

Grace United Church of Christ



January 21, 2024

The Third Sunday After Epiphany

11:00 AM

Today's Theme

"Come and See - Seeing in the Dark"

WE GATHER

*During this morning worship, we encourage you to know and to remember that this is a **Quiet Meditative Space**, that this is a **Safe and Loving Place, a Sanctuary**, for worship, praise and reflection; and to remember that **'No Matter Who You Are or Where You Are on Life's Journey, You are Welcome Here** More than that, we invite you to be engaged in the **Spiritual Ministries of Grace Church!***

Prelude - "Hallowed be thy name..." from the Salem Sonata - Dan Locklair

Welcome

Preparing Our Hearts

Ringling of the Bell

Introit - Father, We Have Heard You Calling text, Gareth Hill; music, Rowland Prichard

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Arise; shine, for your light has come!

ALL: We are called out of our darkness into light.

Leader: Lift up your eyes and look around.

ALL: We rejoice in the gift of light.

Leader: Come let us worship the God of light and joy and peace.

ALL: We come to kneel at the cradle of the babe, the light incarnate.

***Opening Hymn "God of Change and Glory" # 177**

1. God of change and glory, God of time and space, When we fear the future, give to us your grace In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.

Refrain: Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise. One Giver, one Word, one Spirit, one God known in many ways, Hallowing our days. For the Giver, for the gifts, we praise, praise, praise!

2. God of many colors, God of many signs, You have made us different, blessings many kinds. As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear. Refrain:

3. Freshness of the morning, newness of each night, You are still creating endless love and light. This we see, as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart

Refrain:

Our Prayer of Renewal

Pastor: Let us open the deepest parts of our souls to the loving forgiveness of God:

ALL: Ever-patient God, we are a people who live in thick darkness. We stumble around bombarded by news of war and poverty, Covid deaths, injustice, and oppression. The maelstrom of things and issues and people of the dark, can overwhelm and paralyze us. Help us be people of the light, shining your light of righteousness, peace, and joy into all the dark places of our lives and world.

Pastor: Let this prayer take us deeper still:

ALL: Unlock the mystery and glory of the babe born in Bethlehem. Turn our aimless wanderings into a journey of purpose guided by your star. Let the light break into our lives and our world, and transform us into people of the light. Amen.

*Passing of the Peace

Scripture Lessons: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; & Mark 1:14-20

Hebrew Lesson: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 – Introduction; This is the classic story of Jonah's attempt to flee from God's call for Jonah to go to Nineveh. Jonah boards a ship to escape but God creates a great storm and Jonah ends up in the belly of a huge whale. In the dark. Of course, Jonah prays for a rescue by promising God he will do better. Out of the dark belly of the whale, Jonah is coughed up on the dry land and in the light of day. Listen to how Jonah responds to God's second call in chapter 3, verses 1-5 from "The Message"

Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:14-20 – Introduction; In the very first chapter of Mark, Jesus calls his first disciples, Simon and Andrew, and James and his brother, John. Listen to the story of Jesus calling disciples – in the light in middle of the day from Mark 1:14-20 from The Message:

Continuing Testament: ***"What is there beyond knowing—beyond and within the dark--that keeps calling to me? I can't turn in any direction but it's there. I don't mean the leaves' grip and shine or even the thrush's silk song, but the far-off fires, for example, of the stars, heaven's slowly turning theater of light, or the wind playful with its breath."*** – Mary Oliver

Children's Moment

Anthem - Awake, Awake to Love and Work - arr. Christopher Gale

Sermon: "God Finds us in the Dark"

We Respond

Pastoral Prayer

ALL: The Lord's Prayer (in 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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering - Rock of Ages - arr. Diane Bish

***Doxology** (Music #780 & Lyrics #778)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.
Amen

Prayer of Dedication

Pastor: Let us Dedicate our gifts to God.

ALL: May these gifts, these many and varied gifts of our lives, be light to the world: to ourselves, to each other, to our church, community and to the world. Amen.



We Are Sent

Announcements

***Closing Hymn “Be Now My Vision” # 451**

- 1 Be now my vision, O God of my heart; nothing surpasses the love you impart--
You my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, your presence my light.
- 2 Be now my wisdom, and be my true word; ever within me, my soul is assured;
Mother and Father, you are both to me, now and forever your child I will be.
- 3 Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise, you, my inheritance, now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart, great God, my treasure, may we never part.
- 4 Sovereign of heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright
heaven's Sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler
of all.

Pastoral Blessing for the Time Ahead

Choral Benediction - As We Part - text, John Thornburg; music, Jackson Henry

Postlude - Menuet from Suite Gothique - Léon Boëllmann

Ringling of the Bell

Note: The Postlude is still part of our worship; thus, we invite you to sit and let Nathan's beautiful music touch us as each one of us listens in silence.



Worship at Grace UCC for the Next Three Weeks:

The Season of Epiphany – 2024

“Come and See: Seeing in the Dark”

A Five-Sunday Sermon Series about Living In Dark Days and Nights of Our Lives

Overview: For some people today, even those who profess Christ and seek to follow Jesus, the ‘Dark’ is an enemy, an ever- challenging space to encounter. Of course, in the ‘war-zones’ of the world (Gaza, Ukraine, etc) people ‘hover’ in the dark, dank spaces of torn out buildings. Even though we in Frederick don’t have to endure such horrid conditions, we still struggle with the cold of winter well as the dark places of our lives.

The profound, encouraging, and challenging words of the Psalmist in Psalms 139:12: (“...**even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.**”)

can both invite us to open ourselves to God’s light when we are afraid in the dark and ‘smack’ us gently to awaken our spiritual gifts and resources that allow us to see God’s ‘safety-net’ in the night. This five-sermon series will challenge and inspire us to “Come and See God;” to allow God to soothe our fears in the darkness; and to discover how the light can add brilliance and vitality to our lives.

-- Pastor

Gerry Hanberry

January 28, 2024 -- The Epiphany Season:

“Come and See – Seeing in the Dark”

Theme: The Emotions of the Night

Scriptures: Mark 1:21-28 (The Man with an Unclean Spirit)

Sermon: “Why Won’t God Turn on the Lights?”

February 4, 2024 -- The Epiphany Season:

“Come and See – Seeing in the Dark”

Theme: The Dark Night of the Soul

Scriptures: Isaiah 40:21-31 & Mark 1:29-39

Sermon: “Jesus Praying in the Dark”

Sacrament of Holy Communion

February 11, 2024 -- The Epiphany Season:

“Come and See – Seeing in the Dark”

Theme: Working With Darkness --Transformed by the Lightness and the Darkness

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 & Mark 9:2-9

Sermon: “What I Learned from the Dark”

THIS WEEK AT GRACE UCC:

Sunday 1/21:	11:00 AM - Worship Service Second Sunday after Epiphany
Mondays:	7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting
Monday - Saturday:	12:00 PM - 1:00 PM NA Meeting
Mondays + Wednesdays:	7:30 PM - 9:30 PM AA Meeting
Wednesday 1/24:	7:00 PM - Book Club (zoom)
Sunday 1/28:	11:00 AM - Worship Service Third Sunday after Epiphany

REFUGEE WELCOMING COMMITTEE

In 2024 Grace Church is starting a team to help a refugee family, under the guidance of the Refugee Welcoming Coalition of Frederick (<https://www.rwcfrederick.org/>). The RWC is an alliance of faith communities, civic organizations, and individual volunteers founded in 2021 in recognition of the influx of refugee families who need help establishing themselves in our area. Assistance indeed includes transportation, furnishing household items, and assistance with bureaucracies like school enrollment and health services.

Interested in making a difference? Contact Michael Davies (fluidmosaic@gmail.com) and Missy Moxley.

GIVE THE GIFT OF WARMTH THIS SEASON

Now through February, 2024

Donate gently used coats, gloves, winter hats, and new socks in the box in the Narthex

For Questions contact the office:

admin@grucc.com



Grace United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

25 East 2nd Street, Frederick, Maryland, 21701

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Director of Music: Nathan Strite

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Children & Youth Ministry: Amy Duray

worshipgraceucc@gmail.com

Nursery Attendant: Joan Princler

Joan.dancer@comcast.net

Custodian: Hunt Hughes

Admin@grucc.com

Church Admin: (Vacant)

Admin@grucc.com

Choir Section Leaders: Anna Kovacsics, James Taylor, & Donald Toms

SUNDAY WORSHIP — 11:00 AM — Virtual and in person

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of every month.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Liturgist:

Mary Turner

Children's Message:

Trish Abell

Children's Church:

Catherine Kern

Altar Guild:

Karen Kehoe

Greeter:

Mary Turner

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