

# *The Worship of God*

Fayetteville First United Methodist Church  
EPIPHANY SUNDAY | JANUARY 1, 2023

## WELCOME TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Martin  
Senior Minister

## MUSIC OF PREPARATION

Mr. Justin Maxey  
Director of Music & Organist

## OPENING PRAYER

The Rev. Allyson Lawrence and **People**  
Associate Minister

O God, Searcher of all our hearts, you have formed us as a people and claimed us for your own. As we come to acknowledge your sovereignty and grace and to enter anew into covenant with you, reveal any reluctance or falsehood within us. Let your Spirit impress your truth on our inmost being and receive us in mercy, for the sake of our Mediator, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

David Tripp, England, 20th century

## \*HYMN 254

### We Three Kings

KINGS OF ORIENT

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

#### Refrain:

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

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

*Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on 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]*

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Dr. Martin and **People**

Offer one another signs of reconciliation and love:  
"The peace of Christ be with you." **"And also with you."**

## A LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Dr. Martin and **People**

Let us give thanks for all of God's mercies.

O God, our Covenant Friend, you have been gracious to us through all the years of our lives. We thank you for your loving care, which has filled our days and brought us to this time and place.

**We praise your holy name, O God.**

You have given us life and reason, and set us in a world filled with your glory. You have comforted us with family and friends, and ministered to us through the hands of our sisters and brothers.

**We praise your holy name, O God.**

You have filled our hearts with a hunger after you, and have given us your peace. You have redeemed us, and called us to a high calling in Christ Jesus. You have given us a place in the fellowship of your Spirit and the witness of your Church.

**We praise your holy name, O God.**

You have been our light in darkness and a rock of strength in adversity and temptation. You have been the very Spirit of joy in our joys and the all-sufficient reward in all our labors.

**We praise your holy name, O God.**

You remembered us when we forgot you. You followed us even when we tried to flee from you. You met us with forgiveness when we returned to you. For all your patience and overflowing grace.

**We praise your holy name, O God.**

## PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Rev. Lawrence and **People**

**Lord, open our hearts and minds  
by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
that, as the Scriptures are read  
and your Word proclaimed,  
we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.**

## FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Rev. Lawrence and **People**

<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

May God bless the hearing of this scripture.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Children are invited to return to seats.  
No Wonders of Worship today as we celebrate Communion together.  
The nursery is available for infants through 3 years.*

**\*GOSPEL READING**

John 15:1-8

Rev. Lawrence and **People**

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.*

May God bless the hearing of this scripture.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

Dr. Martin

**WESLEY'S COVENANT SERVICE**

**COVENANT OF RENEWAL**

Dr. Martin

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and consecrated to God. Through baptism, we have entered this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator. He sealed it with his own blood, that it might last for ever. On the one side, God promises to give us new life in Christ, the Source and Perfecter of our faith. On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves but only for Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

From time to time we renew our covenant with God, especially when we reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant and gather at the Lord's table.

Today, however, we meet, as the generations before us have met, to renew the covenant that binds us to God. Let us make this covenant of God our own.

**INVITATION**

Dr. Martin and **People**

Commit yourselves to Christ as his servants. Give yourselves to him, that you may belong to him. Christ has many services to be done. Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves. But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Let us, therefore, go to Christ, and pray:

**Let me be your servant, under your command. I will no longer be my own.  
I will give up myself to your will in all things.**

Be satisfied that Christ shall give you your place and work.

**Lord, make me what you will. I put myself fully into your hands:**

**put me to doing, put me to suffering,  
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,  
let me be full, let me be empty,  
let me have all things, let me have nothing.**

**I freely and with a willing heart  
give it all to your pleasure and disposal.**

Christ will be the Savior of none but his servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. Christ will have no servants except by consent; Christ will not accept anything except full consent to all that he requires. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing.

Confirm this by a holy covenant.

To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these admonitions:

First, set apart some time, more than once, to be spent alone before the Lord; in seeking earnestly God's special assistance and gracious acceptance of you; in carefully thinking through all the conditions of the covenant; in searching your hearts whether you have already freely given your life to Christ.

Consider what your sins are. Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, strict, and spiritual they are, and whether you, after having carefully considered them, are willing to choose them all. Be sure you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.

Second, be serious and in a spirit of holy awe and reverence.

Third, claim God's covenant, rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength, so you can keep your promise. Trust not your own strength and power.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful. You have given to the Lord your hearts, you have opened your mouths to the Lord, and you have dedicated yourself to God. With God's power, never go back.

And last, be then prepared to renew your covenant with the Lord. Fall down on your knees, lift your hands toward heaven, open your hearts to the Lord, as we pray:

### **COVENANT PRAYER**

**O righteous God, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, see me as I fall down before you.  
Forgive my unfaithfulness in not having done your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I  
turn to you with my whole heart.**

God requires that you shall put away all your idols.

**I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with you that no known sin  
shall be allowed in my life. Against your will, I have turned my love toward the world.**

**In your power I will watch all temptations that will lead me away from you.  
For my own righteousness is riddled with sin, unable to stand before you.**

**Through Christ, God has offered to be your God again if you would let him.**

**Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God.  
I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion and vow to give up myself, body and soul,  
as your servant to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.**

**God has given the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way and means of coming to God.**

**Jesus, I do here on bended knees accept Christ as the only new and living Way and sincerely join myself in a covenant with him. O blessed Jesus, I come to you, hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of your servants. I do here, with all my power, accept you as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own worthiness and vow that you are the Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom and take you for my only guide. I renounce my own will and take your will as my law.**

**Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.**

**I do here covenant with you, O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall. Through your grace I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you.**

**God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.**

**I do here willingly put my neck under your yoke, to carry your burden. All your laws are holy, just, and good. I therefore take them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that I will strive to order my whole life according to your direction, and not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.**

**The almighty God searches and knows your heart.**

**O God, you know that I make this covenant with you today without guile or reservation. If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it aright.**

**And now, glory be to you, O God the Father, whom I from this day forward shall look upon as my God and Father. Glory be to you, O God the Son, who have loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood, and now is my Savior and Redeemer.**

**Glory be to you, O God the Holy Spirit, who by your almighty power have turned my heart from sin to God.**

**O mighty God, the Lord Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Friend. And I, through your infinite grace, have become your covenant servant. So be it.**

**And let the covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven.  
Amen.**

You are advised to make this covenant not only in your heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Dr. Martin

## OFFERTORY

Mr. Maxey

## \*DOXOLOGY

GREENSLEEVES

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

## A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

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, creator of heaven and earth.

... And so,  
with your people on earth  
and all the company of heaven  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might. heav'n and earth are full of your

8 glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the high-est, ho - san-na in the high-est. Blest is he who comes in the

15 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high-est, ho - san-na in the high-est.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

... 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.



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,  
now and for ever.



And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:





## HOLY COMMUNION

Gluten-free elements are available upon request at the chancel.

*You are invited to contribute to the Benevolence Fund by leaving an offering on the chancel rail. These funds are used to assist those in need.*

### \*HYMN 606

*Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine*

KINGSFOLD

### \*BENEDICTION

Dr. Martin

*May the peace of Christ go with you wherever He may send you.  
May He guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.  
May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you.  
May He bring you home rejoicing once again into our arms.*

### \*POSTLUDE

Mr. Maxey

\*Please stand in body or spirit.

Congregational responses are in **bold type**.

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#### Please remember in your prayers:

Van Askew  
Nancy Byers  
Richard Clayton  
Karen Davis

Martha Hale  
Don Harp  
Tangie Hubbard  
Cindy Jennings

Sara Johnston  
Doris Kerlin  
Claudia Rhodes  
Tom Starling

Brenda Tierman  
Helen Voyles  
Mabel Wilbanks

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AA Meetings: Sundays 3 PM; Mondays 7 PM;  
Wednesdays through Saturdays 7 PM  
NA Meeting: Thursdays and Saturdays 7 PM

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GIVING



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