

EPIPHANY SUNDAY

The First Church in Belfast
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation
January 7, 2017
10:00 a.m.

WE ARE GATHERED IN

WELCOME TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PRELUDE

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, once more, to the night of wonder!

Let us hear the angel song and see the sky's light!

Guided by a star that stays faithfully shining,

the whole world is beckoned to meet the holy child.

All people are invited to come and be amazed.

We are called these centuries later,

to bring our gifts with the magi.

Let us worship and adore!

*OPENING CAROL

“The First Nowell” #139

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION

CHORAL ANTHEM

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MESSAGE AND MINISTRY

Blessing the Portal

*GREETING OF PEACE

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God as Creator, family all are we.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me let this be the moment now.

*With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:
to take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally.*

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

MEDITATION

WORDS OF GRACE

“The Flight” by Richard Fiske

.....*silence*.....

WE HEAR THE WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

Pam Chase

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:1-12

MESSAGE

“Epiphany Children”

WE LIVE THE WORD

***EPIPHANY HYMN**

“The Star of Epiphany”

tune: ST. DENIO words: Rev. Dr. Kate Winters, Belfast, ME

For Rev. Susie Maxwell on the day of her ordination, 1/6/18

The star of Epiphany calls with its light
all seekers who open themselves in the night
to voices that whisper “Come, child, let us see
what wonders await if you dare follow me.”

The journey begins in the dark and the cold,
with hazards and questions that challenge the bold.
But soon dear sweet longing becomes who you are,
a daughter or son of that beckoning star.

A child of the star, you will follow its lead
to stables of joy and to places of need.
You’ll find that they’re one in the same as you go,
for present is God in the love you bestow.

When heavens come calling, it’s wise to depart
to follow the vision God’s placed in your heart.
Epiphany claims you, its offspring you are,
transforming the world in the light of that star.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

With the Magi, we bring our gifts with hearts that are full. May our wonder last all year that we might offer ourselves in the mission of the Christ Child. Let us inhabit the world with love, treat others with compassion, care for all in need with joy, and welcome the stranger as brother and sister, in the way of Jesus. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

The table is set for the holy banquet.

We dine on the love and the light of Christ.

All who long to be included are welcome.

All who long for God, taste and see that God is good!

Communion Prayer

Blessed are you, God, maker of the earth and all that is! We thank you for the mysteries of the universe, the glory of the sky, the fecundity of the earth. We thank you for our lives, the gift of our breath, our bodies, our minds, our souls.

But most of all today, we thank you for the light of your star that calls us to attend to your call for our lives. May it ever beckon us to follow Jesus whose life of prayer, teaching, and infinite love, showed us your face, your nature, and your passion for the good of all creation. May our lives reflect the same.

Today, we remember him as he gathered around the table with his friends and his enemies, breaking bread, reconciling people to one another, and becoming one with all things. At supper, he took the bread in his hands and said:

“Take and eat this bread, for it is my body.”

Let us eat together to feed the hunger of our souls.

Then he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it around, saying:

“Take and drink this cup, for it is my blood.”

Let us take in the lifeblood of Jesus for the healing of the whole world.

Holy Spirit, pour your life into this bread, pour your wisdom into this cup. May we find within them new and liberating life.

And so we eat this bread and drink this cup, in the knowledge that Christ is present within and around us for the blessing of all being.

Sharing the Meal

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord’s Prayer

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.

INVITATION TO GIVE

***DOXOLOGY**

“Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!”

Prayer of Thanksgiving

WE ARE SENT AND BLESSED

***CLOSING HYMN** “We Three Kings” (*back page*)

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

“We Three Kings”

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

[Refrain]

O star of wonder, star of light,
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.

[Refrain]