



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



January 8, 2023

"In What Ways Will We Arise and Shine Light?"

Epiphany Sunday

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

*We greet those around us or sit quietly
as we settle into sacred time and space*

Ringling of the Bell

Prelude & Candle Lighting

“Brightest and Best”

arr Mark Hayes

Jonah Gromoll, *acolyte*

A flame represents the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome

Pastor Clare Gromoll

*****Call To Worship** (*responsive*)

Mindy Peters, *liturgist*

One As Mary and Joseph opened their hearts to the child in their arms...

All As the magi opened their hearts to a journey of unknown proportions...

One May we throw open the doors of our hearts—to welcome the joy and pain of life lived in the mysteries of a faith.

All May our worship guide us, like the brightest star—closer to God, ourselves, and one another. Amen.

*****Opening Hymn**

“As With Gladness Those of Old”

NCH #159

Vs. 1 & 3

Acknowledging Our Humanness and God's Grace

Prayer of Longing (*unison*)

God of perfect light, lead us as we proceed through life.

Like with Herod, our selfish ambition sometimes blocks your light and we hurt ourselves and others.

Forgive us and empower us to be more like the magi, following the light you give us.

Light-shedding God, guide us on the road we travel and illuminate our minds with your truth.

Beckoning God, help us to bring gifts worthy of the Christ.

Shine in our lives through the light of your Christ. Amen.

prayerful silence

Musical Interlude

...as our own longings quietly emerge

Assurance of Grace

*****Passing the Peace**

*We share a sign of peace with those gathered now (in-person, virtually)
We extend the peace later by phone call, email, text message*

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

Let's welcome one another!

Name tags are found in the Narthex (just inside the front doors)

Welcome forms in pews: request a prayer or name tag, update contact info, etc.

A Time With Children

Sung Invitation *We sing as our children come forward*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*In fall 2022, we gave a first annual gift to Walker|West in St. Paul, MN as a reparations payment for our use of this African American spiritual.
"Walker|West creates a music learning community rooted in the African-American cultural experience, where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, explore, and grow through music."*

Singing "Happy Birthday"

*..Happy birthday dear **Diane** (Legato), **Cindy** (Siegel), **Avery** (Albright)
Dennis (Albright) & **Hannah** (Wulff)*

Wondering Together

Blessing One Another *Seated, we open our arms to the children*

Children : God be with you **All:** And also with you

Sung Affirmation *We sing as children return to families*

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

We welcome the sounds and movements of children who stay in worship

*Lisa (Childcare Provider) also cares for infants and toddlers
9:15 - 10:45 in the Nursery downstairs*

*If needing space to move around, families are welcome to use
the Narthex (entry area) or Meditation Room (off front left exit from Sanctuary)*

Proclaiming God's Love

Scriptures

Isaiah 60: 1-6 ~ *The Inclusive Bible (responsive)*

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 children 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 2: 1-12 ~ *The Inclusive Bible*

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.’”

...cont. next page

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 at 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 "In What Ways Will We Arise and Shine Light?"

Prayer Cards

(on the Information Table in our Fellowship Hall)

If you voice a prayer for a loved one during Prayers of the People, we welcome you to start a card for us to sign during Fellowship. Or simply take a blank card with you as you leave!

Responding To God's Love

Prayer Hymn

"Many Are the Lightbeams"
Vs. 1, 3, 5

NCH #163

Prayers of the People

When sharing a joy or concern for yourself, another, or a part of the world; please project your voice to be heard. We'll add your prayer to our Prayer Corner.

One: God, in your love

All: Hear our prayer

Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

**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

“Many Are the Lightbeams”

Swedish Tune

Offering plates circulate at this time

*We support our church financially as we have means to do so
Or... mail in a check -or- give electronically by scanning the QR code*

Welcome Forms also go in the offering plate

*****Offertory 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 (*unison*)**

**God of light, we have been illumined by the glory of your presence
and enlightened by your grace. We sense your radiant love among us.
We dedicate ourselves and these gifts for service in the world. Where
there is suffering, loneliness, and pain; may we become beacons of
your love and justice. Amen.**

Going Forth to Share God’s Love

*****Closing Hymn**

“Arise, Your Light is Come”

NCH #164

All verses

*****Benediction**

*****Sung Response**

..as we form a spacious circle

around the perimeter of the Sanctuary

“Let there be Peace on Earth”

by Jill Jackson-Miller and 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.**

We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and space

*****Postlude**

“The Peace of God Be With You Always”

White

All are welcome to gather downstairs after worship!

10:30 am | Fellowship (refreshments)

*11 am | Pursuit of a Call from Traditional to Humanitarian Medicine
A Conversation with Aidan Gromoll*

Join us as we gather for a presentation and conversation with **Dr. M. Aidan Gromoll**, a pediatrician from Wisconsin, sister to Pastor Clare, and friend of People's Church. Aidan will speak about her journey from traditional medicine in the US to the humanitarian field. After completing her pediatric residency, she worked as a pediatrician in Illinois until 2013 when she opted to leave her position to volunteer in resource poor settings. She initially participated in several short-term missions in Haiti. She has spent the last seven years providing care for refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable populations in the US, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Serbia, Bosnia, Romania, Moldova, Iraqi Kurdistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Lebanon, Honduras, Mexico. Aidan will discuss motivation, challenges, rewards, practical issues and future plans. All are welcome!

If you are with us virtually, join us via Zoom [here](#)

PRAYER CORNER

Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:

For persons known to us...

*For **Aidan Gromoll**, safe travels as she departs on Jan. 15th for eastern Turkey, where she will provide medical care to Syrian refugee children and their families.

*For **Linda Tossey** (a former pastor of People's), who had a bad fall this week awaits diagnoses related to her injuries. May she receive an encouraging prognosis for treatment and smooth recovery.

*For Carol Dusbabek's children and all who grieve the recent death of good friend **Sean**, who died from complications of a brain tumor. May Sean rest in deep peace; may love surround those who mourn.

*For John Norheim and his family as they grieve the recent death of John's mother, **Betty Julin**, on Dec. 31. May Betty rest in deep peace; may love surround those who mourn. *See our Mid-Week News for her obituary.*

*For **Mike**, neighbor to Cindy Parsons & Bob Dickie, as he deals with complicated medical issues.

*We celebrate with Mary Maren Bjork and her great-niece, **Abby**, who participated in the London New Year Parade as a member of a Davenport, Iowa marching band.

*We hope for strength and courage for Mary Binger's friend, **Dee**, and all who struggle with addiction and toward recovery.

*We celebrate with Mary Binger as her daughter, **Erika**, finds herself in a time of relief from the mysterious chronic pain she has been managing.

*We celebrate with **Sharri Kinkead**, who enjoyed a wonderful Christmastime visit with her son, Peter.

*For **Mary**, a good friend to Cindy Parsons & Bob Dickie, who lost her husband shortly before Christmas. May love surround Mary and all who grieve with her.

*We celebrate birthdays of: **Diane Legato & Cindy Siegel** (5th), **Avery Albright** (2 yrs. on the 7th), **Dennis Albright** (10th) and **Hannah Wulff** (6 yrs. on the 13th)

And in the wider community...

*For wellbeing and confidence for all students (elementary through college), teachers, bus drivers, and school staff members as they return to classes after the holiday break.

*For all who are living lives behind bars - that they find hope, meaning and purpose even while incarcerated. May we learn from those neighbors about courage and faith.

*At this time of year when owls, woodpeckers and other wildlife make their joyful presence known; may they inspire our efforts to support the integrity of the whole Earth community.

*During this winter season; may we hold greater awareness for all who are lonely, grieving, and managing mental health challenges.

Advent & Christmastide Gratitude!

Thank you for all the ways we were present together during Advent and Christmas. We welcomed 13 friends (in person) from the wider community from the Solstice through Christmas morning. And numerous friends joined us via live stream and watching recordings of those 4 services (268 total views).

We offer particular thanks to the following:

- **Greeters, Acolytes, Liturgists, Tech Team and Fellowship hosts** | for being essential co-creators of meaningful Sunday morning experiences!
 - **Children's Ministry Team** | for engaging our youngest members in ways that helped them explore the meanings of this sacred season!
 - **Jackie Savage** | for weekly managing of our "Sign on 95," letting people in the wider community know they are welcome among us!
 - **John Norheim** | for faithfully keeping our sidewalks and entryways shoveled and accessible!
 - **Michael Bjork, Sharon Neuenfeldt, and our PCC Choir** | for beautiful music that causes our readings, prayers and preaching to dance!
 - **Keely Vandre, Claire Bjork and Michael Bjork** | for cantoring many carols across Christmas Eve and Christmas morning, strengthening our shared experience!
 - **Frank Cole, Lori Mildon and Eric Vandre** | for adding beauty with recorder, flute and guitar!
 - **Kimberly Jackson** | for producing 7 worship bulletins in December!
- Andi Favilla and Jenni Shaller** | for weekly decorating the Sanctuary in artful ways as we progressed through the season!
- **All of us!** | for investing time and energy, participating in the life of our congregation!

Hearts overflow with gratitude!

We encourage anyone to take a poinsettia with you today!

We invite you to these upcoming activities...

People's Book Club

We read theologically progressive books by diverse authors

People's Congregational Church (Bayport)
Jan. 18 | 6:30-8 pm | @ church & Zoomed

CONVICTIONS
HOW I LEARNED WHAT MATTERS MOST

Marcus J. Borg

Interested? Contact us:

office@peoplescongregational.org

*Valley Bookseller (Stillwater) has copies for us
at 15% off the \$16.99 list price!*

...All are welcome!



Exploring a Potential Merger with St. Peter's UCC A Preliminary Timeline

Our Leadership Team invites all members and active friends of our congregation to be present for upcoming conversations, experiences and votes!

In the Jan. 4th Mid-Week News, we shared the minutes from our Dec. 4th PCC Planning, Budget & Elections Meeting, when we first discussed the possible of merger.

[Jan. 8th - St. Peter's UCC has a forum for to discuss its church council's proposal that their path forward be an exploration of the pursuit of a merger with us]

Jan. 15, 10:45 am | A Forum of People's Congregational Church (during Fellowship), facilitated by Pastor Daniel Harrell, interim legacy minister at St. Peter's UCC

[Jan. 22nd - St. Peter's UCC holds its Annual Meeting, voting on affirming a path forward of exploring the pursuit of a merger with us and selecting their 3 lay members of a Church Merger Task Force]

Jan. 29, 10:45 am | Annual Meeting of People's Church (during brunch), voting on (among other business items) *affirming a path forward of exploring the pursuit of a merger with St. Peter's UCC and selecting our 3 lay members of a Church Merger Task Force]*

Feb. 5th, 9:30 am | (Potential) Joint Worship Service at People's Church, celebrating together in Holy Communion and commissioning the Church Merger Task Force.

[Across February and March, the Church Merger Task Force develops and drafts a covenant of merger, incorporating input from both congregations.]

April 9th | Each congregation votes on affirming a covenant of merger (each in their own church building for Easter Sunday), meeting to vote right after worship

Please plan to participate in this process! Reach out to Pastor Clare or Paul Spilseth with any questions you may have. We will be in this time of discernment together!



**MN Conference UCC Covenant Day!
at Robbinsdale Parkway UCC
February 4, 2023 @ 9:30 am - 3:30 pm**

Please contact Kimberly if you would like to be part of a carpool that day.

This winter and spring, we will connect with Hazel Park UCC (located on the border of St. Paul and Oakdale), our sponsor congregation in our dual affiliation process. We anticipate the MN Conference UCC officially welcoming us a dually affiliated congregation at the Conference Annual Meeting in early June.

See our “Mid-Week News” for a refresher on our congregation's dual affiliation process and to register for this event.

Pastor Clare will attend Covenant Day. We hope to have a hearty group of People's members there! This will be a great opportunity to deepen our connection with members of UCC congregations in the greater twin cities area.

A time to gather together and be the church! Workshops, worship, food and fellowship – a time for lay members and clergy of local congregations to connect with one another and Conference staff. Lunch and snacks are provided.

Workshops

- **Local Church Moderators/Council Presidents Gathering** - facilitated by Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Kelly Gallagher
- **Planning your Church's Future & Considering Your Legacy** - Rev. Cindy Mueller
- **Creation Justice** - Director of Outdoor Ministries Rev. Sheri Nelson & Rev. Dwight Wagenius, Mayflower UCC
- **Demystifying Your Church's Financial Covenant** – Bob Olson, Development Director, MN Conference UCC
- **Pastor/Parish Relations Committee Training** – Rev. Kelly Gallagher, ACM, MN Conference UCC
- **Re-imagining Church: Spaces & Places** – featuring a panel of MN Conference congregational leaders

Kimberly (Communications Coordinator) works primarily remotely

She will next be at church: **Jan. 31-Feb. 1 & 2**

You can reach her every week (T, W, Th 9 am - 4 pm) at 651-439-5667
and at office@peoplescongregational.org

Need access to the church building?

Want to visit with Pastor Clare or Kimberly in person?

Please call (or email) ahead of time to avoid missing us.

Pastor Clare is on call at all times: 651-600-6409

**Annual Report are due! Please send Kimberly your FINAL report
(as a .docx or within an email, no PDFs) by Jan. 13th.**

*Pastor, Treasurer / Finance Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee,
Personnel Committee, Adult Faith Formation Team,
Children's Ministry Team, Justice & Outreach Team, Spiritual Life Team,
Welcome Team, Nominating Team, May Festival Team,
Harvest Festival Team, Antiracism Collective*

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist),
Michael Bjork (choir director), Jonah Gromoll (acolyte),
Mary Binger & Bob Dickie (greeters), Mindy Peters (liturgist),
Sam Gromoll & Andre Harrison (youth greeters)
Cindy Parsons & Bob Dickie (fellowship), Paul, Bob & Mark (tech),
Jackie Savage (Sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign),
Andi Favilla & Jenni Shaller (decorations), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider)



People's Congregational Church

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