

Worship Leader

Introduction to Worship

Today we welcome the Wise Men into our Christmas story.

A story of wonder and light,

of angels bringing messages in dreams,

trusting obedience and virgin births.

In the midst of darkness, the Wise Men 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.

Let us praise God for the light that leads us on the way home to Jesus our King.

Please stand and join me in our Hymn of Praise, number 149,

“Angels from the Realms of Glory.”

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

God of love,

from generation to generation,

across nations, cultures and beliefs, we see evidence of you.

Let your light continue to shine in our hearts

and give us the courage to always follow it towards you.

For we pray in the name of Jesus, the light of the world, who taught us to pray:

Our Father...

Pastor

Morning Prayer

Lord of bright and abiding Light, you have shown us, in the person of Jesus your Son, a new way to live.

You have poured your light into the world and have asked us to live in the light rather than run and hide in the darkness of doubt and despair.

You promise to be our light all of our days and ask us to place our trust in you. The journey in this light is risky. It means that we will have to be very serious about our service to you, giving you our best and offering hope and light to others.

In this new year, we bring to you the names and situations of others for whom light seems to be a stranger. They struggle with ill health, economic hardship, broken and damaged relationships, loss of loved ones, and anxiety. We place them in your care. Let your light shine on them, bringing healing and hope.

Help us to be bearers of your light in all that we do; for we ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-23

Sermon: Which way?

Invitation: What choice are you going to make?

Benediction

As we leave our time of worship, I bless you with these words from James Taylor:

Herod's always out there, he's got our cards on file.

It's a lead pipe cinch, if we give an inch, old Herod likes to take a mile.

It's best to go home by *another* way, home by another way.

We got this far to a lucky star, but tomorrow is another day.

We can make it another way, safe home as they used to say.

Keep a weather eye to the chart on high and go home another way.

Go with God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Invitation to the Table

One of the names of the Communion Table is “The Table of Remembrance.”

And that’s also a theme of New Year’s celebrations, so today I want to invite you to the Lord’s table with this traditional New Year’s poem, Auld Lang Syne, by Robert Burns.

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.
We two have run about the slopes,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.
We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine,
But seas between us broad have roared
since auld lang syne.
And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
for auld lang syne.
For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

And so as we share *this* cup of kindness, let us remember that

on the night that our Lord Jesus was betrayed,

he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

“Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in memory of me.”

And after supper Jesus took the cup,

gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying,

“This cup is the new covenant of love in my blood,

shed for you and for all, that sins might be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.”

Prayer for the Bread and Cup (Elder)

Let us pray:

Gracious God,

On this day when we celebrate both your Son's Epiphany and the beginning of a new year, we remember here at this table the great kindness of the grace that is ours in Christ Jesus. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and the cup, that we will both remember the grace that we have received and share that grace with everyone around us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Stewardship Thought (Elder)

We have seen the light of the world.

We have been called to follow the star of promise.

Like the Wise Men,

let us bring our gifts to honor the babe of Bethlehem

and bring the light to all the dark places

in our community and our world.

Offertory Prayer (Elder)

God of light and promise,

we bring our gifts to further your work in a dark world.

May they bring your light

to those overwhelmed by darkness, pain, and loneliness.

Accept these gifts and let them shine for all to see,

and as they are brought into the sphere of your love and righteousness.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.