

BLACKSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE LORD'S DAY

JANUARY 7, 2024

Epiphany

We are a community that welcomes all.
We are committed to experiencing beautiful worship,
nurturing lifelong growth,
and pursuing justice and love in the world.



Pastor - Rev. Sarah Wiles
Director of Music & Organist - Alice Brooks Sanders
Director of Children & Youth Ministries - Susan Hunter
Coordinator of Church Life - Sarah Windes
Office Manager - Rhonda Waller
Parish Associate - Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter

❖ GATHERING AROUND THE WORD ❖

Thought for Meditation: “The moon looks wonderful in this warm evening light, just as a candle flame looks beautiful in the light of morning. Light within light . . . It seems to me to be a metaphor for the human soul, the singular light within that great general light of existence.” — Marilynne Robinson

Prelude: “Cold December Flies Away”

Catalan Carol
set by John Ferguson

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Sarah Wiles

Centering Music: “Raise a Song of Gladness”

Raise a song of gladness, peoples of the earth.
Christ has come, bringing peace, joy to every heart.
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!

JUBILATE DEO

❖ **Call to Worship**

Isaac Wiles

Grace and peace be with you. **And also with you.**
This is the day the Lord has made. **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

The shepherds saw shimmering messengers in the skies,
the wise ones discovered a new star of joy and wonder,
and even today the same light shines in the darkness.

For the Creator of the cosmos
both light and dark are holy.

**We can treasure the darkness,
even as we welcome the light.
It is in the darkness that life begins —
deep in the soil, safe in the womb.
It is in the darkness that we can see light.**

Come, friends, let us give thanks
for both night and day.

❖ **Hymn 152:** “What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright”

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

**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.**

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Holy One,
we say that you are here,
that Love has come in the flesh,
that there is nowhere beyond your sparks of glory.

**But honestly, we doubt it.
So we don't look for you in every face,
every corner of creation,
every crevice of our hearts.**

We doubt you're really there —
**in our brokenness,
in our shame,
in our fear.**

(Silent prayer)

Amen

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear and trust the good news: by grace our sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

Grateful Response: "Love Has Come"

BRING A TORCH
Hymn 110, v. 3

**Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!**

❖ Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

(Worshippers may exchange signs of God's peace, and children may come forward for a time of sharing faith together.)

❖ HEARING THE WORD ❖

Sharing Faith with Children

Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter

(Children in 1st grade age and up are invited to remain in the sanctuary. Children in kindergarten or younger may stay in the sanctuary or go downstairs to God's Garden or the nursery for nurturing and care. Please complete a sign-in sticker for each child.)

Prayer for Illumination

Source of Life, Breath of Forgiveness, Ever-Present Spirit,
**open our eyes,
so that we can see your world
as if for the first time.**

We often approach you with analysis and logic,
wanting everything to make sense.

**For just a moment,
help us put those instincts on pause.
Give us space in our spirits to be astonished.
Help us greet these words with wonder and gratitude.
Keep us curious about what they might do
in our hearts and our lives. Amen.**

Scripture

In the beginning there was the Word;
the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God.

The Word was present to God from the beginning.

Through the Word all things came into being,
and apart from the Word nothing came into being.

John 1:1-5, 14
The Inclusive Bible

In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light –

**a Light that shines in the darkness,
a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.**

**And the Word became flesh
and stayed for a little while among us;
we saw the Word's glory –
the favor and position a parent gives an only child –
filled with grace,
filled with truth.**

For the Spirit of Wisdom in scripture, among us, within us,
thanks be to God.

Sermon: In the Beginning

Rev. Sarah Wiles

Music: "This Little Light of Mine"

African-American Spiritual

1 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (*sing 3 times*)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

2 Won't let no one blow it out...

3 Out in the dark...

4 I've got the light of love...

5 Everywhere I go...

Call to Offering

Offertory: "Morning Star, How Fair and Bright"

Moravian hymn
arr. Michael Burkhardt

❖ **Doxology:** "Angels, from the Realms of Glory"

REGENT SQUARE

**All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king!**

Hymn 143, v. 4

❖ **Prayer of Dedication**

Celebration of Communion

Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter & Rev. Sarah Wiles

(All are welcome at Christ's table. Use the center aisle to reach a station in the front of the sanctuary and return by the side aisle to your seat. Gluten-free bread is available at the center station in front. If you need to remain seated, the elements will be brought to you.)

❖ **Hymn of the Table:** "Come to the Table of Grace"

TABLE OF GRACE

Hymn 507

**1 Come to the table of grace.
Come to the table of grace.
This is God's table; it's not yours or mine.
Come to the table of grace.**

2 Come to the table of peace...

3 Come to the table of love...

4 Come to the table of hope...

5 Come to the table of joy...

Invitation to the Feast and Receiving of Star Words

Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

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.

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Prayer After Supper

✠ BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD ✠

❖ Hymn 110: "Love Has Come"

BRING A TORCH

Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.

❖ Benediction

Postlude: "Jesus, What a Wonderful Child"

set by Mark Hayes



Citations: Prayer of Illumination adapted from Rev. Sarah Speed, sanctifiedart.org. Scripture adapted from The Inclusive Bible. Photo: Abernathy children on front line leading the Selma to Montgomery March for the right to vote, March 1965 (Abernathy Family, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons). Music note: "This Little Light of Mine" is an African-American spiritual from the 1920s. The origin of the song is unclear, but it has a long history as a song of protest. John and Alan Lomax made the earliest known recordings in 1934 and 1939 at prisons in Huntsville, TX, where it was sung by Jim Boyd and Doris McMurray, both of whom were incarcerated. It was later adapted by Zilphia Horton for use in the Civil Rights movement. Rutha Mae Harris, one of the four original freedom singers from Georgia, said the song "helped steady protestors' nerves as abusive police officers threatened to beat them or worse." Music: used with permission under One License #A-701634. All rights reserved.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

This is a space for everyone. No matter who you are, no matter what your story is, no matter what--you are welcome here. May this be a time where your breathing slows, your heart opens, and you connect with the Holy One. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to explore some of what happens in the life of this community.

Serving: Church Opener: Brian Smith

Ushers: Chris Lawrence, Heidi Swartzwelder, Reed or Ella Lawrence, and Marcia Parks

Nursery and God's Garden Sign-in Stickers (one per child): Complete information about each child and parent(s) on the sign-in sticker.

Headsets for the hard of hearing are available. Speak to an usher to use them for the worship service.

You can send prayer requests for Prayers of the People in Sunday worship and/or to be added to the *MidWeek Update* and website prayer list to Rhonda at (rhonda@blacksburgpres.org).



Text or QR Code to Give: To give by text, send keyword **bpcva** and an amount to phone number 77977 (e.g., bpcva 20). If it is your first time, there will be a brief registration process. To give via QR code, use the camera app on your phone and follow instructions. Thank you for your support of BPC's ministry.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



New Weekly Adult Education Class

Bread of Life, Finding Community in the Gospel of John, Sundays, 9:00am, WM. Led by Anna Bach, Linda King, and Pastors Emily and Sarah.



To Our House (TOH) provides winter shelter for unhoused adults in the NRV and connects them with resources that lead to employment, housing, and long-term economic sustainability. Many of the guests who have found shelter through TOH have previously lived in the woods, caves, storm culverts, a friend's pickup truck, or a cardboard box. BPC is grateful for the ability to host TOH in our building for a week or two each year.

Sat.-Fri., Jan. 13-19:

- To Our House, FH: BPC will be hosting clients overnight with other churches assisting with food, laundry, etc.

Sat.-Fri., Jan. 20-27:

- To Our House, FH: BPC will host and provide food and other assistance this week. To volunteer, please see the TOH volunteer sign-up boards in the Gathering Space or you can sign up here: blacksburgpres.org/local. Volunteer opportunities include bringing food, doing laundry, staying overnight, and setting up.

THIS WEEK

FH-Fellowship Hall, **HCR**-Hatcher Conference Room,
WM-Westminster, **SNC**-Sanctuary, **GS**-Gathering Space

All activities are open to everyone.

Contact Rhonda at rhonda@blacksburgpres.org for more information.

Sun., Jan. 7: Epiphany & Communion Sunday

- 10:30: Worship Service, SNC
- After worship: Celebrate Epiphany, FH. Come celebrate Epiphany with an all-church feast and party with soup, salad, king cakes, Christmas and Epiphany trivia, star words, and prizes.
- 4:00-5:30 pm: Interfaith Discussion Group, Unitarian Universalist Congregation (1301 Gladewood Dr., downstairs)
- 5:30-7:30: Youth Group, FH

Mon., Jan. 8:

- 12:00-1:30 pm: Deacons meeting, HCR
- 1:30-3:00: Lydia Circle meeting, FH
- 6:00: Hildegard Circle meeting, Zoom

Tues., Jan. 9:

- 7:30-9:00 am: Morningstars Bible Study, Zoom. Contact Pastor Sarah for link.
- 9:30-2:00 pm: Quilters, FH

Wed., Jan. 10:

- 5:30: Handbell choir rehearsal, FH
- 7:00: Choir rehearsal, choir room

Thur., Jan. 11:

- 3:30-4:30 pm: AIM meeting, Zoom
- 5:00-6:00 pm: Hangout Hour, Moon Hollow Brewery (4237 Prices Fork Rd.). Feel free to just show up.

Sat., Jan. 13 - Sat. Jan. 27:

- 1:00 pm: Memorial service for Sue and Ben Johnson with reception to follow, SNC & GS
- To Our House begins, FH. See announcements for details on how to volunteer.

Sun., Jan. 14:

- 9:00 am: Children and Youth Sunday School, various rooms
- 9:00: Adult Sunday School, WM. See announcements for details.
- 5:00-7:30 pm: Youth Group, El Rodeo and bowling
- 7:00 pm: *Mere Christianity* book study, HCR, with Russell Gregory and Jack Call

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mon., Jan. 15: Church office is closed - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Tue., Jan 16:

- 7:00-8:15 pm: Creation Care Team meeting, Zoom

Wed., Jan. 17:

- 5:00 am-5:00 pm: Day for All People - the annual Advocacy Day organized by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, bringing together people of faith and goodwill from across Virginia. In 2024, Advocacy Day will be back in-person in Richmond for inspirational presentations, informative workshops, and effective advocacy on Wednesday, January 17. Join with other motivated Virginians to make your voices heard on economic, racial, and social justice issues, to learn about policy issue priorities and meet with your state legislators. A free bus ride is being provided to the event from Roanoke. If you are unable to attend in-person, there will be a virtual option to participate in the plenary sessions. Contact Melanie or Scott Smith for information (melscofam@gmail.com) and check this week's *Midweek Update*.

Sun., Jan. 21:

- After worship-1:30 pm: Youth Group, FH
- 7:00: Session meeting, HCR