

# A Revealing Light (Epiphany Sunday)

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Date: 03 January 2021

Preacher: Pastor Sherry Mahar

[ 0 : 00 ] Michael McQue cortis Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. The Lord be with you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. God revealed to the world that a Savior had come. God's only Son, Jesus. Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, our Savior and our King.

A light in the darkness, shining into our lives with God's glory. Jesus reveals himself to us today, lighting the path as we step into the newness of this coming year, a faithful step into a life of hope and promise with our eternal King.

[ 3 : 14 ] Let us pray. Holy God, we thank you for your presence, for your gift of light, for your gift of joy, for your gift of revelation, shining your truth into our lives, guiding us and keeping us, leading us in your way.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. That's a wonderful person. I love you.

Amen. Together, the first Noel, you are welcome to do so. So you can hum, you can speak, and just rejoice in the words.

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.

[ 4 : 44 ] Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

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.

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

Then entered in those wise men three, full reverently upon the knee.

[ 5 : 55 ] And offered there in His presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

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

Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And a Happy New Year to you. Welcome to worship at the Pendleton Center in Niagara Falls First United Methodist Churches this morning.

My name is Scott. I'm part of your pastoral team. And it is a joy to be in worship with you today. So much is happening. So much is good in the world, even though we are still in the midst of so many struggles and crises.

[ 7 : 02 ] God is with us and God is good. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. great Epiphany Sunday. It is not the day of Epiphany, but it is the Sunday we set aside to honor that trip of the Magi to the young child Christ in Bethlehem. It is indeed a special day in the life of our worship. As we come together today, we want to remind everyone, especially those of you who are worshiping with us online, that you can give electronically through our website. You can also mail something into the church if you prefer to go that way. And for those of you who are here with us, of course, you can leave your gift in one of the boxes on the way out. As we consider our time of giving today, we have a special mission moment that we'd like everyone to see so that as you think about how you are sharing what God has so generously shared with you, how we continue to support God's mission in the world.

Community missions began in 1923. And since that time, we've provided services for the people that are most in need throughout Western New York. We have everything from a soup kitchen to a food pantry.

We have a clothes closet and we have emergency housing. Those are just a few things that we do on a daily basis here. In all, we have 19 different programs that serve Niagara County across 14 different locations. And if there's one thing that we've learned over the past 92 years, it's that we absolutely cannot do it alone.

So we thank you for your support that you've given us in the past and thank you for the support you're giving us now and look forward to having a partnership with Pendleton United Methodist Church far into the future.

So as we consider those gifts that are still to be given and those we have received this morning, we're going to do our doxology, our prayer of dedication, and then we'll have a time of special music together. Would you stand as we honor God with that special prayer?

[ 9 : 33 ] We'll be right back.

Lord God, you have shown us that as we discover you in new ways, as we seek and find you, one of the ways in which we honor is by that which we give.

Just like those wise men all those years ago, we open up what we have and share with you to honor you. Please receive these gifts that we are sharing this morning as they go to the honor and glory of your name.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Come, they told me.

Come, they told me. A newborn king to see. Our finest gifts we bring To lay before the King So to honor Him When we go Maybe Jesus I am a poor boy too

[ 12 : 10 ] I have no gift to bring Let's get to give a King Shall I play for you?

Pa-da-pa-pa-pa-pa On my drum Mary nodded Pa-da-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-per-'ve-Bo-us- Pa-da-pa-pa-pa-pa-au- I played my best for him La-da-ba-ba-ba La-da-ba-ba-ba La-da-ba-ba-ba Then he smiled at me La-da-ba-ba-ba Me and my drum

Me and my drum Me and my drum So now we come to our time of praying together.

Having that ongoing conversation with God that keeps us as closely connected as we can possibly be. We are mindful of so many struggles today. We heard a prayer request today for Bonita who's in the hospital with a weak heart.

We also know there are several people who are in need of healing touch, not just from COVID, but from several conditions. So with all of that, and with all of the good things that God has done as well, let's open our hearts, go to God together in prayer.

[ 14 : 36 ] Gracious and loving God, your people come this morning seeking. Just like the example of those wise men so long ago, we come looking for you.

Looking for your truth in the midst of so many things we hear in the world. Looking for your wisdom in the face of all the choices that we have to make.

Looking for your strength in the face of so many challenges to be overcome. Lord, we come especially mindful today of the ongoing pandemic and those who need your healing touch.

For those who would see their bodies restored, those who want to come back to full health. Lord, we know that you are indeed the author of healing. We come before you.

We speak on behalf of those we love. We open our hearts and pray that it is your will to see them restored. Lord, for those who are doing the hard work, the hard frontline work of taking care of those who are ill.

[ 15 : 45 ] Lord, we pray for their strength. We pray for their wisdom. We pray for their clarity of mind. That whether you choose to work through them or whether you choose to work supernaturally on your own.

We hope that they too will be sustained as they do that important work of giving care to those who are sick. Lord, for those who must make hard leadership decisions in our world.

Those who are responsible for balancing the best interests of all of us together. Let them keep love for neighbor, love for brother and sister at the forefront of their actions.

Let them always come from belief that they are there to serve. That their true motivation should be love. And that all of us will love our neighbors as well.

For those who are struggling with need of any kind. Those who need food. Those who need shelter.

[ 16 : 51 ] Those who need clothing. Those who need to know that the world has not turned their back on them. Indeed, Lord, your people are ready. Here we are. Use us.

Use us. But of course, Lord, however you choose to work. We come on behalf of those in need. To see your hand move.

And Lord, as we come seeking today. Know that we come seeking your face. Not just the work of your hands. We come seeking the truth of love in your heart.

Not just the power that you would display. Lord, we come seeking your truth and your will.

Not just your words. Help us to know you. Know you in all the ways we can know you. That when we follow the star you set before us.

[ 17 : 54 ] And we find you wherever you lead. Let us know that powerful lesson. Let us know that powerful truth. Let us know you.

However you wish to be known. Just like those wise men. All those years ago. Amen. Good morning, church.

I'm reading from Matthew, 2nd chapter, verses 1 through 12.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem and Judea. During the time of King Herod. Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked.

Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose. And have come to worship him. When King Herod heard this.

[ 19 : 26 ] He was disturbed. And all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law.

He asked them where the Messiah was to be born. In Bethlehem in Judea. They replied. For this is what the prophet has written. But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea.

Are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler. Who will shepherd my people Israel. Then Herod called the Magi secretly.

And found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said. Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me.

So that I too may go and worship him. After they had heard the king. They went on their way. And the star they had seen when it rose. Went ahead of them.

[ 20 : 23 ] Until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that star. They were overjoyed. On coming to the house. They saw that the child.

With his mother. Was with his mother Mary. And they bowed down. And worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures. And presented him with gifts. Of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream. Not to go back to Herod. They returned to their country. By another route. This is the word of our Lord. Thanks be to God.

Thank you, Louie. So as Pastor Scott said earlier. Today we are celebrating Epiphany.

So it's the tradition of when the wise men. Or the kings. Or the magi. Visited the Christ child.

[ 21 : 21 ] Born as king of the Jews. And revealed in glory through a star. And the magi were on a quest. Searching for the king of the Jews.

And the belief is that these wise men. Or magi. Were from the east. From Persia. Or Babylonia. Think Iran. Iraq type of area. And they were astronomers.

And theologians. And historians. Basically scientists. Priests. And spiritual advisors to the king. From a far away land. That did not worship the one true God.

And when we read the book of Daniel. We find that Daniel. In the exile. When he went to Babylon. He was actually made part of the sect of the magi.

And was actually one of the chief. People over them. A chief made over the magi. Which is believed to be. How they acquired this prophecy. Because they would have then had access through Daniel.

[ 22 : 19 ] Of the prophecies. That would be available at that time. And the prophecy is Balaam's prophecy. And it's from Numbers 24. And it says a star will go out from Jacob. And a scepter will rise from Israel.

So the scepter is the symbol of a king. Rising for Israel. And the star is going to lead the way. And so the wise men. These magi. They saw the star.

For the king of the Jews. Kind of like they saw the Christmas star. You know the Christmas star that we talked about recently. December 21st. It was supposed to happen.

And it was like a convergence of Saturn. And Jupiter. And we were supposed to see this big amazing star. In the sky. Everybody remember this? Yeah. It was a big thing.

We heard about it all in the news. How many of us saw it? Anybody here? How come? Cloudy. It was cloudy.

[ 23 : 19 ] How many go outside hoping. Expecting to see this great big star. And it's cloudy. Cloudy. Now for those. We had somebody who actually was in the south at the time.

And they said they saw it. So I was like wow. They had clear skies. They actually saw it. Which is pretty cool. So for those of you who are worshipping with us in sunny states like Florida in the south.

You know use your imagination of what this cloudiness is like around here. It's cloudy. Which means that we know it's daytime because things are lit up. But we can't actually see the sun.

And at night time it's just a whole sheet of gray. And you can't see the moon. You can't see the stars. It's just this whole sheet of cloudiness over top of us. Shrouding us.

Blocking us from seeing the light. And this can actually happen to us spiritually as well. We can become spiritually clouded.

[ 24 : 17 ] Experiencing a spiritual cloudiness where we just can't see the light. Our vision. Our revelation is blocked. And we see instances of that throughout this entire story.

I mean the story starts out well. The star comes up and the magi see it. A shining revelation of the glory of God. Kind of like the pillar of cloud and fire that led the Israelites away in Exodus.

Or the Holy Spirit shining within us. And I believe that the magi had a revelation of God in star and spirit. That led the way.

And the magi were diligently following the star wherever it was going. Seeking the king of the Jews that had been born. The star leading the way.

But then they stop. They stopped in Jerusalem. And they went to go see King Herod. And I think, why on earth did they stop?

[ 25 : 23 ] I mean it says later on, after they saw King Herod, that the star came again and led them right to Bethlehem. Led them right to the house where Jesus was.

It says that they were overjoyed when they saw it again. But it seems like there's this gap in time when they were following this star. And then suddenly, they weren't.

They were talking to Herod instead. And then after they stepped out in faith, they were able to see the star again. So why?

Why? Why did this happen? Well, I believe that their spiritual insight, their spiritual sight had become cloudy. And they couldn't see the star.

I mean, they were on their quest to find the new king. And I believe that they stopped. Because they stopped trusting in their spiritual senses. And started using their own intellect instead.

[ 26 : 24 ] Saying, well, the child is to be king. And so, those in authority, those in the palace, they must have all the answers. Instead of allowing the star to lead them to the answer.

Which is what they had been trusting in up until that point. Their spiritual insight was clouded over. Brought on by their trusting themselves over the revelation of God.

It clouded over the direction where God was leading them. So imagine the star leading the way. And the magi faithfully following. And then they stopped basically saying, not sure I trust this anymore.

I mean, we want to check this and ask for directions. Because it looks like it's going this way. Toward Bethlehem. And that just doesn't seem quite right. Doesn't seem like where it should be going. I'm not sure I'm believing any of this anymore.

So why did this happen to them? Well, the same reason, honestly, that it happens to us. When we start getting ahead of God. When we start presuming and assuming and questioning.

[ 27 : 28 ] We get off track from where God wants us to be going. I mean, thankfully, thankfully in this story, the magi did step out in faith again. And they did get back on track.

And thankfully, so can we. But we have to be careful of this spiritual cloudiness. Because there are others in this story that have a spiritual cloudiness that didn't overcome it.

So we start off with Herod. The magi arrive in Bethlehem and meet with Herod the Great. Now I read one commentary that said that he was called Herod the Great. Because he called himself that.

He decided he was going to be called Herod the Great. So if you can imagine, he's an extreme narcissist. I mean, yes, he did great things. But how many of us say, you know, I'm so and so the great.

He's got some issues. He was an extreme narcissist with a huge ego. And he was a politician. He helped the Jewish people by beginning the rebuilding of the temple.

[ 28 : 32 ] And though publicly he said he was a Jew, he wasn't really a Jew. He was actually appointed there by the Roman government. Placed there to be king of the Jews. And so he would call himself a Jew if it was to his benefit.

If he would get gain. He would help the Jewish people if he would benefit and gain from it. But that wasn't really why he was doing it. He was doing it for his own self.

And he was fearful. Fearful for his power and his authority. I mean, he was a brutal, brutal person. He ended up, he killed off his in-laws.

He killed off his wife. He killed off his sons. He was anybody that he thought threatened. Threatened his power. Threatened his authority.

He killed him. Brutal, brutal person. In fact, the Magi, because they got off track from where God was leading. And because they went and met with King Herod. There were repercussions that led King Herod, the great.

[ 29 : 37 ] To go and kill all of the baby boys in Bethlehem. There are terrible consequences to this. And so King Herod, unfortunately, gives us an indication of the clouding over.

Clouding over by a desire for power. Not willing to submit to any authority above himself. This new king was seen as a threat.

Imagine he said, well, what do you mean he's king of the Jews? I am king of the Jews. And as much as I want to think that all of us can say, oh, I'm not like that at all.

And certainly none of us are going around killing people. I mean, that's good, right? But if you dig deeper into what is actually behind all of this, I think we all struggle with this.

I mean, deeper examination would show us that far too often God challenges our own authority. Our own power. The control we want to have over our own lives.

[ 30 : 39 ] What we want. The way we want it. When we want it. And we fight against it. One of the words in Christianity that people really struggle with is obedience.

Obedience. And it's hard. Because we want things our way. We don't want to do things that we don't want to do. But yet we're called to be obedient.

And a new king over us can feel threatening. And we struggle against it. We have power struggles with God.

We might challenge it or dismiss it or become angry. Actively going against God's will for our life. God having control can sometimes bring us to be even fearful.

Fearful. And most scary, honestly, is if we ever decide to just participate in religion for our own gain. Participating in it for our own wants and our own desires.

[ 31 : 43 ] Instead of seeking to give of ourselves in humble submission. We instead seek it for our own purposes. And we say, oh, I never do that. But we see it in churches all the time.

You know, the power struggles in churches. Especially in worship. Where it's like, well, that's not what I like. That's not what I want. And it ends up being all about us instead of all about God.

And so instead we're called to humbly give of ourselves. To be in submission to God. To Christ, our King.

And when we have attitudes like this. Where we struggle with power. Where we find it threatening in disobedience. It clouds over our following God.

It clouds over our revelation from God. It keeps us distant from God. And then we have the Jews.

[ 32 : 42 ] The people of Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem who say that they are worshiping the one true God. The ones that have been waiting their entire lives for this prophecy to be fulfilled.

And it said that King Herod was disturbed. And all of Jerusalem with him. All of Jerusalem with him.

They were disturbed. Well, why were they disturbed? Why weren't they joyful? I mean, the Jewish people have been looking for this sign.

And they hear the Magi saying, we saw this sign. The new king is here. Where is the king? And instead of saying, woohoo, yay. We instead end up with them being disturbed.

What causes that? What causes that? I mean, they called together the chief priests and the scribes. And they knew the answer right away.

[ 33 : 50 ] They knew the factual information. Where was this Christ to be born? Well, in Bethlehem. In Judah. In Judah. He was going to be born in Bethlehem. And none of them went to go see him.

None of them. And we think, okay, well, it's a long journey. No. Bethlehem is only like six miles away. Like, just past Wegmans. It's not that far.

If you are waiting for something. If you are waiting for something. If you are waiting for something that you've waited your entire life for. Something that is going to be the new king. The thing that is going to change everything for the better in your life.

And then instead of having joy. Instead of going and seeking. Instead of going and offering yourself to them. You instead stay put. What's going on? Why?

Why? The view of the star. The revelation of Christ was clouded over by their lack of desire. Faith is more than knowing the facts. And more than having a practice of religion.

[ 34 : 53 ] It's as if the people thought. Well, it's just easier to stay in Jerusalem. And keep doing what we're doing. It's just easier.

And so I'm not going to put myself out there. I'm not going to do what it takes to actually go that distance. To go and offer myself. That'll change things.

And I don't think I want to have any change. We've got to be so careful. It's a spiritual cloudiness that can actually cover any of us. If we're not careful.

That spiritual cloudiness that they had allowed them to miss the new king. They missed seeing the epiphany. They missed the revelation.

They missed the glory of God. And we don't want to miss it. Amen? We do not want to miss this. The revelation of God is there for us too.

[ 35 : 51 ] We can see it. We can experience. We can know it. As long as our spiritual skies are not cloudy and gray. The Jewish people.

The people of God. We're not willing to accept and receive the new king. And so I ask. Are we willing to make Jesus our king?

I mean Jesus is savior. Absolutely. Jesus died on a cross for our sins. He rose again so we can have eternal life. Jesus is our savior.

Offering new life that begins the moment we accept Jesus as savior. And Jesus is called Emmanuel. God with us. Jesus is with us through the thick and thin.

But there's more. Jesus must also be our lord. Over us. Our king.

[ 36 : 45 ] Above us. And that is something that so many of us struggle with. Jesus as lord. As king over each and every area of our life.

Over every decision. Over every relationship. Over all of our finances. Over our destiny. Over absolutely every part of our life.

And we can say well Jesus is lord. But not that area. Jesus wants to be king. Over our entire life. And until we do that.

We will have spiritual cloudiness. That will keep us from the changes that God wants to do in our life. Good changes. God always does good changes.

Christ the king. There will be changes. And there are some things we just want to change. We know we want to change it. Can we just say a big amen that we got through 2020?

[ 37 : 42 ] Woo! Amen! Woo! Woo! Woo! Woo! We made it through 2020. And we are so glad for that change. We actually got this ornament for my children for Christmas. 2020. It stink, stank, stunk.

Right from the Grinch. Stink, stank, stunk. 2020 will go down in history as that. And when we look back on it. We are going to remember all the stink, stank, stunkiness of it all.

I mean there were not really good circumstances throughout 2020. And here is the thing. 2021 we are seeking change.

And some of that external stuff from 2020 is going to keep going. But in spite of that, as long as we don't have spiritual cloudiness, as we step into 2021, we can see God's change.

And we can have a great year. No matter what the circumstances are. We can have an amazing 2021. And I plan to.

[ 38 : 47 ] Are you planning to? Amen. Amen. 2021, it's going to be awesome. Awesome. Our change will be from God. Just by changing the number on the calendar is not going to bring that change.

We will only have it happen if we seek Christ as King. Who will bring the revelation to what God is doing in our lives. And open us to it. And give us the faith, the power, and the boldness to follow His star wherever it goes.

But doing that means that we have to make a decision to change. That we can live in and by our King, Jesus Christ. And many of us, honestly, if we really consider it, many of us don't want to step out.

We don't want to change. Many of us have areas in our lives that we just do not want to submit to God's authority. Many of us have been living with cloudy, gray spiritual lives that block the revelation of God and keep us distant from God and what God would have for us.

And so I invite you to a prayer of confession along with me. Won't you repeat after me. Lord, I have sinned. I have not always followed you. I've been stubborn and not obedient.

[ 40 : 11 ] Wanting my own ways and not yours. I've not always lived and loved as you have called me to. I've not always sought you.

I've not always sought you. Or followed you. Or humbled myself before you. Forgive me, Lord. You are my Savior.

And you are my King. Reveal yourself to me. And I will see and listen and follow by your grace.

Amen. We made it through 2020. And it was a bumpy and turbulent ride. The skies for many of us were cloudy and gray.

Physically, societally, and spiritually. And we're looking for change in 2021. Moving forward with a quest for Jesus, our King.

[ 41 : 15 ] To have an epiphany. An experience of God's glory. And in doing this sermon, a friend of mine, Heidi. She's a travel agent. And she posted on Facebook this thing that was written by Juliana Mayo.

And I just thought it was great. It just spoke to me about what we're going into here. She wrote, Hello and welcome to Flight 2021. We are prepared to take off into the new year.

Please make sure your attitude and blessings are secured and locked in place. All self-destructive devices should be turned off at this time.

All unwellness, illness, disease, fear, negativity, hurt, and discouragement and unforgiveness should be put away. Should we lose altitude under pressure during the flight?

Reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by faith. And once your faith is activated, you can assist other passengers. There will be no baggage allowed on this flight.

[ 42 : 20 ] The captain, God, has cleared us for takeoff. Destination, trust. Destination, health. Destination, love.

Light. Joy. Abundance. And all things good. That's what I'm looking forward to. Are you ready? Let's get ready.

This is how we're going to do it. We see how to do this through the Magi. Those spiritual gray clouds washed away. We can see the revelation of the light of Christ.

And when they saw, they bowed down before Jesus, the newborn King. Humility. And so we humble ourselves. So in 2021 and beyond, let's commit to Jesus as King.

God's will. God's direction. God's revelation. God's destiny for our lives. A new path with a new birth and a new year. A new direction. Following the star that Christ reveals within us.

[ 43 : 21 ] Pointing the way. Giving us faith and power and boldness to follow his star wherever it goes. And the Magi, they gave generously.

And they gave with treasures that meant more than I'm sure they even realized. Frankincense for the priest who makes the sacrifice. Myrrh for the burial.

And gold for a king. So in 2021 and beyond, let's give generously with our resources, our time, in our relationships with God and with others.

Let's go into 2021 giving generously because Jesus, our King, gave to us. And the Magi, they worshipped with joy.

The way it's actually translated is rejoice with great joy, great exceedingly. They said joy. Lots and lots and lots of joy.

[ 44 : 27 ] Great exceedingly. And so we rejoice in 2021 and beyond. Let's rejoice in who God is. In what God is doing.

Rejoice in what God has done for us. What God is doing and what God will do. Rejoice in God's abundant love and grace for us. Exceedingly great joy in the light of Christ.

Glory to God. Hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. And this proves God's love for you and for me.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

And so our cloudy skies are opening up to the light. Making Jesus Christ our Lord, our King. As we bow down in the light of his glory and joy in 2021 and beyond.

[ 45 : 28 ] Amen. It is indeed a gift from God that we can come together and celebrate this sacrament.

As we move forward together. So let us now make ready to commune with God in this special way given to us by our Lord. The Lord be with you.

And also with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. It is right to give our thanks to the Lord. It is right and a good and joyful thing.

Always and everywhere to give thanks to you, almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

[ 46 : 37 ] You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. In the fullness of time, you gave your only son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior.

And at his birth, angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected.

As in the poverty of a stable, Jesus was born. So by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant.

[ 47 : 54 ] By water and the Spirit. As your word became flesh, born of a woman on that night long ago, so on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said, Take and eat.

This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. When the supper was over, he took the cup.

He gave thanks to you. Then he gave it to his disciples and said, Drink from this, all of you. For this is my blood, sign of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin.

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, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread. And cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ.

[ 49 : 18 ] That we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ. One with each other and one in ministry to all the world.

Until Christ comes in final victory. And we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son, Jesus Christ. With the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church.

All honor and glory is yours. Almighty God. Now and forever. Amen. And now with the confidence of the redeemed children of God, let us pray together the prayer Jesus taught us to pray.

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 trespasses. As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.

[ 50 : 19 ] For thine is the kingdom. And the power. And the glory forever. Amen. So friends, I would invite you to take your communion cup.

Start with the side that has the wafer on it. Gently open it. And then remove your mask. And let's take together.

Because this is the body of Christ. Which was given for you. Take now and receive. Amen. Amen. Amen. And on the other side, this is the blood of Christ.

Which was shed for you. Take now and receive. We ask you to hold on to your cups and dispose of them properly on your way out.

Please put your mask back in place. And remember. All that God has done for you in this precious gift. Amen. Amen. May you stand if you're able.

[ 51 : 44 ] You'll have to, but if you'd like to. We three kings. We three kings. We three kings of Oriental.

Bearing gifts. Bearing gifts. We travel so far. Field and fountain moor. And mountain following yonder star.

Oh, star of wonder star. Oh, star of wonder star of night. Star with royal beauty bright.

Westward. Westward leading still. 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. Seat sing ever. Over us all to reign.

[ 52 : 59 ] Great Wondrous star of light Star with royal beauty bright Westward leading still Proceeding guide us to Thy perfect light Fur is white, it's bitter perfume Brings a life of gathering blue Star with sight, bleeding dying Sealed in the stone cold tomb Glorious now, behold Him arise

King and God and sacrifice Hallelujah, hallelujah Shouts to the earth and scours Oh, star of wonder Star of night Star with royal beauty bright Westward leading still Proceeding guide us to Thy perfect light That perfect light revealed within us One of the cool things about this story is that Before the magi reached the Christ child There was a star out there But once they worshipped and bowed down And gave generously God then spoke to them Individually, in person And God will do that for us as well

May we walk forward in faith in 2021 With Christ as our King In glory, amen Amen Amen And graciously, amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.