



***Trinity United Church of Christ***

60 East High Street Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325 717-334-7266  
[tuccgburg@gmail.com](mailto:tuccgburg@gmail.com) [www.gettysburgtrinityucc.org](http://www.gettysburgtrinityucc.org)

**Trinity United Church of Christ**  
8AM and 10:30AM Worship  
*Epiphany Communion*

*Awakening joyful service guided by our still speaking God!*

*Congregational responses in **bold print**.*  
*\* Denotes standing as you are able.*

+++++

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

PRELUDE - "For Unto Us a Child is Born" – *M. Hayes*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

God of Life, like a promised land, you invite us to leave our frantic ways.

**Like a banquet-laden table you bid us to restore our empty spirits.**

Like a pool of still waters, you call us to cease our crowded living.

**Like a bright and shining star, you brighten our worship,  
and restore our lives. Amen.**

**\*HYMN #104 "We Hail You God's Anointed"**

**\*PRAYER**

**Radiant God, the nations are drawn to your light. The sound of your praise is heard around the world, for you have come in Jesus Christ, friend of the forsaken and the help of the homeless. We rejoice in your great love for the world. With people of all nations, we praise you. Glory be to you, O God! Amen.**

**\*RESPONSE TO PRAYER #104 "We Hail You God's Anointed" (V1)**

*We hail you God's anointed, the long awaited One!  
Hail in the time appointed, your reign on hearth begun!  
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free;  
To take away transgression, and rule in equity.*

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We believe in God,  
the creator of all things, the giver of life and breath.  
We believe in Jesus Christ,  
born Emmanuel, God with us,  
baptized and revealed the most beloved Son of God;  
he sought to heal humanity by taking our brokenness upon himself,  
suffering for us, dying for us  
and being raised from the dead for our sake  
and for the sake of all the world.  
We believe that he will come again.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
continually poured out refreshing our lives,  
leading us into a new day,  
ever-birthing the church, the body of Christ in the world.  
This Spirit is our soul companion and counselor of truth  
reminding us of the gift of faith, the ever presence of God  
and the promise of eternal life.  
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**\*CELEBRATION OF OUR GIFTS**

May our gifts be a sign, as were the gifts for those travelers of old,  
that wisdom is marked by an offering of self and substance  
to the Christ whose light we celebrate today and every day.

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

#164 "Arise, Your Light Is Come" (v1)  
*Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;  
Show forth the glory of your God which shine on you today!*

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**May these gifts be the light needed to restore your world, O God.  
May we continue to use its brilliance to seek out injustice,  
oppression and need, today and every day. Amen.**

Isaiah 60:1-6

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 on 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 praises of the LORD.

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men 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 at its rising, 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: <sup>6</sup>"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 wise men 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 at its rising, 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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

**"We Three Kings"** (Insert)

*J. H. Hopkins, Jr.*

*Congregation may sing along*

SERMON

"Field of Faith"

## SERVICE OF COMMUNION

*(All are welcome around the table of Remembrance. We use gluten free bread and grape juice.)*

### UNISON INVITATION TO THE TABLE

**We remind one another: Jesus welcomes everyone at this table.**

**No one is turned away. If you seek God's presence, come and eat.**

**If you are hungry for this spiritual food, come and eat.**

**If you have questions and doubts, come and eat.**

**If you feel unworthy, come and eat.**

**This table is spread for all of us that we each might experience**

**God's abundant and unconditional love.**

Since his birth, with the visit of the wise ones, strangers from the East, Jesus was not content to limit his welcome and message to his own people. Jesus was one who reached across human borders and boundaries, seeing in everyone a common heritage as a child of God. Whether it was magi from the East, or a woman from Samaria, or a leper from a nearby leper colony, Jesus welcomed them all. So, remembering Jesus and his open-hearted welcome, let us pray.

### COMMUNION PRAYER/LORD'S PRAYER

**God of all blessings, we give you thanks and praise  
for Jesus the Light of the World, the light that no darkness can overpower;  
we thank you that you have called us from darkness to walk in the light;**

**We thank you for the insight of the wise men,  
who by their gifts showed us that all life is a gift;  
with them, the angels and archangels and all who live in the light.**

**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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

### THE SERAPHIC HYMN #795

*Holy, Holy, Holy, God of the heavenly host;  
Heaven and earth are full, are full of the  
Majesty of your glory,  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed the one who comes in the name of our God,  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

*(Please come forward as the Usher directs you up the center aisle. We will form a semi-circle around the Communion Table. You will be individually served the bread first and then the cup. After we commune, the pastor will offer a benediction and you will leave the chancel area placing your cups in the receptacles provided, then return to your seat.)*

**\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**God of Light, thank you for nourishing and illuminating  
us around the table of your Son.**

**May we be beacons of love and justice in a darkened world,  
shining your light on the poor and needy,  
the victims of oppression and violence,  
and all living in dark places in need of your light.**

**Continue to lead us to places you wish us to journey. Amen.**

**\*HYMN #164 “Arise, Your Light Is Come”**

**\*FINAL BLESSING**

May the Lord bless you with all good and keep you from all evil;

**May God give light to our hearts with loving wisdom,  
and be gracious unto us with eternal knowledge;**

May the Holy One shower loving countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

**\*POSTLUDE**

**Elements from today's worship have been adapted from the following resources:**

*Shine on, Star of Bethlehem.*

Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan. The Pilgrim Press. Cleveland. 2002.

*Prayers to Share, Year B.*

David Sparks. Wood Lake Books. Kelowna, BC. 2002.

*Touch Holiness*

Ruth Duck and Maren Tirabassi. The Pilgrim Press. Cleveland. 2012.

*Portions of the Communion Liturgy came from:*

Rev. Amy Pitton within the Worship Well:

A ministry of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ.

*Affirmation of Faith*

The Rev. Dr. Amanda Burr is a United Methodist elder appointed to

United Methodist Church of Palm Springs, California.

**Prelude:** *For Unto Us a Child is Born.* Music by Mark Hayes. Copyright 1988. Shawnee Press.

**Permission to reprint / podcast / stream the music in this service obtained from ONELICENSE with License # A-712060. All rights reserved**

**Today's Worship Participants**

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young		Pastor
George Steckert	8:00am	Lay Liturgists/Serving Elders
Steve Sheely	10:30am	
Sara Shank		Organist
John McKay		Senior Choir Director
Mark Luckenbaugh		Percussion
	8:00am	Ushers
	10:30am	
Ruth & Terry Krietz		Greeters
Buck Harvey		Acolyte
Georgia Hollabaugh, Kara Young, Luke Milhimes, Sue Churchill,		Tech Team
Russell Bailey, Carl Barrick, Stacey Rushwald, George Steckert, Garrison Redding, Terry Krietz		

# 113 We Three Kings of Orient Are

When Jesus was born ... there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem — Matthew 2:1 KJV

1. We three kings of Or - i - ent are: Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far—  
 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain: Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain,  
 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh;  
 4. Myrrh is mine, its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom—  
 5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise: King and God and Sac - ri - fice;

Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain— Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er, O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship Him, God on high.  
 Sor - r'wing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! Earth to heav'n re - plies.

star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.

WORDS: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891  
 MUSIC: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891

KINGS OF ORIENT  
 Irregular



James Montgomery, 1821; alt.

1. We hail you God's a-noint-ed, the long-a-wait-ed One!  
Hail in the time ap-point-ed, your reign on earth be-gun!  
You come to break op-pres-sion, to set the cap-tive free;  
to take a-way trans-gres-sion, and rule in eq-ui-ty.
  
2. You shall come down like show-ers up-on the fruit-ful earth;  
and joy and hope, like flow-ers, spring in your path to birth.  
Be-fore you on the moun-tains shall peace, the her-ald, go,  
and righ-teous-ness, in foun-tains, from hill to val-ley flow.
  
3. The wise shall bow be-fore you and gold and in-cense bring;  
all na-tions shall a-dore you, and praise all peo-ples sing;  
To you shall prayer un-ceas-ing and dai-ly vows be said,  
your realm is still in-creas-ing, with you, O Christ, as head.
  
4. O'er ev-ery foe vic-to-rious, you on your throne shall rest;  
from age to age more glo-rious, all-bless-ing and all-blessed:  
The tide of time shall nev-er your cov-e-nant re-move;  
your name shall stand for-ev-er, your change-less name of Love.

Ps. 72

Arise, Your Light Is Come

Ruth Duck, 1973

1. A-rise, your light is come! The Spir-it's call o-bey;  
Show forth the glo-ry of your God which shines on you to-day!
2. A-rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris-on door;  
Pro-claim the cap-tive's lib-er-ty, good tid-ings to the poor.
3. A-rise, your light is come! All you in sor-row born,  
Bind up the bro-ken-heart-ed ones and com-fort those who mourn.
4. A-rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!  
Rise up like ea-gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Words Copyright © 1992 by G.I.A. Publications, Inc.

Isa. 60:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21

Trinity United Church of Christ  
Gettysburg, PA  
**Epiphany Sunday**

January 7, 2024



**Sermon**  
*“Field of Faith”*

**Matthew 2:1-12**

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young  
**Pastor**

Through the Christmas Season we have invited Christ into the world. An invitation which sometimes seems halfhearted. The child of light met with a string of no vacancies and was born instead in a lowly stable: far from home. This is the Sunday of Great Light, Epiphany, the story of those who traveled many lands to bow before the newborn king. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

For the last couple thousand years, many have speculated over the true identity of these majestic magi. Although we love to sing about Three Kings, the word magi has nothing to do with royalty, but is used to describe a priestly class of Persian or Babylonian experts in things such as astrology, astronomy, and the interpretation of dreams. They came a long way to worship one whose power was prophesized to be greater than all their rulers collectively. By paying homage to the Christ Child, they were denouncing the ruling Roman Empire, spreading light across the globe.

It was the strange star that led the magi, but their visit was filled with many illuminating gifts. Gold to celebrate royalty, frankincense to anoint the Holy One and for his priestly duties, myrrh to prepare the Messiah for burial. The most precious of presents we often overlook, the magi's light of wisdom. God provided direction through dreams, just as Joseph was guided. Last week we heard Dr. Bill Herzog's words on Jesus' dedication in the Temple. Today, I turn to Herzog's wisdom once again as he describes these visitors:

*Who were the magi? Traditionally, one of three answers has been offered...*

- 1. They were magicians and frauds who practiced the forbidden arts of divination.*
- 2. They were a class of courtly priests serving the rulers of Persia.*
- 3. They were astrologers who read the heavens and advised rulers on their plan.*

*If the magi were astrologers, their presence places the so called "star of Bethlehem" in a different light. The star has been thought to be the result of a supernova explosion, a conjunction of planets, or a comet. But it need not be any of these. The star of Bethlehem was not necessarily an extraordinary celestial event, but an ordinary star seen through the extraordinary eyes of the magi. They had "eyes to see." But Herod and his scribes did not.*

We know that these mysterious travelers came to Herod's court to stop and ask for directions. The king's wise scribes knew exactly where to tell them to go based on the words of the Ancient Prophet, Micah:

*But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient day. Micah 5:2*

But, once they visited this hardened dictator, they knew it was a mistake and did not return. When Herod was frightened, people died. His paranoia led to escalating extreme measures to secure his realm.

Matthew is all about promoting God's grace. The kingdom is wide and for Matthew, grace freely given, even to the "questionable" people of their world. The Christ Child, who attracted wise and wealthy Gentiles from the east to his manger bed, will later welcome the likes of Samaritans, tax collectors, and fishermen. In this light, we see the ministry of Jesus beginning from infancy. Herod's scribes shared the words of a minor prophet proclaiming news about one of the lesser clans of Judea, Bethlehem. Now the magi had the prophetic word and the

bright star to help them reach their destination. When they entered the stable where Jesus was born, they knelt and paid homage to the newborn King, then presented their treasures.

Epiphany is the time of the church year when we learn that God's grace goes far beyond every obstacle within or without. This season is when, through scripture and song, we learn that wisdom is not limited to a select few, but comes from many different kinds of people and places. A great light has dawned, a light that draws all people and calls us to live our lives illuminated by its truth. The prophet, Isaiah, continues to promise, even us, a light breaking forth for all who know what it feels like to "sit in darkness," and we hear the call to arise and become radiant with the light of God.

I leave you with these words from poet, Dominic Windram.

### **The Three Kings**

Although they did not know his name, they sought  
Him in the bleak darkness of wintry night.  
It defied all the wisdom they'd been taught,  
yet they were drawn to a mystical light.

With pilgrims' keen eyes that see beyond stars,  
they followed the light until they found Him.  
They offered gold, frankincense and myrrh  
to the newborn King of Kings without sin;  
In a humble stable of hallowed ground.  
They wondered how such bright glory dwelt there.  
Yet through it all, He slept without a sound.  
They realized their riches weren't so rare,  
not compared to divine innocence's worth.  
That blessed night they perceived heaven on earth.

**Amen.**

---

**Resources cited:**

Herzog II, William R. *Exegetical Perspective*. Matthew 2:1-12. Feasting on the Word. Year B. Vol. 1. Bartlett and Brown Taylor, Editors. Westminster John Knox Press. Louisville. 2008.