



*January 5, 2025*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Epiphany Meditation*

Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die.

**Peter Chrysologus**

**Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ  
Joint Service  
Epiphany of the Lord**

**January 5, 2025  
Greenfield 10:00am**

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

*\* Call to Worship*

Arise, shine! Your light has come!

**Glory to God in the highest.**

Darkness covers the earth,

**But God's glory shines brightly,**

Lift up your eyes. Look around.

**The light of God's love shines radiantly.**

Arise, shine! Your light has come!

**Our hearts thrill and rejoice!**

*\* Opening Prayer*

God of light and love, shine upon our lives, as we welcome the mystery of your love. Guide us toward your true gift, for our hearts long to encounter the holy. Quiet our expectations, that we might be surprised by the unexpected. Open our eyes that we might find you in unanticipated places. Shine your light upon us, that we might see you clearly, and recognize your face in all people.

Amen.

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

*\* Opening Children's Hymn*

*"Shine, Jesus, Shine"*

**CH #431**

## *Prayer of Confession*

**The presents have been opened. The cookies have been eaten. The celebrations have left us exhausted. Yet your Spirit comes again, guiding us toward true joy. In all of our busy celebrations, remind us that you desire righteousness and justice for the world in need of generous hearts. May the light of Jesus Christ, the world's true light, live among us and turn our lives from oppressive power toward liberation and hope. Amen.**

## *Words of Assurance*

Like rain that falls upon the grass, like showers that water the earth, may righteousness and peace abound in our lives and in our world.

## *Old Testament Reading*

**Isaiah 60:1-6 NRSV**

### *The Ingathering of the Dispersed*

- 60** Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
- <sup>2</sup> For darkness shall cover the earth  
and thick darkness the peoples,  
but the Lord will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.
- <sup>3</sup> Nations shall come to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- <sup>4</sup> Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together; they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
- <sup>5</sup> Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- <sup>6</sup> A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense  
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 2:1-12 NRSV

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

TH #497

*The Visit of the Magi*

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> 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.’ ”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> 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.” <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road

\* *Gloria Patri*

\* *Meditation Hymn*

“We Three Kings”

CH #288

## *Today's Message*

### *The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings*

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

\* Doxology

TH # 551

\* Offertory Prayer

**Giver of every gift, source of all goodness and light, we open the treasure chests of our hearts before you. We offer you gifts of gold, to care for those in need. We offer you gifts of love, to serve a suspicious world. Bless our gifts and our lives and use them to love and heal the world. Amen.**



### *Invitation to Communion*

*Matthew 2*

Follow the star to the table of grace.

**Here we find gifts beyond price.**

Follow the star to the table of blessing.

**Here we find strength for the journey.**

Follow the star to the table of peace.

**Here we find rest and refreshment.**

Follow the star to the table of Christ.

**Here we find light and love.**

\* *Communion Hymn*    *“Let Us Break Bread Together”*

CH #460

### *Holy Communion Litany*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him our thanks and praise.**

## *Responsive Communion Praise*

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, listening for a voice that calls us beloved.  
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,  
or a voice that parts the clouds,  
but just as God called Jesus "Beloved," God calls you the same.  
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.  
You are beloved, so come.

## *Great Prayer of Thanksgiving*

God of today, tomorrow, and yesterday, as we begin this new year,  
we once again find ourselves looking for you. We long for the  
clarity of a star in the sky, or a voice in the clouds declaring your  
presence in our lives. So today we ask that you would make  
yourself known to us. Do what only you can do. Reach into our  
spirits to give us a boost of confidence that love is real and we are  
not alone. Remind us that we are beloved in your eyes. 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 thrown off our shoes  
to honor your holy ground. We haven't been baptized in the Jordan  
river. We haven't spent the last several days traveling here by  
camel. We're no Magi, Moses, or Messiah, 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 as you spoke through the clouds at Jesus's baptism. Holy God, you call us beloved. You are with us in our joy. You are with us in our sorrow. Surely, even as we pray, you are with us here as well. So, with grateful hearts, we unite our voices in prayer, using the words your son taught us to pray, saying:

*\* 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.**

*Words of Consecration*

So, as we remember his birth,  
as we prepare to journey with him this year,  
we speak of that mystery called faith,  
which is revealed to us through Christ:

**Christ came, the morning star of love;  
Christ died, the night star of salvation;  
Christ arose, the radiant star of resurrection;  
Christ will come again, the constellation of hope.**

Holy One of stars and sinners,  
send down your Spirit of hope  
upon those gathered around this Table,  
and on the gifts of the bread and the cup,  
that they might make us  
your faithful and loving children.  
Feed us with the bread of hope,  
so, when we leave,  
we will travel another road,  
to defend the weak,  
to speak for the voiceless,  
to assist those cast aside.

Refresh us with the sweet nectar of grace,  
so we, overwhelmed with joy,  
would go forth  
to enter the houses of the strangers in our midst;  
to enter the despair of the lonely and forgotten;  
to enter the hearts of everyone we meet.

And when eternity's time begins  
and we are gathered around your Table,  
with friends and family we loved,  
with those we ignored and mistreated,  
with all our sisters and brothers of grace,  
we will lift our songs of glad joy to you,  
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

Come, journey to the Table Christ has prepared for us with His  
very Life.

### *Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine*

### *Giving the Bread and Cup*

### **Pew Communion**

### *Prayer of Thanksgiving*

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 seen us, claimed us, and called us beloved.  
We give thanks for the gift of this table, for new beginnings, and  
hope for tomorrow. Amen.



\* *Closing Hymn*

*“The First Noel”*

**CH #265**



\* *Benediction*

As you follow the star on your journey, don't look for the holy in places of power and prestige. Instead, pay attention to the ordinary, the quiet places. There may you be overcome with joy, and share your gifts with creation.

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

**TH # 558**

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

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*The Abingdon Worship Annual 2022 Epiphany of the Lord January 2, 2022 – Mary Petrina Boyd*