



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

Living Waters Contemplative Life Center | Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless  
Tippecanoe just.good.food Garden | Food Justice Site PCUSA  
Arts and Science Literacy Camps for Children

# Welcome To Worship

January 10, 2021

9:30 a.m.

*Holy Mother Hears Our Prayer...  
The Light Is Within Me!*



*Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.*

## TODAY'S WORSHIP

*Epiphany*

Preparing To Worship...



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*Holy Mother Hears Our Prayer...*

*The Light Is Within Me!*

✧ **Welcome and Community News**

✧ **Readying Ourselves for Worship**

*Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!  
Surely God is in this place,  
Holy Ground!*

✧ **Becoming Present to God and Each Other...Our Check-in:**

*How Are You As You Arrive...how is it with your spirit?*

✧ **Gathered As God's People: A Music Video "Where Is The Light?"**

*Pastor: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of God is shining within you!*

One: Shadow may cover the earth, but the brightness of God's presence will be over you.

**All: Nations will be drawn to the light, and rulers to the dawning of a new day.**

One: So, lift up your eyes and see what is happening: people are gathering! We see a new reality!

*Pastor: You shall see and be radiant; you shall thrill and rejoice. The light has come!*

**All: Like the Wise Ones long ago, we now bring gifts to manger of possibility. We bring our authentic selves...our humanity. We, too, will leave from this time changed. We, too, go home a different way, a different people. We share the good news: The Light Is Within Us!**

*Based upon Isaiah 60: 1-6*

## ✧Opening Ourselves to God’s Grace

### ✧Sharing Our Inner Most Lives With God

As this new year begins, we are renewed, made able to resist our usual ways of thinking, becoming resilient to face each new day! This good news clearly rings out to all who have ears to hear, and eyes to see. It is a time of Epiphany...our own epiphanies! As this new year begins, let us spend some time reflecting on the past and opening to God with us now, into the future. On your paper, please draw a large star which you will use for your personal reflection.

Listen....

The space outside the star represents the year gone by...some of which you want to lay down and let be. So, further from the star, write down what you lay down. Close around the star, write things from the past year that you treasure and shine on for you in the new year. Take a sigh too deep for words and honor them.

The inside of the star represents the time that lies before you...the 365 days to come, your hopes and your dreams for Good News. Honoring Epiphany, breathe in the new reality: God is with you. Your light guides you in these coming days. Deeply take a breath and release fully, writing within the star your prayers for this new year. Let there be some quiet.



### ✧Our Assurance of God’s Love With Us: Good Enough

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyaidTfyxgI&list=PLwBHPKLxxcdVVUIOFbM4BCptBYdi4Oe9L>

## ✧Bible’s Wisdom Teachings

### The Gospel of Mary 4: 1b-10, 5

The Blessed One (the Risen Christ) greeted them all, saying: “Peace be with you!

Bear my peace within yourselves. Beware that no one lead you astray saying, “Look over here!

Or “Look over there!” For the Child of Humanity is within you! Follow it! Those who seek it will find it.

Go then and proclaim good news of the realm. Do not lay down any rules beyond what I determined for you, nor give a law like the lawgiver, lest you be confined by it. When He had said this, he departed.

But they were pained. They wept greatly, saying, “How shall we go to the nations and proclaim the good news of the Child of Humanity? If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?”

Then Mary stood up. She greeted them all, and said to her brothers and sisters,

“Do not weep and be pained, nor doubt, for all His grace will be with you and shelter you.

But rather let us praise His greatness, for He has prepared us and made us Humans.”

When Mary said this, she turned their heart to the Good, and they began to discuss the words of the Savior.

## An Epiphany Story: A Retelling of Matthew 2 Prompts Us

### Background:

Most of us weave the storytelling of Matthew and Luke together to form a narrative of Jesus' birth...often including information that is not in either story. ie. There is no donkey.

This is in part because most of us lack knowledge of the matrix of that time so we miss the understandings that First Century Hearers would have derived. Meaning, our take-aways from these stories are often faulty.

Know, both writers use the Marcan story (considered oldest and most authentic) to unfold their stories but with one big difference. Mark has no birth story. The reason Matthew and Luke do is because they wrote their first chapters as an overture, a thematic summary setting the stage for the points they will make about who Jesus is and His message. (Sorta' like reading the inside of cover a book to get a glimpse at what is coming.)

Today's story is from Matthew...our Epiphany story. Matthew 1 has only 2 sections: the genealogy of "Jesus the Messiah" as listed by Matthew (differently than Luke's...making a different point) ...and the story of Joseph and his dream. So, no part of the "Christmas Eve story" is in Matthew. Matthew 2 is our focus and it includes the story of the Wise Ones who go to share the good news: Epiphany! Tadaa!

### Some of Matthew's matrix:

Matthew's hearers would have largely been Jewish (he probably a Pharisee). He wants them to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Messiah. Matthew sees Jesus as the new, updated version of Moses bringing Moses to perfection. And so, to make this point, Matthew tells the story of Jesus using the same structure as the Old Testament uses to tell the story of Moses. Matthew builds his story upon understandings of Moses that his hearers would have known, and builds up the story of Jesus similarly to the way the story of Moses builds...this is the storytelling technique he uses to make his point.

So...

Moses is supposed to have written the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the OT). Matthew has Jesus give 5 great speeches. Jesus' first and last speech take place on Mt. Sinai as did Moses'. And, that first speech of Jesus first, the Sermon on the Mount, is an update on those tablets. (Blessed are...)

And, the birth of Jesus is modeled after the birth of Moses. Moses was born into a time of upheaval where the Pharaoh was killing new born babies because the Pharaoh dreamt a child was to be born that would be his rival. Moses parents also had a dream in which they were told they should not refrain from having a baby even in such times for the child would save their people. So...Matthew has Joseph dream. In it he is assured the baby being born is holy and the Savior.

And then, following the Moses blueprint, when Herod hears of a baby being born who would be savior, he also orders the killing of all children 2 and under (Slaughter of the Innocent...which is not documented historically so may have been completely a storytelling technique). Just as Moses barely escapes Pharaoh's slaughter (set adrift in a basket), Jesus barely escapes as Joseph receives a warning in a dream to flee (and then later to return after the death of Herod).

Matthew makes the connection undeniable to First Century Hearers and so affirms Jesus is the Messiah foretold.

So, just a bit more about Herod. His royal title is "King of the Jews". As we have previously learned, under Roman Empire, rulers were seen as God and so this is a literal title and authority the state gives Herod. So, when Wise Ones arrive seeking the "New Born King of the Jews," this is treasonous.

The Hearers of this story would have cringed fearing for the lives of the 3 travelers! Interestingly, the title “King of the Jews” is used again by Matthew as Pilate has this written on a sign at Jesus’ crucifixion connecting the beginning of the story and the end and it’s assault on Empire.

One more thing: that Star and the need to ask for directions. Really? The star just stops right there at Herod’s doorstep? Stars stop? And men ask for directions? Matthew uses the Star stopping as part of his storytelling technique so that the Wise Ones stop in Jerusalem. Because they do, they upset Herod’s reaction so he then plots to eliminate the threat. And, those Magi...were not kings, they were scholars...so calling them Wise Ones is very appropriate.

As a footnote: The old realm was being challenged by a new realm. The old ways always feel challenged by the new. And the old often, and Herod wasn’t, going to transition peacefully. (Sound familiar?) And so he tries to trick the Wise Ones...and he may have if the dream had not come to them warning them not to return the way they had come.

So, Moses and Jesus align. Jesus is the new Moses perfected. We see from the beginning the story, Jesus contraposes empire. The story of Jesus is political. It is about upsetting the status quo of empire. It is a threat to empire. Is about a new order, new realm on earth...a non-violent resistance to what is unjust which includes all people...especially the marginalized. In this way it is then personnel as well. The political and personnel inextricably linked. And this time the threat cannot be eliminated. Here we are!

#### ✧Bible Wisdom Teaching: Mathew 2:1-2

*Pastor: When we seek for the Christ child, we bring with us all that we know and all that we have yet to learn.*

**People: All that we’re learning about the world...**

**All the wisdom we’ve gained over the years...**

**All the skills we’ve acquired in our work...**

**All that we’re learning as we manage school and jobs and sports and music and...**

*Pastor: All this we bring.*

**People: And yet we still have much to more to learn, to bring.**

*Pastor prays: Give us the wisdom, Gracious God, to know that we don’t know everything and that there is more than one right way to do everything. Give us hearts open to the knowledge of Your Word that we might see the rising star of Christ in our lives and follow where it leads. Amen.*

#### ✧Bible Wisdom Teaching: Matthew 2:3-8

*Pastor: The Christ Child was not born into a world of peace but into a world that mingled politics and piety, scripture and sword. A world not unlike our own.*

**People: When fear and suspicion stalk our world, and violence and cunning seem the norm, remind us, O Prince of Peace, that this is *not* Your way.**

*Pastor prays: Give us the courage to search diligently for what is true and good and just. For it is there that we will find You and our true selves...our humanity, Lord. Amen.*

✧**Bible Wisdom Teaching:** Matthew 2: 9-10 (Go get a Wise One outfit for this reading!)

*Pastor: Offer to Holiness the “Gift of Who You Are” by writing it on the other side of your star. This is also your offering to humanity. Let your light shines!*

*Naming The Gift of Light We Bring...Gifts Out Loud!*

*Pastor: When you travel by starlight, you sometimes stumble in the dark. In the dark, it takes a special kind of looking to determine if something in your path is an obstacle or a guidepost. When you travel by starlight, the journey is easier if you have companions to help you see what your own eyes cannot. When we travel by starlight...*

**People:** God gives us companions. We welcome them.

*Pastor prays: When we seek the Christ child, we are never alone! Joy overwhelms. Amen.*

✧**Bible Wisdom Teaching:** Matthew 2:11

*Pastor: God, frankincense and myrrh—how rich and exotic these gifts sound! Yet no richer than the gifts we carry, no more fragrant than the beauty of our lives, no more pungent than the suffering we know.*

**People:** When the Wise Ones offer treasures of frankincense and myrrh, they thought them to be their greatest gifts. But perhaps their greatest treasure, the best gift of all, was the giving of their very lives...a trusting into faith.

*Pastor: Brighter than the star they followed was the light the magi saw shining in the Christ Child. The real treasure that night was the light of Christ now in them...a light they carried with them from that stable to all the places and people of their lives. May it be so with us, Lord. Amen.*

✧**Bible Wisdom Teaching:** Mathew 2: 12

*Pastor: God speaks to those who dare to dream, warning them of dangers as yet unseen, beckoning them to ventures yet untried. Like magi long ago encountering the Christ Child...*

**People:** We know the world to be touched by God. We dream of what is to be. We too are called to risk the journey.

*Pastor: When we return home we are not the same. We travel by another way. May our ways also give way to God’s ways. Amen.*

✧**Bible Wisdom Teaching:** Mathew 2:13-23

*Pastor: When we’ve been tricked, may we remember that true power is not based in violence or getting even. For this brings no end...no resolution...no peace. True peace never comes at the slaughter of innocence.*

**People:** Peace comes through justice. Not in Bethlehem or Jerusalem, but from within us. It is from the Nazareth within that the light shines! The light is within us! We are more than good enough to rise up in our humanity! Amen!

✧ **Special Music Video: I Am Light** [India.Arie - I Am Light \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom...*Our Light!***

HU - form of light  
MAN - manifest

**HUMAN**

Form of light  
manifested in body

✧ **Affirming Our Faith With Intention...*Our Prayer*** (Poem by John O'Donohue, adapted)

May warmth of heart keep my presence aflame.  
May anxiety never linger about me.  
May my outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.  
And I take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.  
May I be consoled in the secret symmetry of my soul.  
May I experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.  
I am affirmed. My light shines, even in the darkness.

✧ **Community Prayers: Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer**

✧ **Honoring the Sustaining Financial Gifts of Our Faithing Community**

✧ **Special Slideshow of Theme**

✧ **Benediction...*Becoming a Living Blessing***

*What of this shared wisdom goes with you as helpful and life-giving?*



✧ **Our Response ...*Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your word lives on in us.***

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*To know more of the Christmas stories, listen to Faith and Reason Podcase "The First Christmas"*