

**Sunday January 5, 2025
Epiphany Sunday**

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Love Ye The Lord" G.F. Handel adapted. Soloist: Nancy Quinn

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation

Lighting the Christ Candle

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

Call to Worship

Beloved children of God, come and worship.

**We come from the darkness of the world
into the light of God's presence.**

The journey is long and difficult, the way is narrow.

Nevertheless, we come seeking the light of life.

Come discover God's blessings.

We come embracing God's light,

We will depart reflecting God's light into the darkness.

Hymn VU 91 "The First Nowell" Words: English traditional carol. Music: English traditional melody.
Words and Music in the Public Domain.

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay a – keeping 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 north – west;
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.

Ministry of Music: "O! Night Divine" by W.J. Marsh. Soloist: Nancy Quinn

A New Creed VU 918

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn VU 79 "Arise, Your Light Is Come" Words: Ruth Duck, 1992. Music: William H. Walter, 1900.

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Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God, which shines on you today.

Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born,
bind up the brokenhearted ones and comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

We Open Ourselves to Receive God's Blessings

Responsive Reading: Psalm 72:1-8, 10-14 VU 790 *Parts One and Two*

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

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.

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

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.**

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

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.

Hail to God's own anointed, who rules in equity.

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.

*The other readings for this week are: **Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:1-12***

Meditation: "Gifts Most Rare"

Hymn VU 82 "A Light Is Gleaming" Words and Music: Linnea Good, 1992. Words and Music © 1992 Borealis Music.
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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.

When light comes pouring into the darkest place,
it hurts our eyes to see the glow.

Sometimes a word of hope reminds us of our fears,
our memories and tears.

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.

When night is round us and every shadow grows,
a star is there to light our way.

It tells a story of Jesus who came near to say:

"God's light will ever stay."

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.

And Jesus showed us a brighter path to walk.

He showed us things we hadn't seen.

Now we, like Jesus, can help creation shine,
and this will be a sign.

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.

So let us live in the brightness God has giv'n,
and let us rise to see the dawn.

We trust that God is here a – sparkle and a – blaze,
– warming all our days.

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.

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.

Offertory Hymn VU 81 "As with Gladness Men of Old" **vs. 3** Words: William Chatterton Dix, ca. 1858.

Music: Conrad Kocher, 1838. Adapted William H. Monk, 1861.

Words, Music and Adaptation in the Public Domain.

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.

Prayer of Dedication

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. May it be a light to all who walk in darkness.

We pray for the people of the world, your children in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

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 Bill Latham; all who are ill, especially we think of Christa, Christina, Kurt, Marilyn, 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 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 and ever. Amen.

Hymn VU 87 "I Am the Light of the World" Words and Music: Jim Strathdee, 1967.

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"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.

Commissioning

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.

Response: VU 298 “When You Walk from Here” Words & Music: Linnea Good, 1991.

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When you walk from here, when you walk from here,
walk with justice, walk with mercy, and with God’s humble care.

Postlude: “The First Noel” Traditional English Carol. Arr. Kevin Olson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual Turkey Dinner will be held at noon on Sunday, January 19th. Tickets are \$30.00 per person and are available until January 12th. For tickets, contact Shannon Wakeling at 519-870-8656 or Jane Busche at 519-268-3360. This event is open to friends and family, other from the wider community.

Today is **Food Bank Sunday!** Please leave your donations in the collection boxes near the church entrance.

The **Worship Committee** meets Wednesday, January 15th at 4:00 p.m.

The **Central Board** meets on Wednesday, January 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

LECTIONARY READINGS:

January 12 – Baptism of Jesus

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