



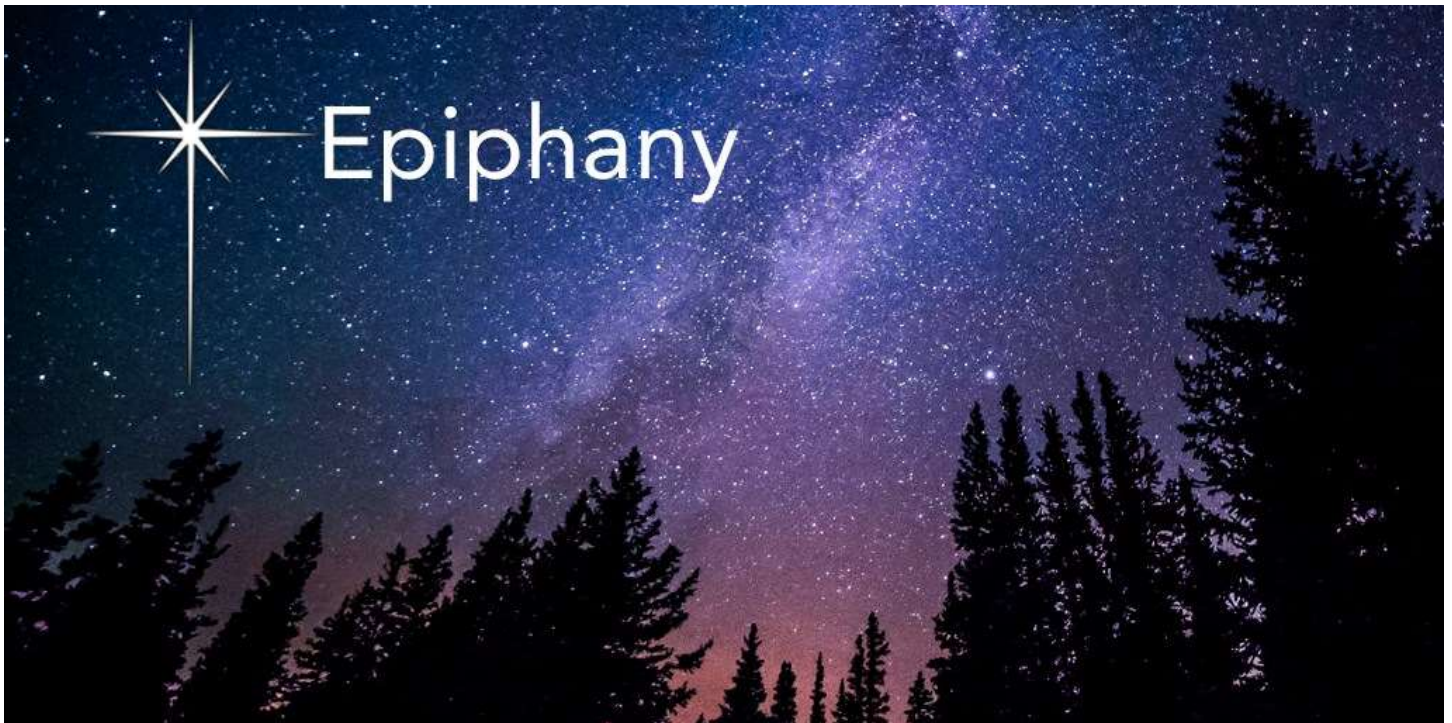
"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

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 8, 2023

9:30 a.m.



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

*"What We Seek" Rev. Trish Eckert*

✧ **Prelude: Zo Trembley**

✧ **Welcome and community news**

Updates re: how to participate in Tippe's ministries and online worship

✧ **Readying Ourselves for Worship**

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

✧ **A Blessing as we Center Ourselves in this Moment**

- Prayer by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org  
*A Blessing for the Seekers*



Blessed are you who turn your face up to the sky,  
who open your arms to feel the wind,  
who notice all the things that we should notice.  
Blessed are you who are fluent in wonder  
and familiar with awe.  
Blessed are you who, even now, dream dreams,  
who have not lost hope,  
who swear the glass is still half-full.  
Blessed are you who plant trees  
and sing the harmony,  
who tell the children how this world can be magic.  
Blessed are you who  
walk and seek  
and turn over every stone,  
pointing out all the corners and colors  
that God lives in.

Blessed are you. Amen.

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

~ **The Joy of Passing the Peace** ~

✧ **Kid's Time**

✧ **Gathering as God's People: Epiphany Sunday ~ *What We Seek***



Today is our celebration of Epiphany Sunday. The earliest Christians celebrated Epiphany as one of the three primary holy days of the liturgical year. Deriving from the Greek word, *epiphaneia*, meaning “appearance” or “coming,” Epiphany more so than Christmas celebrated the manifestation of divinity on earth through Jesus Christ. The celebrations that occurred during Epiphany found their origins not only in Jesus’ birth but also his baptism and his first recorded miracle, the turning of water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. For Christians in the east, Epiphany remains the primary holy day in this season.

As Christianity developed, those of the West focused more specifically on the birth narratives and began to associate the celebration of the Incarnation primarily with Christmas. Epiphany became a less celebrated holiday and focused mainly on the journey of the Magi, the wise ones, to honor the newborn Jesus.

The traditions of both East and West remind us that our journey does not end on Christmas Day; rather, it begins there. Often, we in the West forget that Christmas is not one day but twelve. Even when Epiphany, the last day, passes, it has but prepared

us for the journey through the year to come. On this day we celebrate God revealing Godself to the world.

The Maji, the “three kings” were seeking a star that led them to the baby Jesus, so today we will contemplate what we are seeking, and we will engage in a prayer practice called “star words.” During our Communion Service, each person from the congregation will be invited to draw a card from the basket, and the word that they pull is the word they can reflect on throughout the upcoming year, considering it a guiding word or a word of intention.

We invite you to allow your word to speak to you. You might start by looking the word up in the dictionary so that you are clear on its meaning; we hear the word grace all the time, but what exactly does it mean? A word that seems unclear at the beginning may gain new meaning as the year goes on. It may be that your word seems very timely, as if it was indeed designated for you. You may be unsure how this word applies to your life as the year opens. Stay open to the possibility that the Spirit could be speaking to you and moving in you through this word.

✧ **Gathering Hymn 152** *What Star is This, With Beams So Bright*

✧ **Opening Ourselves to God’s Grace**

One: God of the past, who has fathered and mothered us,

**ALL: We are here to thank you.**

One: God of the future, who is always ahead of us,

**ALL: We are here to trust you.**

One: God of the present, here in the midst of us,

**ALL: We are here to praise you.**

One: God of life beyond us, within us,

**ALL: We rejoice in your glorious love.**



✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

God of Love, You have planted within each of us all that we need. Our task in this life is to love. Guide us as we strive to discern what you call us to do and grow in the gifts that you’ve given us. Open us to hear you, to see you, to know you – not only through our prayer life but also through our daily interactions with one another. Amen.

✧ **Special Music 127** *Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Jesus the Light of the World)*

## ✧Prayer of Intention

### ✧Bible Wisdom Teaching Matthew 2: 1-23

**2** In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, **2** 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.’ **3** When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; **4** and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. **5** They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

**6** “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.”

**7** Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. **8** 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.’ **9** 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. **10** When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. **11** 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. **12** And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**13** Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ **14** Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’

**16** When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. **17** Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

**18** ‘A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.’

**19** When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, **20** ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.’ **21** Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. **23** There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, ‘He will be called a Nazorean.’

**One:** May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

**All: Thanks be to our God.**

✧ **Message *What We Seek*** Rev. Trish Eckert



✧ **Reflection Questions**

- Reflect on the actions of the Magi. What can we learn from them? What do they teach us about being a seeker, as in, one who persistently seeks the sacred?
- Look back at all of the humans involved in the story of Christ's birth as it unfolds—Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, the shepherds, Herod, the Magi. As God intervenes in their lives (in mysterious and startling ways), what does each person seek? As we begin this new year, what are we seeking?

✧ **Short period of silent reflection**

✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom**

✧ **Hymn 134 *Joy to the World***

✧ **Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer**

Welcome

It is a prayer practice in churches all over the world to give people a star word on this Epiphany Sunday. There are many reasons behind this tradition. First, we know that the Magi followed a star, which ultimately led them to Jesus. Therefore, we too use all the resources we have available to us—including creative prayer practices and intention words for the new year—to move closer to the divine.

Secondly, we trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us with a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight.

Finally, we know that the most common prayer practice for many involves speaking to God as opposed to silence or contemplation. However, this prayer practice invites a new prayer rhythm of reflection and review that can be a powerful way to connect with God.

So in just a moment, you will be invited to select a star word. Consider this a guiding word for the year ahead. We invite you to remember your star word often, seeking the ways God might be moving through the meanings and definitions the word contains. As we prepare our hearts and minds for this centering moment, we lift up this prayer of Thanksgiving:

### Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of today, tomorrow, and yesterday,  
like the Magi, we are seeking you.

Like the Magi, we are bringing ourselves closer to you,  
step by step, and word by word.

So today we ask that you would make yourself known to us. Reach into our spirits and give us a boost of confidence that love is real and we are not alone.

We know we're asking a lot for a group that brings very little. We don't have gold or frankincense or myrrh. We haven't spent the last several days traveling here by camel. We're no Magi, but we're yours.

Instead, we bring ourselves to this Table—to your Table—in hopes of catching a glimpse of you. Speak to us in this bread. Speak to us in the cup. Speak to us through these star words. Let them be invitations and challenges for the year ahead; let them be like stars above helping us look for you.

Holy One, you were the God of yesterday, and we know you'll be the God of tomorrow, for you have loved us from generation to generation. So, with grateful hearts, we pray together the words your son taught us to pray, saying:

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**ALL: Our Father, who is 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 our debts, as we  
forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, forever.**

**Amen**

## Words of Invitation and the Breaking of the Bread

Friends, we know what it feels like to look for God.

We know what it feels like to turn our heads up to the sky, looking for stars or signs.

We know what it feels like to walk day after day, hoping that we grow closer to God.

We know what it feels like to seek.

I think that's part of why we end up here, because we are hoping that in the midst of this messy world we might catch a glimpse of God that will carry us through.

Well, friends, I have good news. God is already here. Like a mighty wind, God is moving through this room. God is at this Table, inviting us forward. The invitation may not be as clear as a star in the sky, but from generation to generation, God has always gathered with God's people.

So come to this Table with your questions and your doubts. Come with your joys and your gratitude. Come seeking, come hungry, come curious. Come open. Come not because you have to, but because you can.

Come with all of you, for there is room for you here.

This is God's Table; this is God's meal. We are the guests. So come.

Family of faith, the bread has been broken and the cup has been poured, which means the feast is ready. After you have received the bread and juice, we invite you to draw a star from the basket as we pass it around the circle.





## Communion of the People

### Prayer after Communion

God of open horizons and open roads,  
like the Magi so many years ago,  
we are here, seeking you.

Step by step, we have wandered into this space  
with the hope of feeling you in our midst.

Step by step, you have claimed us, loved us, and fed us.

Today we have drawn star words.

For some, these words are full of meaning, challenge, and invitation already.

For others, these words are a blank canvas—inviting you into our lives.

So as a new year dawns, we pray that just as you have spoken to the generations before us, you would speak to us again. Allow us to use these star words as a tool that might help us hear you more clearly.

May they guide us, as the star guided the Magi.

And in a year, may we find ourselves here, together again, with mouths full of praise for the ways in which you have been present with us.

Together we pray, with the saints before us. Amen.

### ✧ **Benediction**

Beloved, as we depart this holy space nourished and renewed, let us live into our dreams and expand our circle of justice to encompass all of creation. Let us love one another and the earth, for as a body is animated through the relationships among its many parts, so God is made manifest among us through our love. Remember your promise, live in hope, and go in Peace.

*Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.*

### ✧ **Our Response:**

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your Word lives on in us.***

### ✧ **Postlude: Zo Trembley**

*All prayers, worship words, and communion liturgy written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.*

