

**EPIPHANY: THREE KINGS SUNDAY**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

**Jan. 1, 2023**

*Welcome*

*Thanks for joining us*



*Enter in SILENCE*

*Wait with REVERENCE*

*Worship from JOY*

**PRELUDE:** *"Wachet auf; Ruft uns die Stimme" by JS Bach*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Erika Wulster

AFFIRMATION OF MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Statement

**As disciples of Jesus Christ,  
led by the Holy Spirit,  
we experience God's unconditional love,  
and we witness to others  
by discovering and sharing our gifts.**

CHORAL INTROIT:

Chancel Choir

\* CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: Shepherds arose from their fields and went to Bethlehem,

**People: Magi from the East, versed in astrology, followed the star and found the child;**

Leader: This child, so distinct and unique, was unlike any other child, is the revelation of God to simpletons and the sophisticated;

**People: The Magi offered their gifts of frankincense, gold, and myrrh; filled with joy, they bowed to worship.**

Leader: They bowed to worship and in worship, the Christ-child.

**People: They worshiped the Christ, the revelation of God for the people of God.**

Leader: With mindful preparation, heartfelt expectation, and joyful celebration, let us worship, let us worship God.

\* HYMN OF PRAISE: *No. 56 The First Noel* (vv. 1, 3, 6)

***The first Nowell the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds  
in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay akeeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.***

*Cont'd.*

*And by the light of that same star,  
Three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

*Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;  
That hath made Heaven and earth of naught,  
And with His blood our life hath bought.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

EPIPHANY PRAYER OF CONFESSION: *In silence then unison*

**Eternal God, whose Son, Jesus, is the light of the world: In Jesus' penetrating light, we acknowledge our unacknowledged shadows and inner darkness; in his constant grace our casual love; in his generous giving our grasping; in his equal justice, our dire prejudice; in his fortitude our fear of failure; in his unconditional, inclusive love, our deep divide and divisiveness; in his wholeness, our brokenness and our sins.**

**In your mercy, awaken us to and forgive us of our inner darkness. Make us mindful of our mortality, that we may know the enduring hope of his eternity; in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS:

**Leader:** As God's Epiphany people, be fully alive to the joy of Christ's light and birth. Celebrate that we are Christ's light to the world.

**People:** **In freedom and forgiveness, let us forgive one another.**

\* EPIPHANY CELEBRATION: *No. 28*

*v. 3*

***Good Christian friends, rejoice  
with heart, and soul, and voice;  
Now ye need not fear the grave;  
Jesus Christ was born to save;  
Calls you one and calls you all  
to gain the everlasting hall;  
Christ was born to save!  
Christ was born to save!***

\* EXCHANGE OF CHRIST'S PEACE:

*Share Christ's peace by using the peace sign or by waving to those in the Sanctuary.*

GIVING OF OUR GIFTS & OFFERTORY:

*Please remember to be faithful stewards of your church family with your prayers, your time, talent and your financial resources.*

*Plates are positioned in the window sills and the center aisle.*

*Contributions may also be made:*

- *Electronically on the church website at [fpcb-nj.org](http://fpcb-nj.org);*
- *By electronic withdrawal from your checking account; or by*
- *Mailing your offering to the church:  
P.O. Box 385, Blairstown, NJ.*



\* DOXOLOGY: *Love Has Come* (v 1, No. 110, Glory to God)

***Love has come, a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.***

\* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

# DECLARING GOD'S WORD

HEBREW BIBLE READING: Isaiah 60: 1–6

The light had come and is revealed to the nations.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 2: 1–15, 19–23

The origin of Jesus is revealed.



# DECLARING GOD'S WORD

HEBREW BIBLE READING: Isaiah 60: 1–6

The light had come and is revealed to the nations.

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 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 praise of the LORD.

## GOSPEL READING: Matthew 2: 1–15, 19–23

The magi bring offer their gifts to Jesus.

2 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."

*Cont'd.*

<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.

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." *Cont'd.*

**14** Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

**19** When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, **20** "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." **21** Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. **23** There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

ANTHEM:

Chancel Choir

*See Amid the  
Winter's Snow*

MEDITATION:

Pastor David Harvey

# ***Bumpy Start***



# RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

\* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *The Nicene Creed, AD 325*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated on the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. Amen.**

\* COMMUNION HYMN: *No. 66 We Three Kings of Orient Are (vv. 1–3, 5)*

***We three kings of Orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.***

***O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light!***

***Born a King on Bethlehem's plain  
Gold I bring to crown Him again,  
King forever, ceasing never,  
Over us all to reign.***

*Cont'd.*

***Refrain: O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light!***

***Frankincense to offer have I:  
Incense owns a Deity nigh;  
Prayer and praising, we are raising,  
Worshipping God Most High.  
(Refrain)***

***Glorious now behold Him arise,  
King and God and Sacrifice;  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
Sounds through the earth and skies.  
(Refrain)***

# SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

## INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE:

Deacon: Listen to these precious and gracious words  
of the Lord Jesus:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”.

Matthew 11: 28–30

This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.

John 6: 40

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if those who hear my voice open the door, I will come in to them and eat with them, and they with me.

Revelation 3: 20

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And with your spirit.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give God our thanks  
and praise.**

# PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING, FOR THE PEOPLE & THE LORDS PRAYER:

Pastor: Holy Lord . . . as we pray together.

**All: O God, awaken within us the grace of Jesus' humility, the miracle of his hospitality, and the mystery of his generosity that we may live as beacons of Jesus' light and true ambassadors of Jesus' peace. This we ask as we pray together in Jesus' name, saying: "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.**

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

OFFERING OF THE ELEMENTS: Approach the Table, receive the bread, take the cup, and return to your pew.

## SHARING THE BREAD:

Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*" (Jn. 6:37) Let us eat this bread in remembrance of Christ and may the spirit that is in him be in us also.

## DRINKING THE CUP:

Jesus said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches, apart from him, we can do nothing.*" Let us drink this cup in remembrance of Christ and may the spirit in which he died be our Spirit.

## COMMUNION BLESSING:

Deacon: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: For the complete reign and rule of Christ's kingdom on and over our lives, we praise you, O God. We rejoice that because He lives and lives in us, we are assured that nothing past, present nor things to come shall separate us from your great love, revealed in Jesus our Lord. Amen.**



# DEPARTING IN GOD'S NAME

\* HYMN: *No. 68 What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright*

*What star is this, with beams so bright,  
More lovely than the noonday light? 'Tis sent to announce a newborn King,  
Glad tidings of our God to bring.*

*'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed,  
"From Jacob shall a star proceed";  
And lo! the Eastern sages stand  
To read in heaven the Lord's command.*

*Cont'd.*

***O Jesus, while the star of grace  
Impels us on to seek Your face,  
Let not our slothful hearts refuse  
The guidance of Your light to use.***

***To God the Father, God the Son,  
And Holy Spirit, Three in One,  
May every tongue and nation raise  
An endless song of thankful praise.***

\* CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE & BENEDICTION

\* CHORAL BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE: *"For Unto us a Child is Born" by GF Handel*

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED,  
OUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS BEGINS!

*Have a Blessed 2023!*

Please join us in Fellowship Hall after  
the service for refreshments and fellowship!