



United Methodist Church  
of Westport and Weston

January 3, 2021  
Epiphany Sunday

*Our Vision is to Know, to Live  
and to Share the Love of Jesus Christ.*

LivestreamWorship – 10:00am

PRAYER FOR MEDITATION

Rev. Ian Elston, Church of Scotland

*Lord of yesterday, today and tomorrow, we gather this first Sunday of the New Year, in a mixture of hope, anticipation, fear, excitement, and expectation. We do not know what the year holds for us. There are things we are afraid of: worries about health and family, job security and finances. There is much to look forward to – weddings or anniversaries or baptisms, holidays to enjoy, friends to laugh with. Lord God, the coming year is full of uncertainty and hope. Whatever the year holds for us, though, we trust You, and we place every day of this year in your care knowing that, as in the past, You are with us, caring for us with constant love. And so Lord, we place ourselves into your keeping and dedicate our lives to your service through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior. Amen.*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Heather

PRELUDE

*We Three Kings*  
Ahyoung Son, organ

J. H. Hopkins, Jr.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Dennis & Paula Castiglia

We gather:

**a community of faith in God's subversive world.**

We gather to celebrate

**that no darkness can extinguish light,**

to remember

**that love will always be more powerful than death,**

and to trust that

**peace will always be stronger than violence.**

We gather,

**people of faith in the light of God's world.**

Welcome to worship.

HYMN

*The First Noel*

UMH 245

*Verse 1*

The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*Refrain*

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

*Verse 2*

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. **(Refrain)**

*(continues on next page)*

*Verse 3*

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. *(Refrain)*

*Verse 4*

This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. *(Refrain)*

*Verse 5*

Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee,  
and offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense. *(Refrain)*

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:1-12

Harry Jordan

**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."

<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.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"Follow That Star!"

Rev. Heather A. M. Sinclair

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

INVITATION

Christ invites to this table all who love him, who turn away from sin and despair, preparing their hearts to receive the welcome of Christ and one another with peace and love. Let us pray for Christ's light to come into our hearts and lives:

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & CONFESSION

We thank you God that you know what it is to be human  
Fragile and vulnerable,  
searching for ways to stay alive in dangerous and complicated times  
We thank you that you know the struggles and temptations  
of living in darkness.  
And we thank you that you give light to the world.

*[silent prayers for those who are fragile, vulnerable and seeking light]*

We confess that sometimes it's easier to stay in the shadows,  
where things can stay hidden,  
where people can't see our cracks and flaws.

**Cast your light on our darkness  
and forgive us, God of love.**

We confess that we have at times brought darkness  
into the world by our anger, our selfishness, our violence.

**Cast your light on our darkness  
and forgive us, God of love.**

We confess that we are sometimes skeptical of light  
and find it easier to trust its absence.

**Cast your light on our darkness  
and forgive us, God of love.**

And in this silence,  
bring the confessions that are on your heart and mind  
into the light of God's love

*[silent prayers of confession]*

We know in faith that God restores and renews,  
and that our sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

#### SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*As forgiven and reconciled people, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God.*

#### GIVING THANKS FOR OUR GIFTS

*The ministry of the church is ongoing during these days. Your gifts, tithes and offerings continue to allow us to "be the church." Checks may be sent to the church office or given online through our website. Your generosity is a blessing. Thank you.*

#### SPECIAL MUSIC

*In the Bleak Midwinter*  
Chris Hisey & Lauren Hisey

C. G. Rossetti; G. Holst

#### HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

UMH 94

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

#### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Lift up your hearts and give thanks to God.

Blessed are you, O God, who with your Word and Holy Spirit created all things and called them good. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth.

In Jesus Christ your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, revealing our light and our salvation.

You sent a star to guide wise persons to where the Christ was born;

And in your signs and wonders, in every age and through all the world, you have lead your people from places to your divine light.

Through Jesus' suffering and death  
you took upon yourself our sin and death and destroyed their power for ever.  
You raised Jesus from the dead, who now reigns with you in glory,  
and poured upon us your Holy Spirit, making us the people of your new covenant.

On the night before his death, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,  
gave it to the disciples, and said:  
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to the disciples, and said: "Drink from  
this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts,  
that in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this wine  
we may know the presence of the living Christ  
and be renewed as the body of Christ for the world,  
redeemed by Christ's blood, until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at your table for ever.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER *You are invited to pray in the version and language of your heart.*

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your 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 yours is  
the kingdom, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

BREAKING AND SHARING THE BREAD & CUP

HYMN

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*  
Bill Hall, vocal & instrumental

UMH 224

*Verse 1*

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
Give ye heed to what we say: News, news! Jesus Christ is born today!  
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today, Christ is born today!

*Verse 2*

Good Christian friends, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;  
Now ye hear of endless bliss: News, news! Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He hath opened the heaven's door, and ye are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!

*Verse 3*

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

GOING FORTH TO LOVE AND SERVE

BENEDICTION

*Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy meal in which you have abundantly given yourself to us.  
Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to bring peace, to share hope and to give  
ourselves for others with love and joy, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

POSTLUDE

*Once in Royal David's City*  
Ahyoung Son, organ

H. J. Gauntlett



Portions of the Order of Worship are adapted from:

*The United Methodist Hymnal, The United Methodist Book of Worship, and The Faith We Sing,*

Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House

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Rev. Ian Elston, Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday, <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

Call to Worship and Prayers of Thanksgiving & Confession, Cheryl Lawrie, <http://holdthinspace.org.au/>

Star Words worksheet adapted from Rev. Charissa Clark Howe, pastor of St. Andrew's and Emsworth UP Churches, Pittsburgh, PA



**WELCOME!** We joyfully welcome all visitors to our worship service this morning. You are welcome to make this your community of faith and participate in any of the activities of our congregation.

Our Mission is:

**To Know the love of Jesus in personal ways through worship, prayer and study**

**To Live the love of Jesus through acts of compassion, gentleness and justice**

**To Share the love of Jesus in our homes, our community and the world**

**To Welcome all of God's children regardless of age, race, ability,  
sexual or gender orientation, and economic circumstance.**

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF WESTPORT AND WESTON**  
49 WESTON ROAD ♦ WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

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OUR MINISTERS

EVERY PARTICIPANT IN THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

DAN GELMAN AND CINDY GLOVER, LAY LEADERS

REV. HEATHER A. M. SINCLAIR, PASTOR

CHRISTOPHER HISEY, MUSIC DIRECTOR ♦ AHYOUNG SON, ORGANIST

MARILYN SMITH, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

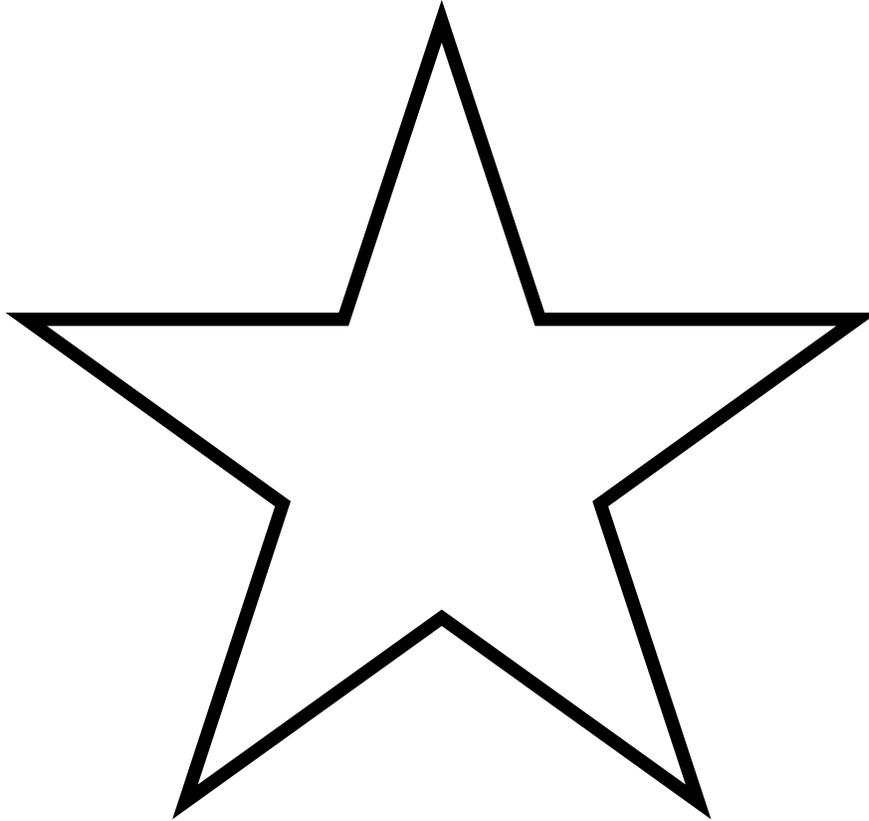
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# Star Word 2021

The spiritual practice of following Star Words will be introduced during Epiphany Sunday Worship. Print out this page (one per person) in preparation.



**"You are the light of the world.**

**A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.**

**In the same way, let your light shine before others,  
so that they may see your good works and give glory to God who is in heaven."**

**Matthew 5:14-16**