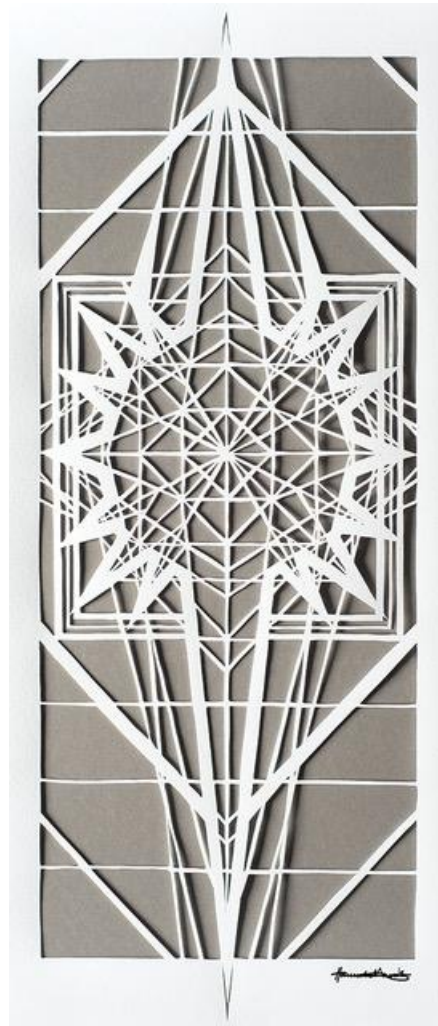


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# St. Paul's Episcopal Church Piney Parish

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*The Second Sunday After Christmas*

*January 3, 2021*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

*Officiant* Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People* **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

## PRAYER FOR PURITY

*Officiant* Let us pray.

*All* **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,  
and from you no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you  
and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!  
Joyful, all he nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!  
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*All* **And also with you.**

*Officiant* Let us pray.

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## YOUNG DISCIPLES MOMENT

## THE EPISTLE LESSON

*Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a*

Fern Brown

*After the initial greeting, the greeting is displaced by a blessing in the form of hymn. The hymn centers on the revelation of God in Christ, through whom believers are chosen and destined for adoption and for participation in Christ's mission of redemption.*

Bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing that comes from heaven. God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in God's presence before the creation of the world. God destined us to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ because of his love. This was according to his goodwill and plan and to honor his glorious grace that he has given to us freely through the Son whom he loves.

Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, this is the reason that I don't stop giving thanks to God for you when I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you. I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call,

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what is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers, and what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers. This power is conferred by the energy of God's powerful strength.

*Lector*            The Word of the Lord.

*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

**THE PSALM**

*Psalm 84*

How dear to me is your dwelling, O GOD of hosts! \*

**My soul has a desire and longing for your courts;  
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.**

The sparrow has found her a house  
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; \*

**by the side of your altars, O GOD of hosts,  
my Ruler and my God.**

Happy are they who dwell in your house! \*

**they will always be praising you.**

Happy are the people whose strength is in you, \*

**whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.**

Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, \*

**for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.**

They will climb from height to height; \*

**the God of gods will be revealed in Zion.**

O God of hosts, hear my prayer; \*

**hearken, O God of Jacob.**

Behold our defender, O God, \*

**and look upon the face of your Anointed.**

For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, \*

**and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God  
than to dwell in the tents of the wicked;**

For God is both sun and shield; \*

**and will give grace and glory.**

No good thing will GOD withhold \*

**from those who walk with integrity.**

O GOD of hosts, \*

**happy are they who put their trust in you!**

**THE GOSPEL**

*Matthew 2:1-12*

*Today's reading, full of allusions from the Hebrew Bible, points to Jesus as the fulfillment of messianic expectations.*

*Deacon*            The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

*All*                 **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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

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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.

Deacon            The Gospel of the Lord.  
All                Praise to you Lord Christ.

## SERMON

The Rev. Deacon Steve Seely

### THE NICENE CREED

*The Nicene Creed, the Church's central statement of faith, emerged out of the first four councils of the Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> century in response to controversies about Jesus' divinity. The Latin root of the phrase "we believe" (credo) means to "give one's heart." The creed is our way of affirming who is deserving of our heart amidst fear and doubt. The term apostolic refers to the historic succession of the apostles (original leaders of the early church) through our bishops. The term catholic refers to the church throughout the world.*

Celebrant        Let us affirm our faith in the Triune God.

All                **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: by the power of the Holy Spirit: he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.**

*Intercessor*

The true light has come into the world, and we have seen his glory. We pray that this light will always shine through us as we make our way through the world you have made.

From his fullness,

**we have all received, grace upon grace.**

We pray that the true light will illumine your faithful people. We pray for all bishops, priests and deacons who guide and support your people in their ministries. In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Church of the Epiphany, DC; Welcome Table and Street Church, and Epiphany Church, Forestville.

From his fullness,

**we have all received, grace upon grace.**

We pray that the true light will enlighten those in authority throughout the world; that the way to justice and peace will be clear, that the needs of people in every corner of the world will be met, and that violence and poverty will be no more.

From his fullness,

**we have all received, grace upon grace.**

We pray that the true light will highlight those who need your love and peace the most; those who suffer from illness and anxiety, those whose relationships are broken, those who live in fear and despair.

From his fullness,

**we have all received, grace upon grace.**

We pray that those who have died will be joyfully received into your eternal light and find bliss in your everlasting glory. We pray for the recently departed. Bring us all into your glorious light when our journey here is complete.

From his fullness,

**we have all received, grace upon grace.**

We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who has brought us out of darkness into the light.

From his fullness,

**we have all received, grace upon grace.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Officiant* As Christ teaches us, we pray:

*All* **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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## THE PEACE

*Officiant* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

## BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS

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### PRAYER FOR A BIRTHDAY

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants *she/he/they* begin another year. Grant that *she/he/they* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *his/her/their* trust in your goodness all the days of *his/her/their* life(ves); through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### PRAYER FOR ANNIVERSARY

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### THE BLESSING

### THE DISMISSAL

### CLOSING HYMN

*We Three kings of Orient are*

We three kings of Orient are, bearing  
gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain  
moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Glorious now behold him arise, King and  
God and Sacrifice; heaven sings alle  
luia: alleluia the earth replies.

O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright; westward leading,  
still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright; westward leading,  
still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

### THE BLESSING

### THE DISMISSAL

#### Questions for Reflection

The theme of “fullness” runs through all the lectionary readings for this day. God satisfies the people with bounty (Jer. 31:14) and fills them with finest wheat (Ps. 147:14). Jesus, God’s Word made flesh, reveals the fullness of God’s grace and truth (John 1:14), a fullness from which we all receive grace upon grace (John 1:16). The apostle says that in the fullness of time (Eph. 1:10; cf. Gal. 4:4) all things will be gathered into God. Where is there fullness in your life? Where is there emptiness? How have you experienced the fullness of God’s grace?

#### Household Prayer: Morning

At the beginning of this day, O God, you are with me, like light scattering darkness. Be with me to the end—and to the beginning of the life that even death cannot destroy; through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

#### Household Prayer: Evening

God of all glory, I give you thanks for the fullness of this day and the grace upon grace you have given me. Now hold me close to your heart and let me rest in the grace of Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

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## PERMISSIONS

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