

January 2, 2022

Epiphany

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "The First Nowell". Traditional English Carol , Arr. by Kevin Olson

Lighting the Christ Candle

Moment of Silent Reflection

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...

Call to Worship

Christians, in your homes you shelter,

keeping safe from all about.

Will the promise of the New Year

be fulfilled in spite of doubt?

Come and worship, come and worship.

Worship Christ the newborn King.

Hymn VU 91 "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 akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

Opening Prayer (*unison*)

God of Light, you call us out of the dark places in our lives and in our world to live in the radiance of your love. You sent Jesus, the Light of the world, to light the way! You call us to reflect your light in all of the dark places of this world. Forgive us when we choose the shadow places rather than the light of day; when we choose to follow other stars; when we listen to the promises of the Herods of our time, and, to our peril and the peril of the world, we believe them. Fill us again with the radiant promise of Epiphany. In Jesus' name, Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Anthem: ["See Amid The Winters Snow" The Georgia Boys Choir](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Geb6fBFlyYs&t=21s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Geb6fBFlyYs&t=21s>

Time for the Young and the Young @ 

Hymn VU 81 "As with Gladness Men of Old"

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 your splendour see.

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 eager pace
ever seek your throne of grace.

As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger crude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, 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 your glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
none shall need created light;
you its light, its joy, its crown,
you its sun which goes not down;
there for ever may we sing
hallelujah to our King.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 72:1-8, 10-14

Give the ruler your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal heir,
**for judging your people rightly,
and upholding the poor with justice;**
that the mountains may bring forth peace for the people,
and the hills, prosperity with justice.

May your anointed defend the cause of the poor among the people,
save the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

**May your anointed live as long as the sun endures,
as long as the moon from age to age.**

May your anointed be like rain falling upon the grass,
like showers that water the earth;

**may your anointed be one in whose days
justice shall flourish and peace abound
till the moon is no more.**

May the rulers of Tarshish and the isles pay tribute,
the monarchs of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

May all rulers do homage, and all nations render service.

For your anointed shall deliver the needy when they cry,
the poor and those who have no helper.

**Your anointed shall have pity on the weak and the needy,
and save the lives of the poor.**

From oppression and violence your anointed shall redeem their life,
and count as precious their blood. //

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

The Visit of the Wise Men

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*For those of you who are interested, the other readings for this week are: **Isaiah 60:1-6;**
Ephesians 3:1-12. You can look them up on www.biblegateway.com and search for the passage.....
in any translation you prefer (ie. King James – KJV, NKJV, NRSV, etc.)*

Meditation: "A Thing or Three about Epiphanies"

Hymn VU 87 "I Am the Light of the World"

'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found
their way home,

the work of Christmas is begun:

'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth
and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above!
'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God's children everywhere!
'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth!
'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

They offered gifts of great worth: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We too offer gifts of great value, our hearts, our time, ourselves, and yes, and even our wealth. We offer them, as did the Magi all those years ago, to God alone. Our tithes and our thank offerings will be received.

Holy One, we come today to worship you, just as the Magi did so long ago. We come with awe and wonder, following a star of hope, offering our gifts: ourselves, our time, and our commitment. Accept our gifts. Bless them and use them to build your eternal realm. And, just as the Magi left by a different way, send us home a different way, changed by coming here. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

In the darkness of time, O God, you created all that lives and breathes. In the darkness of Mary's womb, O God, you nurtured the Christ child, bringer of light. In the darkness of our world, O God, your Spirit sustains us. O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

Under the cover of darkness Magi followed the star to the Christ child. In desert darkness, Mary and Joseph fled to safety in Egypt with the infant Jesus. In quiet darkness, dreams emerge, guiding the Holy Family home to Galilee. O God, you are with us in darkness and in light.

We pray for your church in this world, especially St. Clair United Church in the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, and their minister, the Rev. Brenda MacMain. May they be a light to all who walk in darkness in their nation, and in ours.

We pray for the people of the world, your children in.....

We pray for those who feel lost in the darkness, all who are discouraged, demoralized, or depressed; all who are bitter and cynical; all who feel hopeless; all who are unemployed, homeless, or persecuted; all who have lost their homes and workplaces and communities due to natural disaster; all who have fled their homes due to violence and warfare, all who are refugees; all who are bereaved, especially we think of the friends and family of.....
all who are ill, especially we think of.....
and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our hearts.....

In the embrace of darkness, we pray for those who are near to our hearts: colleagues, partners, parents, children, neighbours, friends. We thank you for their presence in our lives and ask for your blessing in their lives.

In the serenity of darkness we bring to you, O God, our fears and concerns, our hopes and dreams. In your presence we come face to face with ourselves and with the way that lies ahead of us. In the solitude of darkness we find expectant hope for the journey. We gather all of these prayers together and lift them to you, in the name of the one who taught us to pray, saying,

**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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.**

Amen.

Hymn VU 93 "When Heaven's Bright with Mystery"

When heaven's bright with mystery
and science searches nature's art,
when all creation yearns for peace
and hope sinks deep in human hearts,
appear to us, O Holy Light;
lift from our eyes the shades of night.

When Herod barter's power and lives
and Rachel's weeping fills the night,
when suffering's mask marks every face,
and Love's a refugee in flight,
reveal to us your word of grace
and make us witness to your peace.

When fragile faith, like desert wind,
blows dry and empty, hope erased,
when withered grass and fading flower
proclaim again our day's brief space,
breathe on the clay of our despair
and work a new creation there.

When heaven's bright with mystery
and stars still lead an unknown way,
when love still lights a gentle path
where courts of power can hold no sway,
there with the Magi, let us kneel,
our gifts to share, God's world to heal.

Commissioning and Benediction

As God set a star in the nighttime sky
to guide the Magi in their journey to find the Christ,
**may God also guide us in our journeys of faith
as we too seek to find the Christ.**

May it be so.

Amen.

Sung Response: VU 82 "A Light is Gleaming" *Chorus only*

A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.
Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.

Postlude: "There's a Song In The Air" Karl P. Harrington. Arr. by Cindy Berry

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dorchester:

Central Board meets Tuesday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Union:

Unified Board meets Wednesday, January 19 at

ALL:

Scripture Readings for next week:

(January 9, 2022. Baptism of Jesus)

Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22