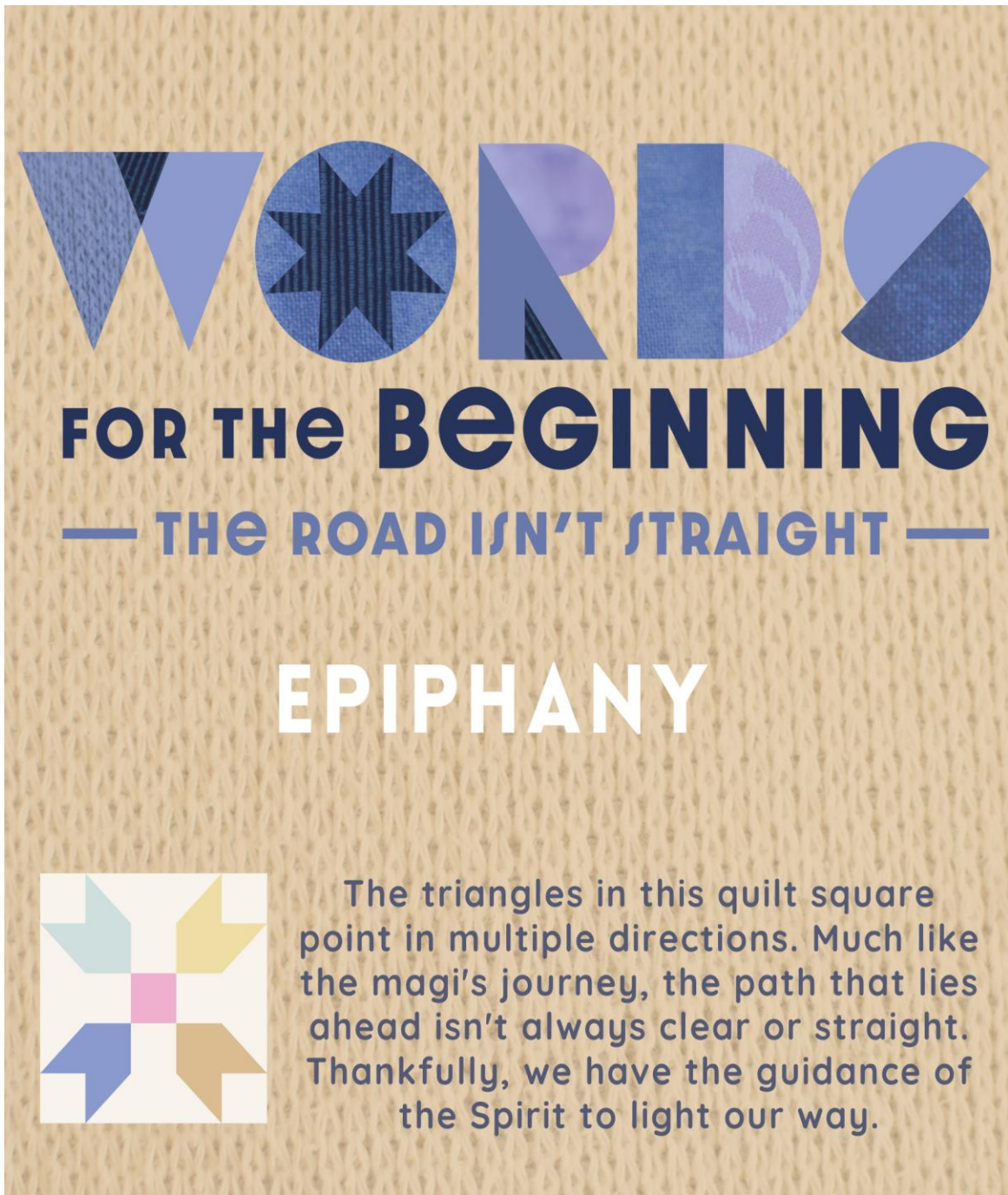


Epiphany Day | January 5, 2025



WORDS

FOR THE BEGINNING
— THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT —

EPIPHANY

The triangles in this quilt square point in multiple directions. Much like the magi's journey, the path that lies ahead isn't always clear or straight. Thankfully, we have the guidance of the Spirit to light our way.

Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Kay Zastrow

Reader: Michael Zastrow

Altar Guild: Karen Hervas

Communion Assist: Dawn Schroeder

Ushers: Carl Andrews & Sharon Hilla

Video Tech: Yvonne Pamperin

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING

Welcome

Call to Worship

In the midst of darkness, they chose to follow the light.

Their story gives us hope that God still sends light for us to follow.

We come today knowing we too are on a journey.

May we be faithful followers of the light of God so that we too can be bearers of hope and justice for a dark and lonely world.

Blessed be the Holy One,
the Word made flesh,
the Power of the Most High,
✠ one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* Cranberry 275 vss. 1,3, 4



- 1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
- 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
- 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
- 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

The Prayer of the Day

God who sent the Light into our world,
God who shone in the Bethlehem manger,
God who spreads the Spirit's rays, be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray,

God of starlight, **We long to follow you. Like the Magi, we want to pick up the hems of our robes and run in your direction. Like the Magi, we want to kick up dust with our feet and make a joyful ruckus following your guiding star.**

Unfortunately, the stars can be hard to see from here. Your still, small voice can be hard to hear from here. So just as you guided the Magi, guide us. Draw our attention to your Word. Reveal what it is you want us to hear today, so that we can follow you. With hope in our hearts we pray, Amen.

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² 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.

³ Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14 (read responsively by verse)

¹Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.

**²May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.**

³May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

**⁴May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.**

⁵May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

**⁶May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.**

⁷In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

**¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts.**

¹¹May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.

**¹²For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.**

¹³He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.

**¹⁴From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:1-12

¹This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the

mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation

Bright and Glorious Is the Sky

LBW 75 v. 6

*As a star, God's holy word
leads us to our King and Lord;
brightly from its sacred pages
shall this light throughout the ages
shine upon our path of life,
shine upon our path of life.*

Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

"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." ' "

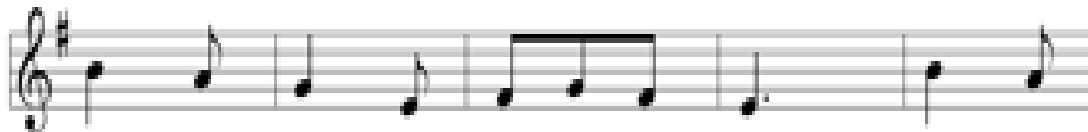
Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, 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. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

WOV 646



1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing
2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I
3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense
4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a
5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and



gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foan - tain,
bring to crown him a - gain; king for - ev - er,
owns a de - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,
life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
God and Sac - ri - fice; heav'n sings al - le -



moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.
glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God Most High.
bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
lu - ia; al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.



Refrain
Oh, 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!

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in a with-us God,
a God who is beside us in the mountains and valleys,
holding our hand through every bump and turn.
And in the chaos of our journey,
we believe that God sees what we cannot always see:
a path home by another way.
Therefore, trusting in this ever-present and guiding God,
we lace up our shoes.
We look for God's fingerprints in the world.
We trust that there are paths still unexplored,
paths that God has only begun to invite us down.
And like the Magi, we dare to follow. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

God of starlight, God of new beginnings. We are so grateful to be here, at the start of a new year. We are so grateful to be here, at the start of a new week, gathered in community. We are so grateful to begin again. So here at this beginning, we bring you our prayers.

Holy God, for the people who stand at a crossroad, unsure of what decision to make—give them clarity.

For those who are weary and worn down by the switchbacks of life,
for those walking with blisters,
for those desperate to find their way home—provide them comfort. God of mercy, glorious light, **hear our prayer.**

For those who feel confined by paths that are too straight and narrow—guide them to wide open spaces. Show them your glory in the new path, the untamed path, the twists and the turns.

For those who walk alone—surround them with community. For those who walk afraid—grant them protection. God of mercy, glorious light, **hear our prayer.**

For those who want to walk home, but have found that home is no longer there—destroyed by war or disaster, deemed unsafe by our own human hands—may we see them. May we know their struggles and may we respond with compassion. God of mercy, glorious light, **hear our prayer.**

For those who stand out under the night sky, desperate to see a sign of your star—shine brightly. And for those who dance their way down the path, delighted by the beauty the journey brings—bless them. Allow their joy to spill over into our lives, inspiring gratitude and joy in each of us. God of mercy, glorious light, **hear our prayer.**

Guiding God, we know that this life of faith is not easy.
Even the Magi, those faithful seekers, had to change course.
Even the Magi had to go home by another way.
So as we journey, bless our wanderings. Bless our path. Walk beside us. Hang
stars in the sky and place a deep knowing in our gut that we simply cannot
ignore. And if the road turns into a dead end, grant us the courage to begin
again.

With hope in our hearts and gratitude in our lungs,
we commend all for whom we pray,
dwelling in the light and hope of Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

Offertory *As With Gladness Men of Old*

ELW 302 vs. 3

*As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.*

Offering Prayer

Let us pray, **Glorious God,**

You led the magi to seek Jesus, your Holy Child.

**Overjoyed in the presence of his radiant light,
they knelt down and offered him precious gifts
of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

**We too offer our gifts in gratitude, reverence,
and thanksgiving for the birth of your child,
whom you called to lead the world into fullness of life.**

**Receive and bless our offering as a joyful sign
of the boundless love and abundant life
we share in Christ. Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe,
for your star shines still in the night sky,
guiding your people in paths of love and justice.

In the beginning, you brought light into darkness,
and created a people to reflect your glory.
When we have lost our way or turned away,
you shone the light all the brighter,
calling us through the words of prophets
and even in the life of your Son,
who was born as we are born, breathed and ate
and walked and lived as we do,
who not only revealed your way but is the way.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Send the power of your Holy Spirit
upon these gifts of bread and wine.
May this glimpse of your kingdom sustain us,
and give us eyes to see you at work in every place,
and strength to be your body in the world.
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Guide us all through the promise of Jesus, your light, who teaches us to pray:

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 trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

Family of faith, the bread has been broken and the cup has been poured, which means the feast is ready. Today you are invited to come to the Table to receive Communion along with a star word to guide you in seeking God this year.

Communion Hymns

The First Noel

Cranberry 300



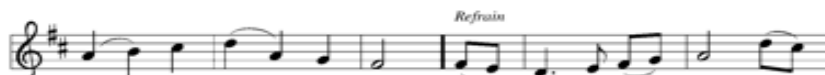
1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing
3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .
4 This star drew near to the . . north-west, o'er . .
5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



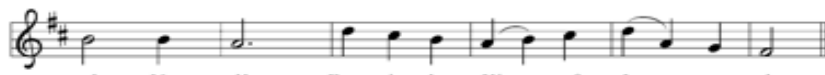
cer-tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
in . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the
wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it
rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
earth it gave . . great light, and . . so it con -
king was their . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
did both stop . . and stay right . . o - ver the
there in his . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and




Refrain
night that was so deep.
tin-ued both day and night.
star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
place where Je - sus lay.
myrrh, and frank - in - cense.




el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.



1 Bright-est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,
 2 Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing;
 3 What shall we give him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion?
 4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,
 5 Bright-est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,



dawn on our dark - ness and lend us your aid.
 low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
 Shall we bring in - cense and of - f'rings di - vine,
 vain - ly with gifts would his fa - vor se - cure;
 dawn on our dark - ness and lend us your aid.



Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,
 an - gels a - dore him in slum - ber re - clin - ing,
 gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,
 rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,
 Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,



guide where our in - fant re - deem - er is laid.
 mak - er and mon - arch and sav - ior of all.
 myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?
 dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.
 guide where our in - fant re - deem - er is laid.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, alt.

Music: MORNING STAR, James P. Harding, 1850–1911, adapt.

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray, Holy God who lights our way, We thank you for this moment of respite along the journey, a moment to be filled with good things, to be reminded of our belovedness and sent out to be your hands and feet in the world.

Though we'd often prefer a straightforward, step-by-step plan for our lives, you've instead given us an invitation to wander, to seek, to take a different road, to be guided by a star.

May these star words be a map to you, guiding us to look under every rock and around every corner, seeking you out everywhere, because everywhere is exactly where you are. And next year, when the road leads back to this very place, may we find that you were with us every step of the way. With hope we pray, **Amen.**

Announcements

Benediction

The God of love,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
lavish you with grace,
illumine your path,
and increase your joy,
today and always. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Cranberry 671

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Shine, Jesus, Shine'. It consists of ten staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes a 'Refrain' label at the beginning and end. The lyrics are: 'Shine, Je - sus, shine, fill this land with the Fa - ther's glo - ry; blaze, Spir - it, blaze, set our hearts on fire. Flow, riv - er, flow, flood the na - tions with grace and mer - cy; send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light! 1 Lord, the light of your love is shin - ing, in the midst of the 2 As we gaze on your king - ly bright-ness, so our fac - es dis - dark-ness, shin - ing; Je - sus, light of the world, shine up - on us, play your like - ness, ev - er chang - ing from glo - ry to glo - ry, set us free by the truth you now bring us. mir - rored here, may our lives tell your sto - ry. Shine on me, shine on me: Shine on me, shine on me:'. The word 'Refrain' appears above the first staff and below the last staff.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Be a light-bearer for Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 12/31/24 \$35,915.85

Monthly Budget Expenses:..... \$18,743.00

YTD Receipts through 12/31/24..... \$ 250,145.00

Yearly Budget..... \$ 224,917.00

The Bethel Weekly

Fellowship Hour: Please, if you are able to help on a future date in January, sign up in the hallway.

2025 Offering Envelopes: Are available in the lounge. Please pick them up so they do not need to be mailed.

2024 Giving Statements: Are available in the lounge.

Annual Reports: Are due by January 16th.

Salvation Army Senior Meal: Is January 20th. Please see the sign-up sheet in the hallway for needed items.

Newsletter Articles: Are due January 22nd.

Aebleskiver 2025: It's never too early to start looking for sales on ingredients and basket items.

Handbags for Hope: In conjunction with the Resurrection Food Pantry, we are asking all the ladies to bring in any unwanted purses. Donations are also needed of travel size hygiene items such as toothbrushes, shampoo, lip balm, etc. to fill the purses prior to distribution. Suggestions can be found on the front of the bin in the lounge.

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Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed and Rev. Anna Strickland | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.