



Thursday January 6th 2022

Lunchtime Worship

Welcome to our Epiphany lunchtime worship.

St. John's acknowledges that the Church buildings, and all living in Victoria, are on the ancestral lands of the Lekwungen speaking people.

Gathering to worship

Let us worship together as one voice

All Amen

God is with you

All And also with you.

This is the day that the Divine has made

All We will rejoice and be

glad in it.

Opening Prayer

**All Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.
Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit
and in truth Amen**

Blessed is the Creator

All for God has heard the voice of our prayer.

The Church Family Prayer

Loving God,

All: you have called us to be your family and to celebrate our life together in worship. We pray now, for all members of our family as we gather in our church buildings, our homes, and online. Through your spirit keep us united in love. Bless each of us with your beloved friendship. Teach us, gracious God, how to be your church in these times. Help us to know that we are your people, that we are your Family, always. Amen.

Psalm 72: 10-14

72:10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

72:11 May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.

72:12 For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.

72:13 He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

72:14 From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

Matthew 2:1-12

2:1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,

2:2 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."

2:3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;

2:4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

2:5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

2:6 '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.'"

2:7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

2:8 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."

2:9 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.

2:10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

2:11 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.

2:12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

A prayer for children

Loving God,
your Son told his disciples
to become like little children.
Lead us to work for the welfare
and protection of all young people.
May we respect their dignity
that they may flourish in life,
following the example of our Lord.
Amen.

A prayer of hope

God of compassion,
your love for humanity was revealed in Jesus,
whose earthly life began in the poverty of a stable
and ended in the pain and isolation of the cross:
we hold before you those who are homeless and cold.
Draw near and comfort them in spirit
and bless those who work to provide them
with shelter, food and friendship.

Affirmation

With people everywhere
**All We affirm God's goodness at the heart of
humanity Planted more deeply than all that
is wrong**

With all creation
**All We celebrate the miracle and wonder of life.
The unfolding purposes of God, forever
at work In ourselves and the world**

Iona Abbey Worship Book

Let us say together:

*Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:*

*The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.*

*With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.*

*For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.
Amen.*

A benediction - by the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Webber

"Blessed are the agnostics. Blessed are they who doubt. Blessed are those who have nothing to offer. Blessed are the preschoolers who cut in line at communion. Blessed are the poor in spirit. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are those whom no one else notices. The kids who sit alone at middle-school lunch tables. The laundry guys at the hospital. The sex workers and the night-shift street sweepers. The closeted. The teens who have to figure out ways to hide the new cuts on their arms. Blessed are the meek. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are they who have loved enough to know what loss feels like. Blessed are the mothers of the miscarried. Blessed are they who can't fall apart because they have to keep it together for everyone else. Blessed are those who "still aren't over it yet."

Blessed are those who mourn. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

I imagine Jesus standing here blessing us because that is our Lord's nature. This Jesus cried at his friend's tomb, turned the other cheek, and forgave those who hung him on a cross. He was God's Beatitude— God's blessing to the weak in a world that admires only the strong.

Jesus invites us into a story bigger than ourselves and our imaginations, yet we all get to tell that story with the scandalous particularity of this moment and this place. We are storytelling creatures because we are fashioned in the image of a storytelling God. May we never neglect that gift. May we never lose our love for telling the story. Amen"

Prayer for Epiphany:

We forget sometimes that the Jesus whose birth we celebrated at Christmas spent many years growing up in a small Jewish family, growing wiser and stronger, learning a trade, waiting for his moment. Waiting for the pieces of the bigger picture to fall into place, when he would enter the waters of the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descend on him and that voice come from heaven proclaiming, "You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight."

Father God, as we join together in worship let us not forget your infinite patience and love in dealing with your people, of which we count ourselves. Use us in your service, that we might draw others into your kingdom. To your praise and glory we ask this. Amen.

I'm January

by Annette Wynne

I'm January bringing you
A year of days—all brand, brand new;
I step upon the frosty ground.
When chimes and sleighbells ring around;
You welcome me and children sing,
And joy comes into everything.
I bring you love and lots of cheer,
And work and friends for all the year.

Gracious God,

All accept these
prayers

In the name of our brother, Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

Thank you for spending this time with us today.

All Go in peace to love and serve.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

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