

WELCOME

Pastor Malcolm Stranathan

PRELUDE

"The First Noel"

arr. Hopson

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: O Star-flinging God, whose light dances across eternity,

Dazzle us into your presence this new year.

Open our hearts to the mystery of your love.

Awaken us to your presence, knit to the ordinary.

Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present.

Heal us, that we might be healers.

Reconcile us to you and to ourselves, that our living might be reconciling.

All: Stop us often, we pray with news that is good, with hope that holds, with truth that transforms, with a Word tailored to this trail we're on. May the word of your grace guide our steps like the sun by day and the north star by night, as we travel into the gift of a new year.

Amen. — written by Glenn Mitchell

HYMN

"Angels From the Realms of Glory" vs 1-3

UMH 220, insert pg 5

KIDS' TIME

Jacki Stranathan

GATHERING PRAYER

Invitation to prayer: The Prophet Isaiah declared, "Arise, Shine, for your light has come, the Glory of the Lord has risen upon us." (Isaiah 60:1) The story is out! Jesus Christ, Light of the World has been born to dispel the darkness that covers its people. God's glory appears in human form. Life on earth will never be the same again! Let us pray our gathering prayer.

Congregational prayer: Holy God, the star that led the Magi to the stable announced to the world that its Savior was born. Today we live in a world that is still covered by darkness, and still needing to make that journey to the stable door. May our lives reflect your light day by day, as we seek to serve where you have placed us. That we might be the means through which others can encounter Jesus Christ. Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER / COMMUNITY PRAYER / LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor Malcolm Stranathan

GOD'S WORD IS READ

Retelling Matthew 2:1-18

Nancy Coats

Retelling the Story Series by Russ Ramsey

HOMILY

"Let Us Become Wise"

Pastor Malcolm Stranathan

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Prayer of confession

Leader: You are the everything we desire, the everything we do not deserve. You are the love we have yet to find, the peace beyond imagining. You are the breath of life enlivening the hardest heart. You are the vibrant color illuminating the darkest dawn. You are the truth that calls in quiet whisper and through storm.

You are the precious moment we reach out and touch the divine.

For those days when we forget, **forgive us.**

When life distracts and focus shifts, **forgive us.**

When self imposes its own will, **forgive us.**

When our praise and worship fail to please, **forgive us.**

Embrace us once again, we pray in sweet and loving fellowship with you.

(moment for silent confession)

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Glory to God. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty (almighty God), creator of heaven and earth. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our

sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation. You sent a star to guide wise men to where the Christ was born; and in your signs and witnesses, in every age and through all the world, you have led your people from far places to his light. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

arr. Whipple

*(v4) For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now angels sing.*

Those at home are invited to mail your offering to our church P.O. Box for financial mailings:
Westminster UMC, P.O. Box 2316, Westminster, MD 21158-2316, or text your offering: 844-
307-2876,

or pay online at www.wumcmd.org, or scan the QR code in the announcements. Thank you.

THE INVITATION TO BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE STUDY Pastor Malcolm Stranathan

HYMN

"Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow"

FWS 2096, insert pg 6

SENDING FORTH

Pastor Malcolm Stranathan

POSTLUDE

"Three Kings"

arr. Harris