

Call to Worship/Litany of the Saints

Adapted from Matthew 2:1-11

Leader: Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.”

Response: They told them, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet.” And so, they continued on their journey.

L: Ahead of them went the star, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

R: On entering the house, they saw the child and his mother, Mary. They knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him their gifts.

L: The wise men, long ago, joyously offered their gifts to the Christ child. This morning we celebrate the gifts joyously given to our congregation by *reading of names*.

R: We give thanks for their lives, their faith, their love, and their witness that each of us has a gift to offer. Amen.

Prayer

God of Guiding Light,

For all time, you have given gifts to your people, to your creation. You even gave of yourself, taking the form of a baby to walk and live among us. You have shown your love over and over and over. We celebrate this morning, the magi. The wise ones who stepped out in faith to follow your star, to allow your guiding light to take them where they needed to be. We give thanks for their faith, for their journey, and for their gifts. We pray that they may always serve as a reminder that each of us has a special and unique gift to bring to You.

God, just as we celebrate and remember the magi from long ago, so too do we celebrate and remember the wise ones from our congregation who gave freely of their gifts. We give thanks for their faith, for their journey, and for their gifts. We thank you for being a guiding light in the lives of *reading of names (if desired)*. And we thank you, Holy One, for the light that each of them was/is to our congregation, to our community, and to our world.

We ask that you would continue to be a guiding light to each of us, that you would guide us on this journey of faith together, and that each of us would remember that we have a gift to offer to you. In Your Holy Name, we pray. Amen.

Children’s Sermon

Materials Needed: Heart Stickers

Good Morning! Today in worship, we are talking about the three wise men who went to visit Jesus. Has anyone heard of the three wise men before? (*Allow short time for answers: Sunday school, Children’s Worship and Wonder, Christmas pageant, worship, etc.*) That’s very good!

Does anyone know why the wise men are special? (*Allow short time for answers.*) The wise men are special because they brought gifts to Jesus. These gifts were important because they gave them to Jesus out of love. I have one more question for you this morning, what is the best gift you have ever given someone? (*Allow short time for answers.*) Thank you for sharing, those all sound like great gifts! No matter what the gift is, when we give a gift out of love it is special. This morning, I have a heart sticker for each of you as a reminder to share your love and the love of God.

Let us pray: Dear God, we thank for the wise men who shared their love of Jesus through special gifts. We thank you for the special gifts that you have given each of us and ask that you help us to share these gifts and your love with the world. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

So often, during the holiday season, we get caught up in the things like making sure everyone looks just right for the family pictures, worrying about who is going to cook what dish, stressing over travel plans and what might go wrong, and finding the “perfect” gift. But the Good News is, at this table, the perfect gift has already been given to all of us. We come to this table not to give a gift, but to receive one. Each and every time we gather together around this table we are reminded of the gift of love that God has given us in Christ incarnate. Every time we come to this table, we receive anew that gift of love.

Words of Institution

Come, and receive the gift of love so freely given for all.

Invitation to Offering

We have talked a lot this morning about gifts, about the gifts of the magi, the gifts that members of our congregation have so graciously given, and the gifts that each of us has to share. Our gifts are so much more than money, they are love and compassion and hope and time. As we collect our tithes and offerings this morning, reflect on what special gift God has given you and how you will use it and share it this year.

Benediction

As we leave this morning let us remember to celebrate the gifts which God has given us and the gifts which our community has so joyously received. May God continue to be our Guiding Light in all seasons and may each of us faithfully follow God’s call. Go in peace, in love, and in light. Amen.