



### Meditation Text

*Now what was deepest in God? His power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say God. Evil could, of course, never create an atom; but let us understand very plainly, that a being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him: his service must be fear, and fear only. Such a being, even were he righteous in judgment, yet could not be God. In one word, God is Love. Love is the deepest depth, the essence of his nature, at the root of all his being...God's perfection is his love. All divine rights rest upon his love. Ah, he is not the great monarch! The simplest peasant loving his cow is more divine than any monarch whose monarchy is his glory.*

– George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons*

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### ORDER OF WORSHIP

Chiming the Trinity

Invitation to Worship

Matt Marston

Prelude

*How Brightly Shines the Morning Star*

Phillip Nicolai  
arr. Wilbur Held

Invocation

Emily Harbin

Hymn

*As with Gladness Men of Old*

DIX

*As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold  
As with joy they hailed its light leading onward beaming bright  
So most gracious Lord may we evermore be led to Thee*

*As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed  
There to bend the knee before Christ whom heaven and earth adore  
So may we with willing feet ever seek the mercy seat*

*As they offered gifts most rare at the manger rude and bare  
So may we with holy joy pure and free from sin's alloy  
All our costliest treasures bring Christ to Thee our heavenly King*

*Holy Jesus every day keep us in the narrow way  
And when earthly things are past bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide where no clouds Thy glory hide*

William C. Dix, 1861

\*Scripture Lesson

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Janet Cleland

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Testimony in Song

*The Work of Christmas*  
Randy Brittain, Tenor

Dan Forrest

*When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost, to heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations, to bring peace among brothers,  
To make music from the heart.*

-Howard Thurman

### Silent Prayers

#### Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Matt Marston

*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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

#### \*Scripture Lesson

John 1:1-18

Frank Granger

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

#### Sermon

*An Open Orthodoxy*

Matt Marston

#### Hymn

*The First Nowell*

THE FIRST NOWELL

*The first Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep on a cold winter's night that was so deep  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel*

*Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord  
Who hath made heaven and earth of naught and with His blood humankind hath bought  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel*

#### Prayer of Stewardship

Richard Coleman, Deacon

#### Offertory

*Mary Did You Know?*  
Rachel Graves, Harp

arr. Sylvia Woods

#### Benediction

Matt Marston

#### \*Postlude

*Three Kings' March*

Michael R. Barker