



January 7, 2024

“Do We Shine
to Control or
to Influence?”

Epiphany

Welcome!

Name tags are in Narthex (entry area)
Feel free to bring coffee and tea into worship

Restrooms: main level (exit front left),
lower level (at foot of Narthex stair/elevator)

Optional nursery care for infant - age 3 (downstairs, starts at 9:25)

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

We greet those around us or sit quietly, settling into sacred time and space

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude and Candle Lighting “Brightest and Best”

American Folk Tune arr. by Mark Hayes

Acknowledging the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome

SPP = *Sing! Prayer and Praise*

* = *Sitting or standing*

NCH = *New Century Hymnal*

***Call to Worship** (*responsive*)

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

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

***Opening Carol** (NCH #139)

“The First Nowell”
verses 2-3

Acknowledging Our Need for God’s Grace

***Prayer of Confession and Longing** (*unison*)

God of perfect light, lead us as we proceed through life. Sometimes our ambition 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 journey and illuminate our minds with your truth. Beckoning God, help us to bring our full selves forward. Shine in our lives through the light of your Christ. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

...the singing bowl welcomes us into silent prayer

***Assurance of Grace** (*responsive*)

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

***Passing the Peace**

*We first wave to those worshipping with us online
Then to those around us: smiles, peace signs, handshakes*

A Time With Children and Youth

Sung Invitation

...as our young people come forward

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

Singing “Happy Birthday”

Eddy Hintze-Graf (31st - 6 yrs), **Diane Legato** (5th), **Cindy Siegel** (5th),
Avery Albright (7th - 3 yrs), **Dennis Albright** (10th),
Hannah Wulff (13th - 7 yrs)

Wondering Together

Blessing One Another

...with our arms wide open

Children: God be with you

All: And also with you

Sung Affirmation

...as young people depart or return to families

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

*infant - age 3 | nursery care available (9:25-10:30) downstairs
PreK-Gr. 1 | gather now for Sunday School downstairs
Older Children (gr. 2-4) & Youth Group (gr. 5-12) | remain in worship
We welcome sounds and movements of children in worship
("busy bags" available in Narthex)*

Proclaiming God's Love

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures | *The Inclusive Bible*

Isaiah 60: 1-6

A Reading from the Gospels | *The Inclusive Bible*

Matthew 2: 1-12

Morning Message “Do We Shine to Control or to Influence?”

Responding To God's Love

Prayer Hymn (NCH #153)

"Who Would Think That What Was Needed"

all verses

Prayers of the People

Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come,
We pray that your good will be done,
Let heaven and Earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need,
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,
From each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence
Beyond the evil of our days —
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Greeters pass offering plates
We give by cash, check or electronically (scanning the QR code)
Completed Welcome Forms also go in plates



Offertory Duet

“Brightest and Best (Morning Star)”

Harding

*Offertory Response

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! Alleluia!

A Congregational UCC Way of Life
Adult Faith Conversations | Jan. 14 & 21, 11:00-11:45am
(childcare provided)

We launched as St. Croix United Church in October 2023. St. Peter's United Church of Christ (UCC) was a long-standing member of the MN Conference UCC. People's Congregational Church was a long-standing member of the National Association of Christian Congregational Churches (NACCC) and added an affiliation with the MN Conference UCC in May 2023. Now we are a dually affiliated congregation.

In February & March, a Strategic Vision Task Force will lead us in distilling our core values, creating vision & mission statements, and designing a visual logo for our church. *(Please contact Jill Greenhalgh or Pastor Clare if you'd like to serve on this task force - we will soon meet for a first planning session!)*

Across the next two Sundays, our adult Faith Formation Team invites members and friends into fuller understanding of what our dual affiliation means for us. What commonalities and differences exist between the UCC and NACCC? What resources do we gain (for doing our particular ministry in the St. Croix valley) by being connected within larger networks of churches? Many of us come from Baptist, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian and other religious and non-religious roots. All perspectives and questions are welcome!



God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Mark Your Calendars: Annual Meeting | January 28, 10:45 am

It's that time of year! Megan will compile many reports into the Annual Report packet for the congregation to review just ahead of our January 28th Annual Meeting. **We ask the Chair/point person of each committee or team to please submit your year-end report as a word document (.docx) or within an email (no PDFs, please!) by Jan. 14th.**



Special thank you to ALL our leaders!

PRAYER CORNER

Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:


For persons known to us...

*We offer gratitude for Frank Cole's grandson **Willy Christou's** vital work as a journalist in Lebanon and thanksgiving for his ongoing safety and wellbeing. Willy wrote an article that was picked up globally and quoted by the New York Times, The Guardian, and the Times of Israel, etc. He had located spent shells used by the IDF to target civilians with white phosphorus, traced the shells, and published an article in the Washington Post about Israel's war crime. The article was referenced by a reporter at a White House news conference. Willy was also recently interviewed on the BBC Newshour. *(The articles and interview are linked in the Mid-Week News.)*

*Safe travels for **Aidan Gromoll** on January 7-8. She departs for Magura, Bangladesh to open and run a medical clinic for persons with limited or no access to medical care. The clinic will be above a newly opened school in a community center recently built by a humanitarian friend.

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), SCUC Choir, Lori Mildon (flute), Jane Hanson (greeter), Jonah Gromoll (youth greeter), Sam Gromoll (acolyte), Heather Kennedy-Bordeaux (liturgist), Sue Favilla (communion preparer & server), Rolf Dittmann & Cheri Schwartz (communion servers), Chris Bordeaux & Wendy Staberg (fellowship), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech team), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider), Carol Dusbabek, Claire Spilseth, & Kim Klisch (preK-Gr1), Jackie Savage (Sunday school float, sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign), Andi Favilla & Jenni Shaller (decorations)



St. Croix United Church
Rev. Clare Gromoll, Pastor
pastor@peoplescongregational.org
309 Third St. N, Bayport MN 55003-1028
(651) 439-5667 / office@peoplescongregational.org
www.peoplescongregational.org  @SCUCBayport

CREDITS & PERMISSIONS | **Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession & Longing, Prayer of Thanksgiving** reprinted or adapted by permission of the publishers from *Touch Holiness*, ed. Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi. Copyright © 1990 by The Pilgrim Pres. **Lord's Prayer** by Park Palmer. **Scripture Readings** from the *Inclusive Bible*. Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #A-703858. All rights reserved.

Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-12

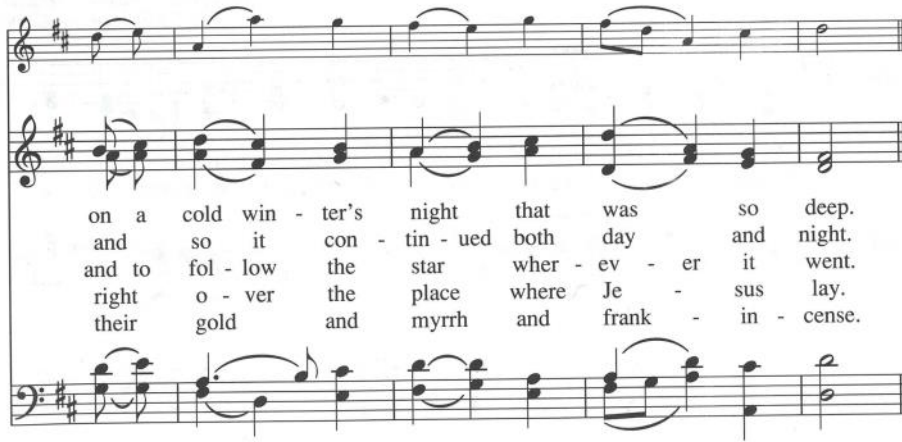
Traditional English carol; alt.

Descant

1 The first Now - ell, the an - gel did say,
 2 They looked a - bove and saw a star
 3 And by the light of that same star
 4 This star shone bright in the north - west,
 5 Then en - tered in those ma - gi three,

was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay;
 shin - ing in the east, be - yond them far,
 three sag - es came from coun - try far,
 o'er Beth - le - hem it seemed to rest,
 and bend - ing low up - on their knee,

In fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep,
 And to the earth it gave great light,
 To seek for a king was their in - tent,
 And there it did both stop and stay,
 They of - fered there, in great rev - erence,



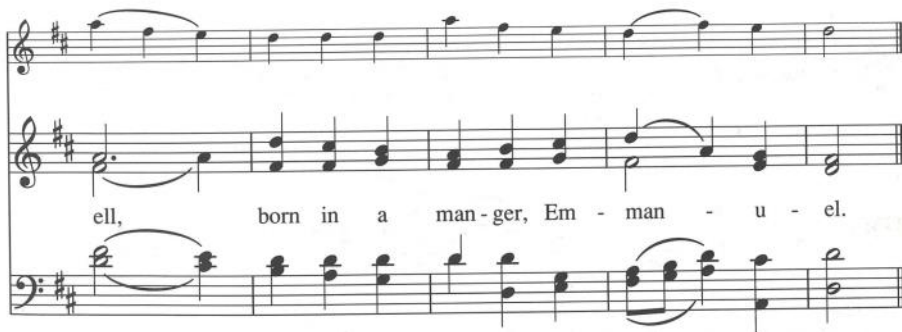
on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.
right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.
their gold and myrrh and frank - in - cense.

Refrain



Refrain

Now - ell, now - ell, now - ell, now -



ell, born in a man - ger, Em - man - u - el.

Though perhaps of earlier origins, this anonymous English carol first appeared in print in the nineteenth century. "Nowell" stems from the Latin novellae (news) and is used as a joyous greeting to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Tune: THE FIRST NOWELL Irr. with refrain
Traditional English melody
Harm. Christmas Carols New and Old, 1871
Descant, Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937

153 Who Would Think That What Was Needed

*Isa. 11:1-6; Matt. 2:1-11; Luke 2:8-14**John Bell and Graham Maule, 1990; alt.*

1 Who would think that what was need-ed to trans-form and save the earth
 2 Shep-herds watch and sag - es won-der, mon-archs scorn and an - gels sing;
 3 Cen - tu - ries of skill and sci-ence span the past from which we move,

might not be a plan or ar - my proud in pur-pose, proved in worth?
 such a place as none would reck - on hosts a ho - ly, help - less thing;
 yet ex - per-ience ques-tions wheth-er with such prog-ress we im - prove.

Who would think, de - spite de - ri - sion, that a child should lead the way?
 Sta - bled beasts and pass - ing stran-gers watch a ba - by laid in hay;
 In our search for sense and mean - ing, lest our hopes and hu - mor fray,

God sur - pris - es earth with heav-en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.
 God sur - pris - es earth with heav-en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.
 God sur - pris - es earth with heav-en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.

This song was written by The Iona Community in Scotland, which frequently develops hymn texts through a collaborative process, often employing traditional tunes from the British Isles such as "Scarlet Ribbons."

Tune: SCARLET RIBBONS 8.7.8.7.D.
English traditional melody
 Arr. John Bell and others, 1990

ENCOUNTER

112 Come to the Table of Grace

$\text{♩} = 90$

1. Come to the ta - ble of grace. _____
 2. Come to the ta - ble of peace. _____
 3. Come to the ta - ble of love. _____
 4. Come to the ta - ble of joy. _____

Come to the ta - ble of grace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of peace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of love. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of joy. _____

This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.
 This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.
 This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.
 This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.

Come to the ta - ble of grace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of peace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of love. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of joy. _____

EPIPHANY

164

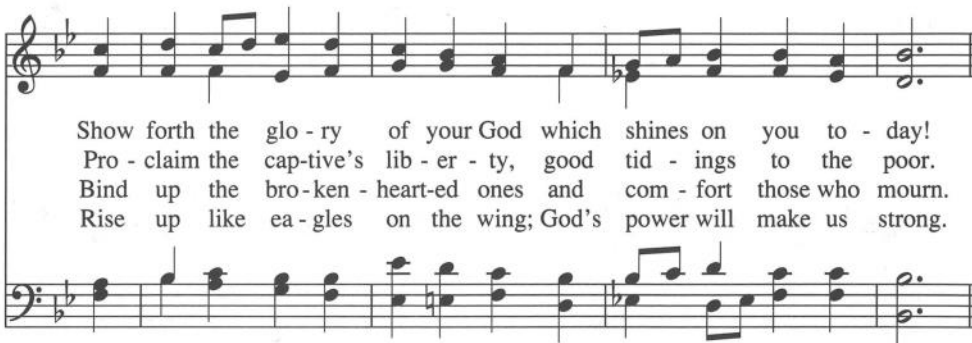
Arise, Your Light Is Come

Isa. 60:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21

Ruth Duck, 1973



1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!



Show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day!
Pro - claim the cap-tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.
Bind up the bro - ken - heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

This hymn was first published by the Ecumenical Women's Center of Chicago in the 1974 collection of hymn adaptations, Because We Are One People. Ruth Duck later included it in her own collection, Dancing in the Universe.

Tune: FESTAL SONG S.M.
William Walter, 1872

Words Copyright © 1992 by G.I.A. Publications, Inc.