**WORSHIP GUIDE FOR JANUARY 3, 2021**

**GATHERING MUSIC - Dana Moody**

**THE MORNING WELCOME - Dr. Tim Hazlett**

**CENTERING PRAYER (in unison)**

**Eternal God, you have placed us in a world of space and time, and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love.**

**Grant that in the new year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event that gives us joy forever – the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC “Heirlooms” - Lori Hazlett**

**A PRAYER OF CONFESSION (responsively) - Monica Whitehurst**

L:We come as your faithful to Bethlehem, O God, and gather in awe around the manger of the Christ child.

**P: We look with thanksgiving at this gift of love and unlimited possibilities.**

L: And yet ... and yet ... we pause in our wondering and ponder the manger without the baby. We think of the times in the past year when our lives have felt a bit like the straw before us ... dried out, used up, empty.  
 **P: Let it be that into this emptiness, the Christ child comes.**

L: Let the straw be of freshly cut hay, providing a place for new beginnings, a new life, a whole new year.

**P: Let it be that we are the ones to put the baby back.**

L: And let it be that we are the ones to catch a vision of the new life possible when we share this baby born in Bethlehem.

**P: Let it be that we are the ones to let Christ loose in our lives that others might be found. We pray in the name of the one who came that we might know what a life of love looks like, Jesus, the Christ, the baby in the manger. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING**  **Titus 3:4-8**

God our Savior showed us how good and kind he is. He saved us because of his mercy, and not because of any good things that we have done.

God washed us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He gave us new birth and a fresh beginning.  
God sent Jesus Christ our Savior to give us his Spirit.

Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life.

This message is certainly true.

**SERMON “Away from the Manger” - Dr. Tim Hazlett**

**THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

L: As we gather here today in the sight of God to join in Holy Communion; both in- person and on Facebook Live; we acknowledge that even though we are a screen width apart; the God of all creation is not beholden to the bounds of time or place.

God transcends our physical distances and parts the veil between us, so that we may be together in this holy space. Through God and the mystery of Holy Communion, we become one creation, one body, one church. Join with me now in acknowledging our togetherness.

**P: Together, we share a table of enormous size; it begins here at the Lord’s Table and extends to the tables found within our own homes.**

L: At the wedding feast, when the table was emptied of its wine, we remember what Jesus proclaimed; “My time has not yet come.” Yet persuaded by his beloved mother Mary, he turned water into wine. I ask you who are worshipping with us on Facebook Live to go now and collect what elements you desire to serve as your bread and fruit of the vine, knowing that prevenient grace will justify your choices in the sight of God.

**MUSICAL INTERLUDE - Dana Moody**

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

L: God is with you.

**P: It is good to be joyful as we give thanks to You, Holy God.**

L: 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. Therefore, with joy, and with all of Creation, we proclaim:

**P: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Power and Grace,**

**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**

L: You are Holy God, and blessed is your Child Jesus. Your Spirit descended upon him so that he could:

proclaim good news to the poor,

heal the sick,

feed the hungry,

cavort with sinners,

and liberate the captive.

His life gave birth to the church through a new covenant

one born out the Holy Spirit

whose power dwells within us today.

On the night in which he gave himself over, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, God, and said, “take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

After dinner, he took the cup, gave thanks, and said, “This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many. Drink from it in remembrance of me.”

In remembering the mighty acts of Jesus, we offer ourselves as a living witness

proclaiming the mystery of faith:

**P: Christ has died;**

**Christ is risen;**

**Christ will come again.**

L: Pour out your Spirit on all those gathered together in this Holy space, and on the gift of these elements. Make them be for us the body and blood of Jesus Christ,

that we may be the body of Christ for the world. Your Spirit makes us one with Christ and one with each other. It binds, blends, and multiplies us, as we minister to the world, as one beloved community of faith singing your praises on Earth and in Heaven until Christ comes again, and we feast at the divine table in perfect harmony. All honor and glory are yours God, now and forever.

**P: Amen.**

**THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP**

[**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are worshipping with us in-person this morning you will be given the elements upon exiting the building. Do not partake of them until you are outdoors or in your car. If you are worshipping with us on Facebook Live you may partake of the elements as you are directed by the following:]

L: This bread is made from many grains from many fields, yet was formed into a single loaf. Because there is one God; we, though many, and in many places, are one body. Join us as we partake in the body of Christ, in remembrance of him.

*[Tear off a piece of bread and hold it up.]*

The Body of Christ given for you.

*[Facebook Live Participants may now eat it.]*

This fruit of the vine is made by many hands, from many places, yet pours freely.

*[Hold the cup up in front of the camera.]*

Join us as we share in this blessing of the cup of the new covenant. The cup of blessing poured out for you and for all.

*[Facebook Live Participants may now drink]*

**MEDITATIVE HYMN “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”**

***[NOTE: If you are worshiping with us in-person please refrain from singing; humming or a time of meditative silence is permissible. If you are at home on Facebook Live you may sing.]***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CLOSING PRAYER (responsively) - Monica Whitehurst**

L: Let us look for Christ wherever we go.

**P: Let us never stop seeking,**

**Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness**

**Which the darkness shall not overcome**

L: And may the love of the Creator

The joy of the Spirit

And the peace of the Christ-child

Be with you this New Year, and evermore.

**P: Amen.**

**POSTLUDE - Dana Moody**