

Grace Presbyterian Church

January 7, 2024

Epiphany

9:30 am

VISION STATEMENT

We are an open and affirming congregation.

**We genuinely welcome people of all ages,
race, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations,
beliefs,
and those who are cognitively
and or physically challenged.**

Our vision is to be a community of love and purpose,
**each one engaged in ministry,
seeking to know Christ, growing in discipleship,
and embodying God's love for the world.**



“ For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.”

Prayer Candles

Before Worship, you may offer a prayer and light a candle at the communion table.

We Gather

PRELUDE

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call to Worship

O come, let us worship the Lord
and consider what wondrous things God has done:
The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star!

O come, let us worship the Lord
and consider what wondrous things God has done:
The people who live in the shadows see a glorious light!

O come, let us worship the Lord
and consider what wondrous things God has done:
The Christ who embodies the Word unveils the hidden plan, making us joint heirs of the promise of salvation through the gospel!

O come, let us worship the Lord,
for God has done wondrous things!

— from The Visit of the Magi—Epiphany Sunday,
on The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

*Opening Hymn #147 "The First Nowell"

Call to Confession

We long to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God's love into this world.

We would like to be those who cared for God in infant vulnerability; who tickled and cuddled and comforted the growing child, that he might know love and safety.

Prayer of Confession

**And yet, merciful God,
we must recognize all the times we are more like
Herod.**

**Whenever we, in our actions or in our inactions,
find our own need for control more compelling
than the needs of others for health and safety.**

**Whenever we cling to the security of our privilege,
rather than standing up for the rights of the
oppressed.**

**Whenever we are complicit in the harming of
innocents for the sake of profit, or power,
or because we fear to know, and to change,
the injustices of this world.**

**Loving God,
we confess our sins against you and one another,
and pray that you will fill us with your light,
that we may live our lives as true disciples in your
name, without counting the cost.**

(Silence is kept for personal confession.)

In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way,
we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

God's light is present in this world.

Present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness.

Present in the star, in all that guides us to love.

God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it.

God's grace is in the world, and our mis-steps will not overcome it.

We are loved, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.

~ written by Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy,
Pastor at First Church Congregational, Rochester, NH.

Hymn #155 "Raise a Song of Gladness"
(please remain seated and sing 3x)

We Reflect

Prayer of Illumination

Emmanuel -

**Give us the perseverance and courage
to seek out and approach you
wherever you are to be found;
Grant us the vision and understanding
to see and recognize you
whenever we might meet you;
Gift us the grace and generosity
to respond freely and fully
whatever you might ask of us.**

~ posted on the Monthly Prayers page of the Christian Aid website.

First reading from the prophet Isaiah 60:1-6

A time for Children and the Young in heart

Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12

SERMON

*Hymn #151 "We Three Kings"

We Respond

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is **to Know, Love, and Serve God**

Offertory Invitation

Musical Meditation

Prayer of Dedication

**God of all good gifts,
who gives freely to us,
have mercy on us and grant us the peace
that only the Prince of Peace can provide.
Grant that our lives would be an offering,
and that our work would be a good gift,
just as the gifts that the magi brought,
pleasing to you and fit for the king of all creation.
We look to you, our Prophet, Priest and King,
to rule the world with justice,
and to give salvation to all who call upon you.**

Amen

~ written by Thomas Turner, and posted on Everyday Liturgy.

(Many thanks to all who contribute to the mission and ministry of our church in offering plates during worship and by electronic giving throughout the month).

Prayers of God's People (sharing of Joys and Concerns)
Lord, in your mercy/with thanksgiving, **Hear our prayer.**

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Pick up "star word"

Prayer after communion

We Are Sent

*Hymn #150 "As with Gladness Men of Old"

*Charge and Benediction

O Star-flinging God,
whose light dances across eternity,
dazzle us into your presence
this new year.

Open our hearts to the mystery of your love.

Awaken us to your presence,
knit to the ordinary.

Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present.
Heal us, that we might be healers.

Reconcile us to you and to ourselves,
that our living might be reconciling.

Stop us often, we pray
with news that is good

with hope that holds
with truth that transforms with a Word
tailored to this trail we're on.

May the your word guide our steps
like the sun by day
and the north star by night,
as we travel into the gift of a new year. Amen.

— written by Glenn Mitchell, and posted on MINemergent's Daily Communique.

*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Peace be with you!

And also with you.

(We invite you to offer a sign of peace to those around you and as you gather for fellowship. We remind you to ask what folks feel comfortable with...a verbal greeting, a handshake or fist bump, etc. Do not assume.)

POSTLUDE

***Indicates, please stand in body or spirit.**

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