human rights, equality, and the protection of the most vulnerable. We pray for all in public office, that they may serve with honesty and honour, and let your bright and glorious peace fill the minds and hearts of the people of Ukraine, Russia, Iran, Sudan, Israel, and Palestine.

God of grace.....**Hear our prayer.**

Help those who have no helper, delivering God. Rescue any who suffer from abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Deliver adults and children who are caught in cycles of poverty. Transform social systems that enable racism and discrimination of any kind. Heal and comfort the sick and recovering. Make a place in our hearts for prayers for Ingrid, Tom, and all we name before you.....

pause

God of grace.....**Hear our prayer.**

Accompany our ministries in the coming year, abiding God. Inspire us as we worship, pray, and serve. Keep us mindful of the needs of others in our community. Help us to seek creative and bold new ways of sharing the bright and glorious love of God

God of grace.....**Hear our prayer.**

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God. **Amen.**

BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS IS THE SKY

**As a star God's holy Word Leads us to our King and Lord;
Brightly from its sacred pages Shall this light throughout the ages
Shine upon our path of life, Shine upon our path of life.**

SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

The offering will now be received and may God bless the gifts of your life

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Merciful God, receive the gifts we bring, ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Through this meal unite us as your body, shining with the light of your justice and mercy, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith
to a new and radiant vision of your glory;
that, beholding the God made visible,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

Our Lord Jesus Christ,
in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Come. Be filled with light and life. **Thanks be to God!**

HOLY COMMUNION

you are invited to eat your bread and drink your wine as you hear the words

"the body of Christ given for you" "the blood of Christ shed for you"

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us always in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O Morning Star, fair and bright, you have refreshed us again with heavenly food. You are our dearest treasure. Go with us now – today, tomorrow, every day – that we tell the story of your never-ending love and sing your praise both now and forever. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

The God of glory dwell in you richly,

Name you beloved,

And shine brightly on your path;

And the blessing of Almighty God,

The Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit ,

Be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

HYMN ELW # 303 BRIGHTEST AND BEST

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,

Dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid;

Star of the east, the horizon adorning,

Guide where our infant redeemer is laid.

**Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and monarch and Saviour of all.**

**What shall we give him, in costly devotion,
Shall we bring incense and off'rings divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?**

**Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.**

**Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid;
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant redeemer is laid.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE