



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

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# Welcome To Worship

January 16, 2023

9:30 a.m.



*Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.*

*"Lighting Our Way" Rev. Trish Eckert*

## ✧ **Prelude: Zo Trembley**

## ✧ **Welcome and community news**

Worship and Ministry Opportunities  
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## ✧ **Readying Ourselves for Worship**

***Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!***  
***Surely God is in this place,***  
***Holy Ground!***

Last Sunday we celebrated Epiphany, and in just six short weeks we will enter the Lenten season. This window of time, according to our liturgical calendar, is called “Ordinary Time,” in which there are no high holy days or celebrations. After Easter, we will enter a much longer stretch of Ordinary Time, until we turn our attention again to Advent and the lead up to Christmas.

This season beckons us to find the sacred in its subtlety. In the introduction to her book, *The Time Between: Cycles and Rhythms in Ordinary Time*, Wendy M. Wright reminds us that the “ordinary” in “Ordinary Time” does not mean “boring, uneventful, undistinguished, every day.” Rather, it “comes from the word ordinal, to count.” With its being a seemingly in-between time, however, Wright observes that this season holds us in a different way than do the seasons “when the beauty of the faith is etched in high relief.” She writes, “I like to think of the entire spectrum of the liturgical cycle of Ordinary Time with all its varied rhythms—of Sunday observance, daily prayer, the holy cycle, the tapestry of stories that dramatize the call and response of Jesus and the first disciples, the seasons of our own discipleship throughout the life cycle, the ritual practice of the great Christian rites, the dynamics of our inner faith lives—as one greater movement of desire to be face-to-face, heart-to-heart with God. The deep grammar of the church year’s Ordinary Time is perhaps uttered most keenly in our ceaseless longing. By it we are propelled into the future. We pine for it as past. We trace the surface of the present with anxious fingertips. Call our desire awareness, mindfulness, mysticism, aesthetic sensitivity, faithfulness, or whatever. It is the fundamental movement of the Christian life.”

As we enter this Ordinary Time, I see a wonderful opportunity to maintain our focus on the star – a star that guides us, that illuminates our journey, that provides a focal point as we discern where we feel led and how we are called to bring our gifts to bear. With that in mind, let us open with a prayerful poem written by Macrina Wiederkehr:

✧ **A Blessing as we Center Ourselves in this Moment**

- Macrina Wiederkehr in *Seasons of Your Heart: Prayers and Reflections*

Creator of the Stars  
God of Epiphanies  
You are the Great Star  
You have marked my path with light  
You have filled my sky with stars  
    naming each star  
    guiding it  
    until it shines into my heart  
    awakening me to deeper seeing  
    new revelations  
    and brighter epiphanies.

And every time I feel the shine  
    I am called  
    to follow it  
    to sing it  
    to live it  
    all the way to the cross  
    and beyond

O Creator of the Stars  
You have become within me  
    an unending Epiphany.

O infinite Star Giver  
I now ask for wisdom and courage  
    to follow these stars  
    for their names are many  
    and my heart is fearful.

They shine on me wherever I go:  
    The Star of Hope  
    The Star of Mercy and  
Compassion  
    The Star of Justice and Peace  
    The Star of Tenderness and Love  
    The Star of Suffering  
    The Star of Joy



✧ **Becoming Present to God and Each Other...Our Check-in**

~ **The Joy of Passing the Peace** ~

✧ **Kid's Time**

✧ **Gathering as God's People: *Guiding Star Along the Journey***

As I mentioned before our opening reading, I see these weeks before the Lenten season as a time for us to consider the gift of the star and how it illuminates our path. We will explore texts that describe how others have navigated their journeys, we will reflect on our own, and we may find opportunities to support one another along the way.



Let us tune into the subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) signs that wash over us in a myriad of ways. How might we be more intentional about watching and listening and opening up to those signs? What practices might we engage in that will equip us to focus our attention on what is showing up and how that shapes how we might show up? May we come to honor what is in front of us, within us, around us, and moving through us.

✧ **Gathering Hymn 353** *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*

✧ **Opening Ourselves to God's Grace**

One: Listen up, everyone! God has given us work to do.

**ALL: God has called each of us before we were even born.**

One: It was God who named us.

**ALL: It is God who claims us.**

One: The light of God's love shines in us.

**ALL: Let's shine God's love into all the world!**

✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

God of the Prophets,  
you are our God, too.  
You spoke to the prophets,  
but your message did not end with them.  
There is still work to be done,  
and we pray to hear your call afresh.  
Help us joyfully claim our role  
as your beloved servants,  
knowing that you provide all that we  
need to do our work.

You walked with us before we were even  
born,  
and you continue to hold us by the hand  
each and every day of our lives.  
We pray with the confidence of those  
who have been filled with your light.  
We pray with the assurance of those  
who have been called into the fellowship  
of this community. Amen.

✧ **Special Music** *Beautiful Day* (Jermaine Edwards) played by Rosie Rain

✧ **Prayer of Intention**

✧ **Bible Wisdom Teaching Psalm 40: 1-11**

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who make the Lord their trust, who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods. You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds, and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you. Were I to proclaim and tell of them, they would be more than can be counted.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Then I said, "Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord.

I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

Do not, O Lord, withhold your mercy from me; let your steadfast love and your faithfulness keep me safe forever.

One: May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

**All: Thanks be to our God.**



✧ **Message *Lighting Our Way*** Rev. Trish Eckert

✧ **Reflection Questions**

- How willing are you to live with questions, with uncertainty, with mystery that lies beyond the answers?
- What questions and uncertainty are you living with right now in your life?
- What mystery are you discovering within yourself and beyond as you live in the part of yourself where the questions are born?



✧ **Short period of silent reflection**

✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom**

✧ **Hymn 123 *Shine, Jesus, Shine***

✧ **Community Prayers, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**ALL: Most compassionate Life-giver,  
may we honor and praise you:  
may we work with you to establish  
your new order of justice, peace and love.  
Give us what we need for growth,  
and help us, through forgiving others, to accept forgiveness.  
Strengthen us in the time of testing,  
that we may resist all evil.  
For all the tenderness,  
strength and love are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.**

### **✧Benediction**

May you know the mystery of open hands.  
May you stretch them out with longing  
and touch the fire of unknowing.  
May they teach you of fullness  
and instruct you in emptiness.  
May you reach toward the holy  
and find yourself  
in your own embrace.  
May you know the mystery of open hands.

*Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.*

### **✧Our Response:**

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your Word lives on in us.***

### **✧Postlude: Zo Trembley**



