

St. Francis Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Narrator – Pastor Katie

Magi One: - Ashby

Magi Two – Shana

Magi Three – John

Angel – Tiffany

Priest - Cindy

Epiphany Celebration: O Come Let us Adore Him

Adapted from Matthew 2: 1-15 (NCV)

Narrator: Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. When Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying...

Magi One: Where is the baby who was born to be King of the Jews?

Magi Two: We saw his star in the east,

Magi Three: And have come to worship him.

Narrator: When King Herod this, he was troubled, as well as the people in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law and asked...

Herod: Where is this Christ child to be born?

Narrator: They answered...

Priest: In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the scriptures: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are important among the tribes of Judah. A ruler will come from you who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel."

Narrator: Then Herod held a secret meeting with the wise men and learned the exact time they first saw the star. He sent the wise men to Bethlehem, saying...

Herod: Look carefully for the child. When you find him, come and tell me so I can worship him too.

Narrator: After the wise men had heard the king, they left. The star that they had seen in the east went before them...

Magi One: Until it stopped above the place where the young child was.

Narrator: When the wise men saw the star, they stopped...

Magi Two: and we were filled with great joy!

Narrator: They came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother.

Magi Three: And we bowed down and worshipped him.

Narrator: And when they had opened their gifts, they gave him precious treasures:

Magi One: Gold,

Magi Two: And frankincense,

Magi Three: And myrrh.

Narrator: But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their own country by a different way. After they left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream and said...

Angel: Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, because Herod is starting to look for the child, so he can kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return.

Narrator: After Joseph woke, he gathered Mary and Jesus and led them to Egypt, where they remained until King Herod's death. This happened to bring about what the Lord said through the prophet: "I called my son out of Egypt."

In Jesus we receive the light of the world. We will now light the Christ candle

Angel lights the candle

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² 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 light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And 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.

Eternal Light

Meg: "Look Mommy, this is Baby Jesus and I'm the star!"

"Arise, shine, for your light has come!"

The light of this special star has inspired young and old for generations. A star so bright and big, that it stood out in the night sky. A star that told wise ones from far-away lands that a new king was born. Not an ordinary King, but a special one who was blessed by the heavens above. And so these wise ones began a journey following this special star, guided by its brilliant light. Followed it all the way to Bethlehem.

Every year, we return to this ancient stories. Perhaps we want to be like those who followed the star... to be willing to travel to faraway lands with only faith to guide us.

The star of Bethlehem reminds us that God's love is for all people, of all races, of all kingdoms. You and I do not have exclusive rights to God's love or to God's light. God loves everybody in the world just as much as God loves you and me. And the light shines bright over us all... guiding us in faith,

And we seek the light. We would like God to eliminate the dark, depressing times of life. But God never promised to take away our darkness; the dark times help us to appreciate the times spent in the light. God did promise was to give us light, a light in the midst of darkness, and God's light helps us live in this dark world.

And, it can be a very dark world. The prophet Isaiah said, "Darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness shall blanket the earth." Life continues to be overwhelmingly dark, especially at some horrible moments of our history. So we light our little candles of hope and they are so fragile and so easily blown out. One accident, one bad diagnosis, one act of war and then we find ourselves stranded in darkness.

After the Wise Ones leave, darkness covers the land. Herod is so afraid of a new king who might replace him, that he slaughters all of the innocent babies in the region around Bethlehem. And his act of violence is only one of many that the representatives of the Roman Empire inflict on the people. That baby boy grows up in times of violence and cruelty that most of us cannot imagine. And yet, despite it all... the ray of light found in the star continued to shine... and it still shines today.

There is one light that never goes out. There is one light that always shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. There is one light that guides us by day and night. "I am the light of the world," Jesus tells us. And today we are reminded that "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it."

The light that shines brighter than even the Bethlehem star.

The light of God has already come to your life and shines bright, guiding us wherever we go.

And so now, the choice is up to us. Will we be guided by the light of the star, willing to follow it wherever it leads us? Will we join together with those pilgrims who try to follow the light, even when we know that they come from different places and view the world in different ways? Or will we be more like Herod, who never looks up to the sky to see the light that is shining bright. He is so focused on holding on to his own power and well-being that he misses out on the opportunity to follow the one sent to us by God.

We are all on a journey. Those wise ones who lived so long ago took the risk to follow a star. I wonder if Joseph followed that same star as he took his small family to a new, refugees seeking sanctuary from a tyrannical government.

We are called to follow some sort of guiding light. We may be unsure of the route or the exact destination, but if we have faith we will arrive where we are supposed to be. The light will guide us. We bring whatever gifts we have been given, ready to lay them at the feet of Jesus. We hope that the gifts we have, as small as they may seem to be, can be shared to build a better world.

Installation of the Consistory

Greeting

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Jesus Christ, the head of the church in heaven and on earth. To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction

Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby a local church of the United Church of Christ recognizes the diverse gifts of its members and celebrates the ministry of each person in the life of the church or in various settings in the life of the world. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to each of us for our service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. Christ is like a single body, which has many parts. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

Presentation

These people have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of this church, to serve among us as our church officers and Council. They have accepted their call and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Ashby Haines & Gloria Nethkin

Shana Clark, Hannah Matthews, Doug Myers, Sue Myers, Debra Persinger, Sandy Sanders

Covenant

addressing the people being affirmed

Siblings in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for service as a Consistory member in the ministry of this church, whether gathered or scattered.

Having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministry, are you prepared to serve with the help of God in Christ's name and for the glory of God?

I am.

Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ?

I do, relying on God's grace.

Members of this household of faith, you have heard the promises of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them. Will those who are able rise and witness to the commitment we now make?

All who are able stand.

***Congregational Response**

We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

Laying on Of Hands

The laying on of hands is the symbolic act whereby the church in every age recognizes God's call to ministry in the lives of faithful women and men and asks the Holy Spirit to confer upon them the gifts of ministry. We lay hands upon you, Ashby Haines and Gloria Nethkin, as you embark on a new calling for this congregation.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen you for the ministry of elder in Christ's church and equip you with everything good to do God's will. Receive authority to execute the office of elder in the name of Christ.

Amen.

Prayer

Let us pray,

Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this household of faith and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united in Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

Declaration

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the people of Trinity United Church of Christ, I rejoice to announce: You are hereby installed in your respective positions.

Greeting of Christian Love

In accordance with the faith and order of this church, I extend to you the greeting of Christian love.

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Invitation

This is the table of Christ—
where strangers become friends,
where seekers find the One they seek,
where the gifts of heaven are given freely to all.
Come, not because you must, but because you are invited.
Come, not because you are worthy, but because Christ is worthy.

***Hymn of Preparation**

Great Thanksgiving

We Tell the Story

Prayer of Consecration

Come, Holy Spirit,
shine upon these gifts of bread and wine,
and upon us who gather here.
Make this meal for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be light-bearers in the world You love.
Amen.

We Share the Meal

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer