



**St. Andrew
Presbyterian Church
of Aptos**

Rev. Anne McAnelly, Pastor
Dr. Don Adkins, Music Director

9850 Monroe Avenue
Aptos CA 95003
Phone 831 688-4211
aptospres@gmail.com
www.aptospresbyterianchurch.org

10:30 A.M.

✠ Sunday after Christmas ✠
Persia: A Place of Return

December 29, 2024

WE SET OFF

** Please stand in body or in spirit.*

*GATHERING SONG *What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright*

GtG 152

What star is this, with beams so bright,
more lovely than the noonday light?
'Tis sent to announce a newborn king,
glad tidings of our God to bring.

'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed,
"From Jacob shall a star proceed;"
and lo! the eastern sages stand
to read in heaven the Lord's command.

While outward signs the star displays,
an inward light the Lord conveys
and urges them, with tender might,
to seek the giver of the light.

O Jesus, while the star of grace
impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts
refuse the guidance of your light to use.

A WORD OF WELCOME AND RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP

LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY (*Sung by all*)

Led by Nancy Samsel

**O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.**

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

The journey continues, and the light remains.

We have been changed on this journey.

We have journeyed from grand to humble places in search of Good News.

We are a people who believe that Good News resides in every place.

The milestones and markers of hope, peace, joy, and love
have guided us along the way.

God's light continues to go before us, we are never alone.

We re on our way
We re on our way
Dream of the day
When hope holds sway
With all the earth
In all our hearts
We re on our way
This is the day.

OPENING PRAYER AND WORDS OF ASSURANCE

THE PEACE

*HYMN

We Three Kings

GtG #151

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising gladly raising, worshiping God Most High. (Refrain)

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. (Refrain)

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice:
Alleluia! Alleluia! sounds through the earth and skies. (Refrain)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Sharing Joys and Concerns

Song of prayer: Prepare the Way of the Lord (GtG 95 2x)

Travel the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord.

And all people will see the salvation of our God.

Prayers lifted to God

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE PLACE AND ITS MESSAGE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (*unison*)

Heavenly Father, as the wise men followed the star's guiding light to find the Christ child, so guide us with your Holy Spirit to seek and discover your truth in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to receive your wisdom, that we may see the world through your eyes and follow your path with unwavering faith. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Psalm 72:1-7

OT page #533

Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.

May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

NT page# 1-2

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler

who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SERMON

Persia- A Place of Return

The Rev. Anne McAnelly

WHAT WE SEE CHANGES US

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (unison)

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen.

OFFERING: Gifts along the way

Doxology (unison) Tune, Away in a Manger

Praise God for these gifts that we offer today
and bless them for good in the world, this we pray.
Praise Jesus, the Christ-Child, our Hope and our Stay,
the Spirit, our Keeper, our Guide on the Way.

MOVING ON

*HYMN

Go Tell It on the Mountain

GtG#136

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (Refrain)

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (Refrain)

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)

BENEDICTION

Choral response after Benediction (*unison*)

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray,
cast our out fear, and draw us near; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

We're on our way
We're on our way
Dream of the day
When hope holds sway
With all the earth
In all our hearts
We're on our way
This is the day.

The service of worship ends, the service of neighbor and world begins!

TODAY'S WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

LITURGIST:	Nancy Samsel
GREETER:	Michele Pomroy
COFFEE HOST:	Michele Pomroy
COUNTER:	Janet Maack

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will be starting our next study on January 6 at 1:00 on Zoom. We will be looking at the Horizon's study on Justice. The title is Let Justice Roll Down God's Call to Care For Neighbors and All Creation. I hope you can join us in the new year as we look at ways to care for our world and each other.

**The office will be closed through January 1st
Happy New Year!!**

