



*"An inclusive community, celebrating God's unconditional love  
through engaging worship and faithful service"*



January 9, 2022

**"Epiphany Sunday! "We Observed His Star"**

Rev. Howard Bell, Guest Pastor

## The Love of God Gathers Us

**Gathering Music**

*You are invited to greet those around you or sit quietly.*

**Ringling of the Bell**

**Prelude**

“The Brightest and Best”

*American Folk Tune*

**Words of Welcome**

Rev. Howard Bell

### **\*\*\*Prayer of Gathering**

**God who guides our journey, as Mary and Joseph opened their hearts to the child in their arms and the magi opened their hearts to a journey of unknown proportions, may we throw open the doors of our hearts to welcome the joy and pain of life lived in the mysteries of a faith. May our worship guide us, like the brightest star, closer to God, ourselves, and one another. Amen.**

**\*\*\*Opening Hymn**

“Arise, Your Light Is Come”

#164

## Acknowledging Our Humanness & God’s Grace

### **\*\*\*Prayer of Longing**

**God of perfect light, lead us as we proceed through life. Forgive us when, like Herod, selfish ambition makes us willing to hurt others. Forgive us when, unlike the magi, we refuse to follow the light you give us. Guiding God, bless us on the road we travel. Light-shedding God, light up our minds with your truth. Beckoning God, help us to bring gifts worthy of the Christ. Then we too shall be known by you as wise ones. Shine in our lives through the light of your Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

*prayerful silence*

**\*\*\*Sitting or standing**

**\*\*\*Assurance of Grace & Invitation to Pass the Peace**

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you! **All: And also with you!**

**Proclaiming God's Love**

**A Time with Young People**

*Pastor Howard invites children forward to the front row of pews*

**Blessing One Another**

*Seated, the congregation opens their arms to the children*

**Children : God be with you**

**All: And also with you**

*Children may follow leaders to Children's Activity or remain in worship*

**Scriptures**

Isaiah 60: 1-6; Matthew 2: 1-12

Cheri Schwartz

*The Inclusive Bible*

**Isaiah**

Arise, shine, for your light has come! The glory of God is rising upon you!

Though darkness still covers the earth and dense clouds enshroud the peoples, upon you God now dawns, and God's glory will be seen among you!

The nations will come to your light and the leaders to your bright dawn!

Lift up your eyes, and look around: they're all gathering and coming to you—your daughters and your sons journey from afar, escorted in safety;

you'll see them and beam with joy, your heart will swell with pride. The riches of the sea will flow to you,  
and the wealth of the nations will come to you—

camel caravans will cover your roads, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah:  
everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the  
praise of God.

## Matthew

After Jesus' birth—which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod—astrologers from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked “Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage.” At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

“In Bethlehem of Judea,” they informed him. “Here is what the prophet has written:

‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, since from you will come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, “Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me—so that I may go and offer homage, too.”

After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay.

They were overjoyed as seeing the star and, upon entering the house, found the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.

**Morning Message**      “We Observed His Star”

**Prayer Hymn**      “Many Are the Lightbeams”      #163  
*accompanied by Sharon , piano & Michael, guitar*

### **Responding To God’s Love**

#### **Prayers of the People**

*You are invited to speak a brief prayer for yourself, another, or a part of the world*

One: God, in your love,      **All: Hear our prayer**

#### **Lord’s Prayer**

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**the hallowing of your name echo through the universe!**

**The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come  
on Earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.**

**From trials too great to endure, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

#### **Invitation to the Offering**



**Offertory**      “In a Lowly Manger Born”

*Yuki*

**\*\*\*Sung Response** “In the Bleak Midwinter”

**What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
but what can I offer: all my heart.**

**\*\*\*Prayer of Dedication**

**We thank you, God, living Spirit, for sending a star to guide the magi to Christ. But even more, we praise you for signs and witnesses in every generation that lead us to your Christ. We thank you for inviting, blessing and renewing us during this service of worship today. May we go forward from this moment and place to participate in invitation, blessing, and renewal. Amen.**

**Going Forth to Share God’s Love**

**\*\*\*Singing “Happy Birthday”**

*..Happy birthday dear Diane, Cindy, Avery, Dennis & Hannah*

**\*\*\*Closing Hymn** “As with Gladness Those of Old” #159

**\*\*\*Benediction**

**\*\*\*Sung Response**    Let There Be Peace on Earth

*by Jill Jackson-Miller & Sy Miller*

**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 ev'ry 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.**

**Postlude**

**“Lord, Dismiss Us Your Blessing”**

*Fawcett*

## **PRAYER CORNER**

*Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:*

\*Update on **Jenna**, from Cindy Siegel: Jenna came home on the 27th of December. All things considered she's doing ok, still no use of her left arm, but her left leg is slowly improving. A nurse stops by once a week. Physical therapy (home visits) as well as occupational therapy & speech therapy (to work on memory) will be stopping by. When I'm not working I am with Jenna so her husband Kevin can work. Jenna is not able to be alone as of yet. Jenna gets frustrated & down at times, but that's understandable. Tell everyone thank you for their support and prayers.

\*For those who are without family and loved ones due to death and other forms of distance. May we all be surrounded by love and community at the turn of a new year.

*And in the wider community...*

\*For increased access to safe, warm, stable housing for our local neighbors as winter weather deepens in Minnesota. For access to safe shelter, food and water for all global citizens, particularly asylum seekers and refugees.

\*As the pandemic rages on with heightened fury, having killed 5.4 million persons worldwide and with 10.8 million active cases in this land (which is 45% of confirmed active cases in the world). As a congregation, may we continue to protect each other and new friends during this season of Christmastide.



## Faith Conversations



### Faith Conversations

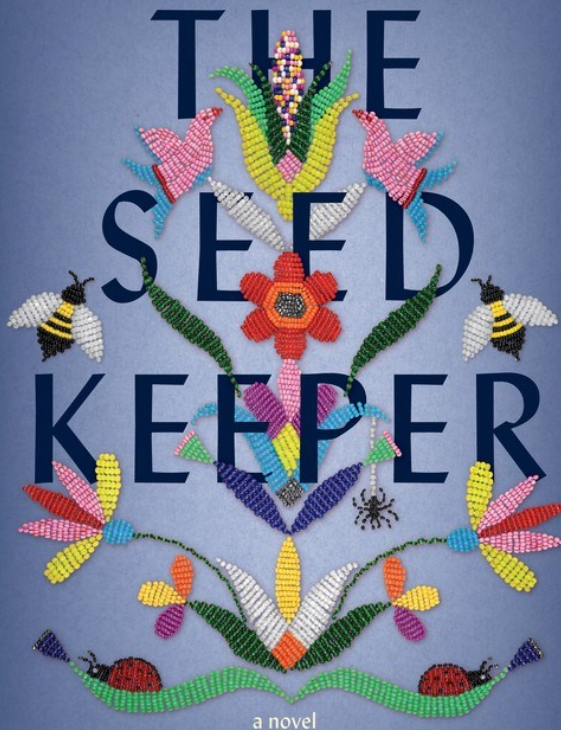
Our adult ed. Forum | in-person and zoomed  
**Most Sundays, 11-11:45 am**

Join us in the Fireside Room. Bring your 10:30 am after-worship fellowship treats with you!

In 10-minute videos, contemporary progressive faith leaders present key concepts of God, religion, Jesus, salvation, cross, Bible, church. We'll explore biblical texts and faith concepts, applying them to our own lives.

**Today's Topic:** Bible | "A Book Like No Other"

"Compelling . . . *The Seed Keeper* invokes the strength that women, land, and plants have shared with one another through the generations." —ROBIN WALL KIMMERER



DIANE WILSON

### PCC Book Club

*We aim to read books that matter from diverse genres, topics and authors.*

Calling all readers! We will read local Dakota author Diane Wilson's debut novel, *The Seed Keeper*, in January.

Hybrid gatherings  
(Zoomed & In-person at church)

**Jan. 13 & 27, 6:30 –8 pm**

If interested please contact  
Pastor Clare  
[pastor@peoplescongregational.org](mailto:pastor@peoplescongregational.org)  
651-600-6409

## Volunteers Needed

Please sign up for open volunteer spots on the sign up sheet which is in the Narthex before worship and downstairs during Fellowship or contact the office 651-439-5667  
office@peoplescongregational.org.

This helps Kimberly greatly, to have volunteers in advance!  
Thank you!

Date	Lay Reader	Greeter #1	Greeter#2	Fellowship host #1	Fellowship host #2	Acolytes	Recorder
<del>12/26/2021</del>	Carol Dusbabek	Mary Maren-Bjork		Kathy Iverson	Bob Iverson		Paul Spilseth
1/9/2022	Cheri Schwartz	Kris Strasburg		Lori Mildon	-		Paul Spilseth
1/16/2022	Mary Maren Bjork	Kris Strasburg		Cheri Schwartz			Paul Spilseth
1/23/2022	Mary Binger	Kris Strasburg					Paul Spilseth
1/30/2022	Carol Dusbabek						
2/6/2022	Mary Maren Bjork						
2/13/2022	Cheri Schwartz						Paul Spilseth

## Operating procedures for inside services

- a. People's Church continues to follow MDH/CDC guidelines and protocols regarding the fluid COVID-19 virus. For the health and safety of our congregation, **we require masks and social distancing. We encourage vaccine-eligible attendees to be vaccinated.**
- b. Pews are now 8 feet of distance between people. **Our capacity is now 32 adults** (including pastor, accompanist, cantor, readers, greeters, recorder).
- c. **Worship leaders will be safely distanced:**
  - i. Pastor or reader will speak at a music stand on the bottom step of the Chancel and sit in a front pew
  - ii. Cantor will sing and sit by the Christmas tree
  - iii. Pastor or reader will speak at the pulpit and sit behind it
- d. If you are sick - stay home
- e. Sanitizing wipes: There will be an usher that will distribute sanitizing wipes at the end of worship. We ask that when you leave your pew, please wipe down the pew and all surfaces in your area.
- f. Bulletins and offering baskets will be placed in the Narthex and in front of the pulpit for you to pick up a bulletin and drop off your offerings.
- g. Communion - prepackaged Communion Elements will be provided in the Narthex and in front of the pulpit to pick up as you enter.
- h. After-Worship Fellowship: Food and beverage service are allowed; see below for guidelines. Masked (unless eating) social distance; **seating at tables is four people max.**
- i. Reader/Pastor will be masked; however, they will remove their masks while speaking. Cantor may choose to be masked or unmasked.
- j. Choir: Until further notice, the choir will not be singing. However, if a cantor feels safe and wants to lead the congregation in song, we will do so.
- k. NOTE: If anything changes and we are advised by the MDH/CDC, all plans will be suspended, you will be notified and new plans will be made according to the instructions of MDH/CDC.

# ANNUAL MEETING

## Notification of Annual Meeting... **Jan. 30**


- Review the Annual Report.
- Advise the membership of any significant changes to Church policies.
  - Adopt plans for the year.
  - Adopt a budget that supports the plans for the year.
- Transact any other business stated in the notice of meeting.

Electronic and hard copies of the Annual Report and Plans and Budgets will be available one (1) week prior to the Annual Meeting

Thank you for all who made today wonderful: Music Dir. Michael Bjork, & Worship Accompanist Sharon Neuenfeldt (beautiful music), Cheri Schwartz (liturgist), Kris Strasburg (greeter), Lori Mildon (fellowship hosts), Paul Spilseth (recorder) and Jill Greenhalgh (Faith Conversations facilitator).



### People's Congregational Church

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