

Grace and peace, light to you, dearly beloved of Christ. Amen.

Arise, shine, for your light has come.

Yesterday was technically the feast of Epiphany, and today, in worship, we celebrate it.

How could we resist this chance to bridge the seasons?

Epiphany literally means manifestation, to show, to reveal, as in: God is revealed in Jesus.

As in Christ's light is revealed in you, and in me, in this community.

As in, darkness doesn't overcome, the light shines and its reflection changes everything.

From our readings today:

Looking forward to the time after exile, Isaiah prophesies to a once heartbroken community:

Arise, shine, your light has come, and God's glory has risen, finally risen, upon you.

On Christmas Eve we heard about the angels and the shepherds.

Today we hear Matthew's rendition of the ancient story replete with

astrologers following a bright star,

and Herod's insecurities on high alert, frightened, threatened, shaken.

This baby is a threat to the oppressive tactics of which Herod was all too fond.

God is showing the world—very physically—a whole new way of salvation.

That's Epiphany!

During this season our congregation enters a new capital campaign called Revealing Hope.

We're exploring how God is revealing hope in and through us, and through this faithful community.

Over these six weeks we'll dig in deeply to how God is revealing hope...

and how we share and live this promise of hope, even, especially in challenging times.

Today I am going to stop talking and invite you into holy movement, all around our worship space.

Let me introduce you to these stations and then I pray you will participate as you feel led.

"At this first station, we remember that Herod's first reaction

to a new power for peace, for justice in the world...was anger, fear.

And that such fear fuels violence and causes suffering, still today.

In an attempt to squelch the Christ-child, Herod would soon undertake

a slaughter of all the baby boys in the region.

Under that threat to their very lives, the holy family fled to Egypt as refugees.

Here, at this station, around the map, let us pray for the world, and for its powers,

for the fears and hopes that live within us all, for immigrants and refugees,

and each of us caught in this power.

Light a candle and place it somewhere on the map as an act of resistance, of prayer.

Similarly, at this wall map,

feel free to write the name or a situation you are praying for today and place it on the map.

Here we remember that light itself is at the center of this story.

And it's Christ's light that shines within and through each of us.

The magi show us how to journey toward the light with courage and a profound, deep, sense of hope,

how to follow a star, how to live in dark times kindling Christ's light.

Stop here, at this station, to make a small candle lantern.

And then take it home, and use it to center your soul.

Today we have an opportunity for prayer and healing.

As always, you can come and pray here at the communion rail.

If you'd like to pray for healing with Pastor Barbara or with me, we'll be close.

At this station, we remember the gifts the magi brought to the child.

Strange gifts, frankincense, myrrh, gold, more like weighty burdens, especially for a baby.

Gifts that represented healing, death and embalming, royalty.

We too, carry burdens, baggage, and gifts.

There are rocks at this station.

I invite you to pick up one and let it symbolize the burdens you're carrying—feel it's weight.

You can place the rock in the baptismal waters, trusting God's promises to hold you, and all that you carry.

Or you can take the rock with you if it is a burden you need to simply name and carry onward.

Here at the baptismal font, dip into the baptismal waters, remember the forgiveness, the new life, the healing, and identity of this water—water that will never let you go.

Remember, You are a beloved child of God, a brightly shining child of God.

Over here, there are prompts for conversation with another, or reflection on your own.

Matthew says that the magi were warned in a dream and they returned to their country by another way—there is this interwoven sense of spirituality and politics.

I'm thinking about dreams and visions, and about strategy and intentions.

In these times, we need one another and we need the wisdom of our traditions.

These are note cards and envelopes.

It's that season of thank you notes, often thank yous for things we have received.

Today write to someone, not about a thing, but about what you value in them, how their light shines.

And finally, at the doors, way in the back, we remember that the magi are threshold characters.

At the doorway, we honor the thresholds, the crossroads at which we find ourselves.

We reflect on the past. We look to the future. And we seek God's blessing.

Write on a star the blessing you seek for a new year, and tape it to the doorframe."

Lots of options, visit a station or two or more.

Or simply remain in your pew—to pray and reflect.

May God bless our holy movement and our prayer.