



Image by Sven Scheuermeier

**Nelson United Church
January 10th, 2021**

***The Feast of Epiphany
Guided by the Star.***

Gathering Music

Prelude “The March of the Wise Men” by Harvey Gaul

Welcome and Announcements

*This is the feast of Epiphany celebrating the arrival of the Magi to Bethlehem.
For communion, if you are able, have ready a piece of bread and something to
symbolize “wine.”
Wherever the text is **bold**, please join in.*

Lighting the Christ Candle/Greeting

We are light, created by God’s divine spark of love.

We are light, created to live in hope and to share love.

We are light, and the light of Christ shines through us.

**We will arise and shine, for the light of love is renewed in us and all
creation.**

(Light Christ Candle)

May the blessing of God rest on each of us this Epiphany and into this year.

**We worship God together in spirit as a community
of love and as a light brightly shining in the world.**

Hymn VU 79 “Arise! Your Light Is Come”

**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 broken-hearted 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.**

Opening Prayer

**O Wisdom and Light, into the chaos and confusion just before creation’s dawn,
you spoke and there was light. In the wonder and beauty of creation, your light shines
through. Remind us again in this time of worship that your light shines in and through us
in a world of light and hope. May we live with your wisdom and peace and share our light
and love with all. In the name and power of Christ, light of the world, we pray. Amen.**

A Word for All Ages & Echo Prayer

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

Refrain

***"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: R**

**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! R**

**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! R**

**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! R**



Refrain

Lawrence M. Probes 1980

A - rise, be clothed in the light. A -
 rise, be clothed in the light. Your light has come. Your
 light has come. Hal - le - lu - jah.

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Arise, shine, for your light has come.
 God's glory has risen among you.
**Behold, darkness covers the earth,
 and thick clouds its peoples.**
 But upon you God shall rise.
 God's glory will appear among you.
**Nations will walk by your light,
 their rulers by the brightness of your rising. R**
 Raise your eyes and look around.
 All gather together, all come to you.
**They will bring your sons from afar.
 They will carry your daughters like babes in arms.**
 Then you will see and be radiant.
 Your heart will thrill and rejoice,
**because they will bring you the sea's bounty.
 The wealth of nations shall come to you.**
 A multitude of camels will cover you,
 the young camels of Midian, and Ephah, and Sheba.

**They will bring gold and frankincense,
and will herald God's glory.**

R

Your land will no longer hear the cry, "Violence
nor "Ruin and Destruction" your borders.

**But you will call your walls, "Salvation,"
and your gates, "Praise."**

No more will you need the sun for your light by day,
nor the moon's brightness by night,

God will be your everlasting light.

Your God will be your glory.

R

Gospel Reading Matthew 2:1-12

The Gospel of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

Choral Response MV 115 "Behold! I Make All Things New"

Behold, (*behold,*) behold, (*behold,*)

**I make all things new, beginning with you
and starting from today.**

Behold, (*behold,*) behold, (*behold,*)

**I make all things new, my promise is true,
for I am Christ the way.**

The Sermon

Prayers of the People—written by Joe Woodward

Hymn VU 82 "A Light is Gleaming"

Refrain

***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. R**

**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." R**

**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: R**

**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 asparkle and ablaze,
warming all our days. R**

Communion Thanksgiving Prayer

May the Light of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

O People of the light, lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God rejoicing in God's presence.

Let us give thanks to our God who gives life.

It is right to thank God and to offer our praise.

We do give you thanks, gracious God, for your gift of light. At the beginning of time, you created night and day and declared all was good, the sun to guide us by day and the moon, stars, planets, aurora and other celestial lights to guide us by night. You planted the spark of your love and life in each of us and in all of creation. You gave us glimpses into the light of your love through prophets and wise teachers, through leaders who led us in the ways of peace. You give us a glimpse into the Light of your Kin-Dom in Jesus, who in the fullness of time came to be among us. His light shines in our hearts and lives and in all times and places where life is celebrated and hope proclaimed.

We are thankful for the Magi who followed a new light in the sky to a place of hope and peace. We are thankful for their story, which is our story of hope and peace. As followers of Jesus, we stand together to seek peace and to resist evil, to proclaim the wonder of creation and the beauty of all life.

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus gathered with friends to break bread. He took a loaf of bread, broke it, and passed it to those with him and said, "Eat this bread all of you. And whenever you eat this bread, remember me."

At the end of this special supper, Jesus took a cup of wine, passed it to those with him and said, "This is a new cup of blessing in my name; it is a new covenant of Light. Whenever you drink from this cup, remember me."

We remember today the gift of light and the wonder of Epiphany. Send your Spirit upon us that we may live in the light of love so that all creation might flourish. May this bread that we share and the cup of blessing we drink be a reminder of your Kin-Dom of Light, love and hope.

With Christ, in Christ and through Christ, we pray. And so, as this community of light and love, we say together...

In sharing this bread and cup, we are reminded that God's light is in all life and that God's love renews here and now.

As Jesus taught us, we are bold to say together...

Jesus' Prayer

**Our Father-Mother, who is in the heavens,
may your name be made holy, may your Kin-Dom come,
may your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today the bread we need;
and forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors;
and do not put us to the test, but rescue us from evil.**

For yours is the Kin-Dom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

(A Translation. VU 916)

Sharing Communion

We will all eat a small piece of bread together, and then the cup of "wine."

Prayer after Communion

**In the things of the earth, O God, we see the light. We know and trust that your light of life and love is in each of us. In the bread we have shared and the cup from which we have drunk, we are renewed to experience again your gift of light. In all of this we pray in the power of the Light of the World.
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 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

Go forth in the light of God’s star. Go forth committed to a journey of courage and faith.

We will go forth and let the star guide us wherever it might lead. We will share the precious gift God has given to all, and we will share our journey with others who choose to live the light of hope and love in working with God in recreating a new world.

Arise! Shine! For your light has come, and the glory and blessing of God has risen upon you. As God has blessed you from before all time, receive God’s new blessing of light this day to live fully God’s hope and love.

Amen.

Choral Blessing (from VU 89 “From a Distant Home”)

**Lovely eastern star that tells us of God’s morning, heaven’s wondrous light,
O never cease your shining! Glory in the highest to the Child of Heaven,
and upon the earth be peace and love to all.**

Postlude “Postlude” by Noel Alexandre Guilmant



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