



*January 3, 2021*

*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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### *Sunday Meditation*

“May Light always surround you;  
Hope kindle and rebound you.  
May your Hurts turn to Healing;  
Your Heart embrace Feeling.  
May Wounds become Wisdom;  
Every Kindness a Prism.  
May Laughter infect you;  
Your Passion resurrect you.  
May Goodness inspire  
your Deepest Desires.  
Through all that you Reach For,  
May your arms Never Tire.”

**D. Simone**

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude*

*Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Arise; shine, for your light has come!

**We are called out of our darkness into light.**

Lift up your eyes and look around.

**We rejoice in the gift of light.**

Come let us worship the God of light and joy and peace.

**We come to kneel at the cradle of the babe, the light incarnate.**

\* *Opening Hymn*      “*As With Gladness Men of Old*”

*Mt Hope PH #119*

*Greenfield CH #290*

*Grace TH #123*

vs 1-4

*Gathering Prayer*

God of promise and light, open our eyes this morning, that we may see your light in the darkness. Open our hearts, that we may perceive your promises of justice and righteousness fulfilled in the babe of Bethlehem. May we, like the Magi, have a star to guide us on our journey quest to find the one who will truly set us free. May this time of worship bring us closer to you, that the good news of the birth of light and love will transform our lives. Amen.

*The Glory of Zion*

60 “Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

<sup>2</sup> See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the LORD rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.

<sup>3</sup> Nations will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup> “Lift up your eyes and look about you:  
All assemble and come to you;  
your sons come from afar,  
and your daughters are carried on the hip.

<sup>5</sup> Then you will look and be radiant,  
your heart will throb and swell with joy;  
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,  
to you the riches of the nations will come.

<sup>6</sup> Herds of camels will cover your land,  
young camels of Midian and Ephah.  
And all from Sheba will come,  
bearing gold and incense  
and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

*Prayer of Confession*

Ever patient God, we are a people who live in thick darkness. We stumble around, bombarded by news of war and poverty, famine and genocide, injustice and oppression. The maelstrom of things and issues and people of the dark, can overwhelm and paralyze us. Help us to be people of the light, shining your light of righteousness, peace, and joy into all the dark places of our lives and world. Unlock the mystery and glory of the babe born in Bethlehem. Turn our aimless wanderings into a journey of purpose guided by your star. Let the light break into our lives and our world, and transform us into people of the light.

## *Words of Assurance*

As certain as the dawn follows the night, so is the promise of God's forgiveness and love for us all. Arise and Shine. Follow the Star. Find the light of the world born in Bethlehem... and be transformed from darkness into light.

## *Epistle Lesson*

**Ephesians 3:1-12 NIV**

### *God's Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles*

**3** For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

<sup>2</sup> Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. <sup>4</sup> In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup> This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. <sup>8</sup> Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup> and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. <sup>10</sup> His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, <sup>11</sup> according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>12</sup> In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 2:1-12 NIV

*Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

TH #497

***The Magi Visit the Messiah***

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message*

\* *Meditation Hymn*    “*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*”

*Mt Hope* VH #248

*Greenfield* CH #539

*Grace* VH #248

## *Today's Message*

### \* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

### *The Lord's Prayer*

**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 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.**

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| * <i>Sung Response</i> | <i>"Hear Our Prayer, O Lord"</i> | TH # 501  |
| * <i>Closing Hymn</i>  | <i>"We Three Kings"</i>          | vs. 1,2,5 |
| <i>Mt Hope PH #143</i> | <i>Greenfield CH #288</i>        |           |

\* *Benediction*

Arise, and go forth to shine for all the world to see.

**We go to spread the good news of light and love,  
righteousness and justice.**

Go now and follow the star that will guide you on your journey  
this week, this year, and forever.

**As the Magi of old, we go forth in trust and excitement,  
transformed in the presence of the child of light.**

May the blessing of the God of light rest upon you and fill you  
with light.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forevermore. **Hallelujah! Amen!**

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

TH # 558

\* *Postlude 2/Exiting the Church*