

CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY

3 JANUARY 2021

“A good journey begins with knowing where you are and being willing to go somewhere else.”

Richard Rohr



Isaiah 60...

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice.

Opening Prayer

God of all creation -
Be with each one of us,
***as growth, creativity and healing,
as light and wisdom.***

Spirit of the living God -
Live within our community,
***giving courage to dispel fear,
and resolve conflict,
giving fire to inflame with love.***

Spirit of Peace -
Dwell with us so that we may
***know your presence in silences and stillness,
know your vision for your people.***

Spirit of Love and Power -
Open our living to your power, so we may
***open ourselves to the joy and pain of others
open ourselves to justice truth and freedom.***
(Pause)

***God of all creation
Come into our bodies,
and your body, the church
making us your new creation.***

The Candle Song

Like a candle flame
Flickering small in our darkness
Uncreated light
Shines through infant eyes

*God is with us, alleluia
Come to save us, alleluia*

Stars and angels sing
Yet the earth sleeps in shadows
Can this tiny spark
Set a world on fire?

Yet his light shall shine
From our lives, Spirit blazing
As we touch the flame
Of his holy fire

*Graham Kendrick
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Epiphany

a moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation...?

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING WORD

The Gospel According to Matthew 2:1-12 The Visit of the Wise Men

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶ "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

REFLECTION

Together in Song 314

As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright:
so, most gracious God, may we
evermore your glory see.

As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to your lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
one whom heaven and earth
adore:
so may we with willing feet
ever seek your mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
at your cradle rough and bare:
so may we with holy joy,
pure, and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly
King.

In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light:
you its light, its joy, its crown,
you its sun that goes not down.
There for ever may we sing
Hallelujahs to our King.

(Tune: Together in Song 598)

We do not look for angel choirs
or visions in the sky,
but simply pray that peace on earth
comes nearer through the Christ
child's birth
in Bethlehem for us,
in Bethlehem for us.

We do not look for frankincense
or wise ones at our door,
but simply ask our prayers be heard
and that our restless hearts be stirred
by Jesus' newborn cry,
by Jesus' newborn cry.

We will not rest until we know
that God makes all things new;
until our search for answered prayer
transforms the lives of all who dare
to put their trust in you,
to put their trust in you.

But still you send us songs of peace
and wisdom whispers near.
You call us to the way of Christ,
that in our living hope will rise
from Bethlehem to here,
from Bethlehem to here.

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RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES

'Light of the world', shine in our darkness today.
(Silence)

Where there is pain and sorrow
May the brilliance of your love bring joy.
(Silence)

Where there is sickness and suffering,
May sunshine come after the storm.
(Silence)

Where there is greed and corruption,
May your radiance scatter the shadows.
(Silence)

Where there is hatred and bitterness,
May your brightness dispel the clouds.
(Silence)

(Candle prayers)

**Jesus, light of the world,
rise again upon us we pray,
and illuminate the darkness of this world
through your life-giving grace. Amen**

The Disciples' Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily
bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Save us from the time of
trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.**

Will you come and see the light from the stable door?
It is shining newly bright, though it shone before.
It will be your guiding star; it will show you who you are.
Will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you step into the light that can free the slave?
It will stand for what is right, it will heal and save.
By the pyramids of greed there's a longing to be freed.
Will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you tell about the light in the prison cell?
Though it's shackled out of sight, it is shining well.
When the truth is cut and bruised, and the innocent abused,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you join the hope, alive in a young girl's eyes,
of the mighty put to flight by a baby's cries?
When the lowest and the least are the foremost at the feast,
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

Will you travel by the light of the babe new born?
In the candle lit at night there's a gleam of dawn,
and the darkness all about is too dim to put it out:
will you hide, or decide to meet the light?

*Brian Wren Words © 1993 Hope Publishing Company,
David Haas*

A Christmas Blessing (Together in Song 779)

May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.

May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.

May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.

May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.

*Words: A. W. Podlich
Music: Robin Mann*

