

Straight from the "Hart"

December 18, 2022

Christmas Pageant



Welcome to Hartland United Methodist Church's "Straight from the 'Hart'". We are glad you are participating in today's time of worship by reading this service script.

Opening Prayer Almighty God, you bless us with so many gifts, including Christ himself. We offer you ourselves, in part signified by these gifts, these resources that we share through this church --- that we may bring your goodness to your world. In Jesus name, Amen.



Donna Allmond (not pictured on piano), Jewell Helquist, and Cathy Novak play pre-service, offering.

Call to Worship

Lay Reader: Come, meet with Christ and experience his gracious compassion as well as his disciplined self-denial -- both needed in order for him to give up heaven to come to us in a manger, to leave the manger to go to a cross, and from the cross's tomb, he comes to us again today. Come and worship -- that we may travel to the manger and be filled with his grace and discipline -- that we may carry on his mission of love for people.

Music Let's move to the manger with the angels to sing of the wonder of creation and the wonder of Christ's appearing.

Angels From the Realms of Glory

1. Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.
3. Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star:

Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

4. Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear;
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

Advent Candles (L – Lay Reader, C – Congregation)

The wise are called to seek what every nation desires, a king that acts as a cornerstone that securely binds us all together. Let's prepare for the Advent Candles by singing just the verse and invite the one who created us to deliver us from our sin-caused conflict.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

7. O come, Desire of nations bind all peoples in one heart and mind.
From dust thou brought us forth to life; deliver us from earthly strife.

L: We lit the candle of hope to remind us that God brings comfort and healing.
[P lights candle 1 while above words are said]

L: We lit the candle of peace to remind us that God calls us to love and be at peace with all that we meet.
[P lights candle 2 while above words are said]

L: We lit the candle of joy to remind us that God sent Jesus so that we can remain in his love and our joy will be complete.
[P lights candle 3 while above words are said]

P: God of love, we praise you -- for you look with favor on us, your servants.

L: Your mercy reaches all who revere you. You lift up the humble. You satisfy the thirsty and fill the hungry with good things.

P: As your holy and dearly loved chosen people, fill us with your compassion,

L: with your kindness, your humility, your gentleness and patience.

P: By your help, we will demonstrate controlled tolerance and forgive each other as you forgive us.

L: People, say with the Psalmist.

C: We will erupt with praise and give thanks to you, Lord, for your loyal love, your miraculous mercy, and all the wonderful things you do for all of us.

Psalm 107:8

L: On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love for it is this virtue that binds everything together in perfect harmony.

[P lights candle 4 while above words are said]
(Inspired from (Luke 1:46-53, Psalm 107:9,8
Colossians 3:12-14)

♫ **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall
come to thee, O Israel.**



[Prayers]

Pastor's Prayer Lord, we come from all walks of life. Some of are traveling over rocky roads and treacherous times, while others are traveling with joy over peaceful paths. We come with a wide variety of experiences, perhaps even during this past week. But we are very near Bethlehem now.

Some gather finding it difficult to celebrate while others arrive with hearts overflowing with elation. Whatever has been our journey, our circumstances; we are coming to your manger now, we are coming into your presence, relying on the promise that you are always with us in every situation. And as we come, **Praises and Petitions** we pray with thanksgiving for the lives of those for whom we have honored and remembered and named through flowers, and those for whom flowers were not or could not be purchased, but we are ever grateful for the impact they have had on our lives. We continue to pray for a relative of Jan Martin's Darlene Tidmore who is very ill, and for Jan's brother Reese Thornton, * for Mary Jo's Mallott's sister-in-law Colleen Huffman * Bert Honour's friend Dennis who is suffering with cancer, * and Terri asks for her parents who have rebound covid, * and there are others who are under the weather today and we are praying for them as well, and others that are not named but are on our hearts and minds. [Pause]

Now as we visit the stable, rejoice with us, or comfort us the light of your love, the love of the Prince of Peace, who later taught us to pray: **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to Responsive Bible Reading

Lay Reader: Psalm 146 gives us some of the reasons we rejoice that God comes to us. Join the pastor on the yellow font while I lead on the white.

Responsive Bible Reading (L: Lay Reader, **C: Congregation**)

L: I will praise the Lord as long as I live.

C: Blessed are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is the Lord their God.

L: He created the heaven and earth, the seas, and all that lives within them. He stays true and keeps every promise –

C: – he remains faithful forever.

L: He upholds justice for those who are pressed down by the world...

C: he lifts up those who are weighed down.

L: He loves those who do what is right. He protects the foreigners among us and sustains orphans and widows. The Lord will reign today, tomorrow, and forever.

C: He will be your God, people of Zion, throughout the generations.

(From Psalm 146:2,5-10)

Meditation He Comes – to Bring Himself

The Psalmist says we are blessed to be able to depend upon the ever-faithful help of the Lord. [Pull out and show cell phone]. In everyday life, if there is an emergency, who do you call? (Don't say Ghostbusters 😊) [9-1-1]. And if you are in England? [9-9-9]. So know where you live! And when you call that number, do you have to hope and pray that somebody might happen to be there to answer your call? [No]. No you expect somebody to be there. – barring something going highly wrong with the system, you expect – and there will be someone who will be there – not only to answer you call and listen to whatever your problem is, they will probably offer you some words of comfort and calming strength and help you through that situation. AND, they will send the right people to your place if needed, right? So they'll send the power company, or firemen, or policemen, or medical people, or whatever your need might happen to be.

Among other things, Christmas reminds us that when we pray to God, we don't have to hope and wish that he is listening. We know and can expect that he will be there, with us and he not only listens and give us words of comfort; he also takes action – he sends Jesus to us, ready to give us his peace, his forgiveness, his help and his gentle guidance; and in our modern context, he sometimes sends Jesus to those in need through Jesus' people. That's us. Did you know you were “spiritual firemen...policeman...medical person?”? And we are to do what we are able to do. But you may also notice that when there is not an emergency, all those personnel that I have named, and others, spend a lot of time in the community trying to do preventative preparations so that those kinds of tragedies and emergencies may

not come as often or as severely as they might have otherwise come.

S, when we aren't doing emergency work for Jesus, we should be doing preventative work for Jesus – helping each other, and others, encouraging each other with our presence and grow into maturity in Christ, and perhaps avoid, or at least better cope with the stressful challenges that come our way during our days.

We don't know how much foresight into this kind of detail the Magi knew about this coming and helping when they saw this new king's star appear in the sky. They only knew that they had to go and see. The gifts they brought seemed to indicate they had some inkling of the kind of king he would have to be if he was going to have that kind of impact on our world. But let's turn it over to our dramatists and let them tell us that story.

Musical Interlude

Pageant

THE STORY OF THE MAGI

written by Mary Jo Bell

Music

What Child Is This?

Soloist- Charles Kirkpatrick

What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

Chorus

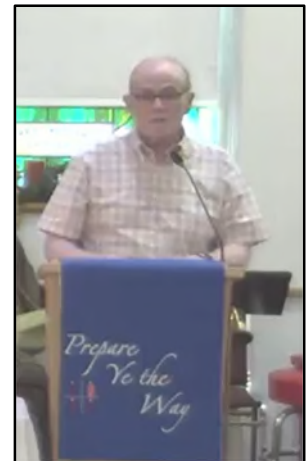
This, this is Christ, the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise a song on high, the virgin sings he lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Chorus

Nails, spears shall pierce him through,
The cross he bore for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary!



Introduction: How many ways have you heard the story of the birth of Jesus? In the Bible, there are many people with experiences from that night, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi. They were all from different backgrounds and yet each played a significant role in that night. The Messiah came without fanfare, without any thing you would have expected the Son of God to receive upon His arrival. But who was this child? What was the purpose of Him being born and what did it mean for the world? We are going to hear today many different stories, but mostly of the Magi and what role they played in the beginning of the life of Jesus.



Narrator: The way Jesus entered the world was not what you would have expected for the Messiah. Joseph, a carpenter and a young girl named Mary, were simple, honest, and faithful people chosen by God for the incredible honor of being the earthly parents of Jesus. However, this was not an easy task for them. You see, they were only engaged to be married when Mary became pregnant with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It was a trying time for them, but they placed all their faith and trust in God and his promises. They followed and believed that God would see them through.



[Mary enters]

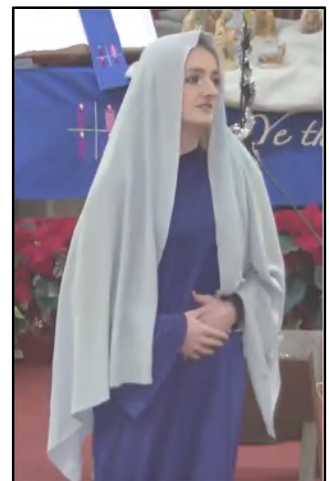
Music

Breath of Heaven

soloist: Carmen Pushman

I have wandered many moonless nights
 cold and weary with a babe inside
 and I wonder what I've done,
 Holy Father, you have come
 and chosen me now to carry your Son.

I am waiting in a silent prayer.
 I am frightened for the load I bear.
 In a world as cold as stone
 must I walk this path alone?
 Be with me now. Be with me now.



Breath of heaven, hold me together. Be forever near me, Breath of heaven.
Breath of heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness,
for you are holy, Breath of heaven.

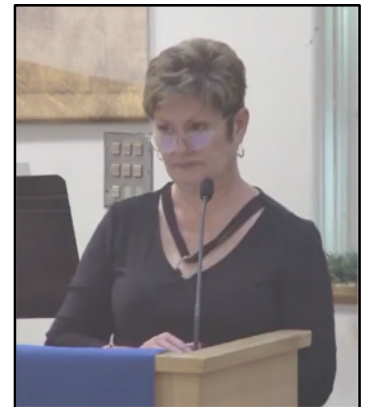
Do you wonder as you watch my face if a wiser one should have had my place?
But I offer all I am for the mercy of your plan. Help me be strong. Help me be.
Help me.

Breath of heaven, hold me together. Be forever near me, Breath of heaven.
Breath of heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness,
for you are holy.

Breath of heaven, lighten my darkness,
pour over me your holiness, for you are holy,

Breath of heaven. lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness,
for you are holy, Breath of heaven. Beath of heaven, Breath of heaven.

Narrator: Have you ever thought of the night that Jesus was born and what it all really means for us? Have you wondered what you would have done if you had been there to witness the birth of the Messiah? Would you have been filled with wonder of the event or fear of the unknown? Joy for the birth? or terror for the change that was sure to come? Would you have been like the Magi and followed that star in the sky to see what was at the end of it? When would you have understood the magnitude of what his birth meant for the world? Could you make a place from this new Messiah in your heart? Would you have made room for Mary and Joseph in your home in they had knocked on your door?



Music

Do You Have Room?

Soloist: Mary Jo Bell

They journey ed far, a weary pair,
they sought for shelter from the cold night air.
A place where she could lay her head,
where she could give her Babe a quiet bed.
Was there no room? No corner there?
in all the town a spot someone could spare?
Was there no soul come to their aid?
A stable bare was where the family stayed.



[Chorus]

Do you have room for the Savior? and do you seek him anew?
 Have you a place for the One who lived and died for you?
 Are you as humble as a shepherd boy, or as wise as men of old?
 Would you have come that night? Would you have sought the light?
 Do you have room?

A star arose, a wondrous light, a sign from God. This was the holy night.
 And yet so few would go to see the babe who came to rescue you and me.
 This child divine is now a King. The gift of life to all the world He brings.
 And all mankind he saves from doom.
 But on that night for Him there was no room

[Chorus]

Will you come tonight? Will you seek the Light? Do you have room?

Narrator: Late in her pregnancy, Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census. It was a long, hard journey that took them several days. When they arrived in the town, they discovered that there was not one room or suitable space for them to stay. One kind innkeeper took pity on them and told them about a small stable that they could use for shelter and rest. It was there, the most humble of all places that Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus, the Messiah, the King of all Kings. This was perhaps not the way we would think He would have entered the world but it symbolizes that Jesus was born for all mankind.

[Mary with baby enters]

Music

You're Here

Soloist: Carmen Pushman

Hold on now, I gotta take a deep breath.
 I don't know what to say when I look in your eyes.
 You made the world before I was born.
 Here I am holding you in my arms tonight.
 Noel, noel, Jesus our Emmanuel.

You're here, and I'm holding you so near.
 I'm staring into the face of my Savior, King an' Creator.
 You could've left us on our own, but you're here.

Someday I'm gonna look back on this,
 The night God became a baby boy



I look at your hands, they're still so small,
Someday you're going to stretch them out and save us all.
Noel, noel, God with us, Emmanuel.

You're here, and I'm holding you so near.
I'm staring into the face of my Savior, King an' Creator.
You could've left us on our own, but you're here, you're here.

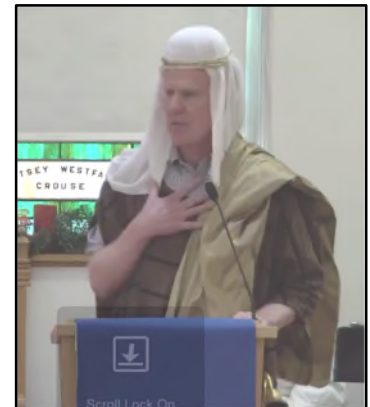
Someday I'm gonna look back on this, the night that God became a baby boy.
Someday you're gonna go home again,
but you'll leave your Spirit and flood the world with joy.

You'll be here, and I'm holding you so near.
I'm staring into the face of my Savior, King an' Creator.
You could've left us on our own, but you're here, you're here.
Hallelujah, you're here, hallelujah, you're here.

[Mary exits and Herod enters]

Narrator: Herod "the Great" ruled as king of Judea under Roman authority and was also called the king of the Jews. He began to hear about this new Messiah that was to be the King and it made him fearful about his stature.

Herod: I must find out more about this Messiah. I am the King of the Jews not him. Am I being replaced? Will others follow this new king and not me?



[Enter Magi (No Gifts)]

Magi 1: "Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

[Magi exit]

Narrator: King Herod was deeply troubled. He feared that the one called Messiah, also called the King of the Jews, would be more powerful than he was. He saw this new King as a threat to him and his rule.



Herod: I need to find out where this Messiah is. I cannot allow Him to challenge my rule.

Narrator: He called together his scholars and priests and asked where this Christ child was to be born. He was not pleased with what they said.

Herod: They told me that the child would be born in Bethlehem in Judea, for the prophet said: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a king who will shepherd my people of Israel. What does this mean? I cannot allow this to happen!

Narrator: Herod was more paranoid than ever and he devised a plan. [enter Magi] He called upon the Magi, Balthazar from Arabia, Melchior from Persia, and Gaspar from India. These Magi (otherwise known as “Wise Men”) were a special class of priests in the Persian Empire that had been around for a long time, at least since Daniel was appointed to be their leader by King Nebuchadnezzar.

They were religious professors, philosophers, and scholars who were highly educated in many fields, including religion, astronomy, and even astrology (which is why they noticed the new bright star in the sky)

Herod spoke to them about the prophecy and the star that had appeared in the East. He needed to know if the prophecy was coming true and that there had indeed been a new King born. He sent them to Bethlehem and said,

Herod: Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report back to me, so that I too may go and worship him.

[Magi and Herod exit]

Narrator: The Magi did not know that Herod was lying to them about why he wanted to know where the child was. He certainly was not looking to worship him but to kill him. He was filled with a great fear about his own power if the prophecy were to come true.

So, they did as they were instructed and set off to find the Messiah. They followed the star that had appeared in the East. Seeing the star shining so brightly over the place where the child lay filled them with joy because it meant hope for salvation in a time of darkness. It was a long journey to Bethlehem but as they traveled along the road, they remained intent on finding the Messiah so

that they could worship Him. They knew that this child was not like any other and so they each brought along a gift that was fitting for the King.

Music Adore

Soloist: May Jo Bell

Countless days on a journey that led so far.
And last night they traveled to follow star.

They did not find a palace,
just a humble village home,
In searching for a king, but finding a child –
no crown, no throne.

Still, they bow down.
Come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him.
O come, let us adore him.

Expectation turned to mystery.
For nothing was like anything they dreamed.

Anticipating the royal
and those honored by this world.
Instead, they gazed in the awestruck eyes
of a lowly peasant girl holding her child.

Come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him.
O come, let us adore him.



The brilliant gold,
the fragrant myrrh, and
the costly frankincense
placed before him.
Come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him.
O come, let us adore him.
Christ the Lord.

Magi 1: I am Balthasar, king of Ethiopia. I have brought the gift for the King. It is called Frankincense. It is obtained from a tree by making an incision in the bark and allowing the gum to flow out. It is used in religious and spiritual rites and is a symbol of holiness and righteousness. When burned, its fragrance is so strong that it is used as a religious offering to signify Christ's sacrifice.

[Turns and places gift at manger and kneels]

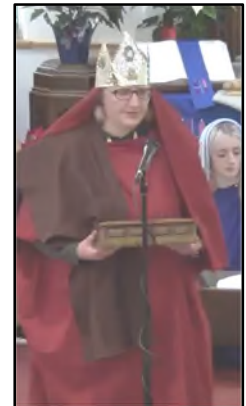


Magi 2: I am Melchior, King of Persia. I have brought the gift of gold to the new Messiah. Gold is beautiful and long lasting. The gift of gold represented Jesus as a king with an everlasting throne. It is symbolic of his divinity and is a treasure befitting royalty.

[Turns and places gift at manger and kneels]

Magi 3: I am Caspar, King of India. I bring the gift of Myrrh to the child. It is collected from a tree much like frankincense. Myrrh was a spice used for medicine, and as an anointing oil. It is mixed into an oil and used to anoint prophets for the divinely appointed work of revealing God and communicating his will and words to his people. It is symbolic, and this gift as an indication of Jesus' humanity.

[Turns and places gift at manger and kneels]



Narrator: The wisemen were in awe of what they had seen, and they were humbled in His presence. As they were on their knees in worship, they felt the magnitude of the work



of God and what the birth of this baby, the Christ child, the Messiah, the Savior, meant for the world.

The Magi played an important role in the beginning of Jesus' life and in the Epiphany, the manifestation of God to the world. Once the Magi were finished in Bethlehem, they prepared to return to Herod and tell him of what they knew about this new Messiah. However, in a dream they were warned about Herod's plan for Jesus. They decided to take another route home to avoid seeing Herod. By doing this act of faith, the Magi spared the life of Jesus and ensured our salvation.

[Magi stand]

Magi 1: I guess we really are "wise men"

Magi 2: Should we sing them the song we wrote on our way here?

Magi 3: I don't know if that's "wise", after all, we haven't rehearsed at all.

Magi 1: Oh c'mon, we can do it. After all, we just deceived evil Herod, saving Jesus and all mankind.

Magi 3: I guess you're right.

Magi 2: Hit it! (Point at booth-all change out crowns for hats)

Music

Wisemen Rap

Singers/Soloists: Charles Kirkpatrick, Mike Sharlow, Sara Williams

Now we're the three kings travelled from afar
we're Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar
we're searching for the king who was prophesied
and now were on the longest ever camel ride

We're the kings who travelled afar

We're riding all night and we're riding all day
we've got to have something to show the way
the prophets have been telling us through history
A star is going to show you where the king will be

We're the kings who travelled afar

He is the one, God's only Son
Now we have come
on our quest to find him
Show us the way by night and by day
Lead us we pray to worship him
He is the One
Hoo!



The world has never seen a king quite like this
He hasn't come for war but to bring us peace
He's come from a line of royalty
and we will be the first in line to bow a knee
We're the kings who travelled afar.



Blessing Having seen the baby Jesus through the message of the Magi, now enter the world with his word in your hearts, his peace in your minds, and his love in your deeds -- for the good of all people. Amen.

