

North Kildonan United Church
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Minister: *Rev. Susan Reed*
Pianist/Choir Director: *Joanne Diplock*
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Our Mission...

to be an accepting Christian community dedicated to living, sharing and teaching the Word of God.

We respect all aspects of people including race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, mental wellness, and ability.

January 7th, 2024
Epiphany Sunday

The asterisk invites all to stand, if they are able. **Bold print indicates a congregational response.*

GATHERING TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE *(Music played with permission under license #A-620529 One License)*

~Joanne Diplock

WELCOME

LIFE and WORK of the CONGREGATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the LAND

We acknowledge that we meet on Treaty 1 land, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Metis nation. We are thankful for these first inhabitants, and we commit to working together towards justice, truth and reconciliation.

LIGHTING of the CHRIST CANDLE

*(Written by Mary Parsons; from *Gathering A/C/E 2022-2023.*)*

LIGHTING of the PEACE CANDLE

As we light this candle, we pray for peace:

**peace in our hearts,
peace in our homes,
peace in our world.**

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace,

O God, we pray for peace. Amen.

SHARING the PEACE of CHRIST

INTRODUCTION to the SERVICE

CALL to WORSHIP

*(Written by Catherine Tovell; from *Gathering A/C/E 2021-2022.*)*

*The wise men saw the star in the east and followed it,
trusting they would find God.*

We gather here today, with the same trust that we too will find God.

Moving past fear and doubt, they followed the star

until it stopped right over the place where the Christ Child was.

**We come hoping to move past our fear and push beyond our doubts
so that we, too, might find the Christ among us.**

*Upon finding him, they offered their finest gifts
of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

**We bring our best gifts, too,
knowing that in God's presence they will be transformed,
and so will we.**

Let us worship God together.

***OPENING HYMN: VU #91 – "The First Nowell"**

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(English traditional carol)

~Joanne Diplock

**1 The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay akeeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

**Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.**

**2 They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. R**

**3 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. R**

OPENING PRAYER

(Adapted from Beth W. Johnston; from *Gathering A/C/E 2020-2021.*)

God of the Ages,

you called the Magi to travel from far away to find Jesus.

You call us to journey into the unknown.

We know that you go with us,

**even if the steps we take are new
and sometimes uncertain or unfamiliar.**

Assure us, in this time of worship, that you do go with us.

Grant us the courage to open our lives

to the new opportunities that lie ahead.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

CONVERSATION TIME

*HYMN: VU #91 – **"The First Nowell"**

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(English traditional carol)

~Joanne Diplock

- 4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. R**
- 5 Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. R**
- 6 Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. R**

LISTENING FOR AND REFLECTING ON GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reader: Heidi McIlwain

Isaiah 60: 1-6

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.*

Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

*"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."'*

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Words of Response:

Let us hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

***HYMN: VU #74 – "What Child is This"**

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(Chatterton Dix)

~Joanne Diplock

- 1 What child is this, who laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!**
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading. R**

**3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him. R**

PRAYER for TRANSFORMATION

(Adapted from Eric Hebert-Daly, from *Gathering A/C/E 2013-2014*.)

God of new manifestations,

**we thank you for this time of Epiphany
and the manifestations of your spirit.**

We accept this time as a special one:

a time when we seek new life in unexpected places, like a stable;

**a time when we interpret the signs differently than we used to,
like a star;**

a time when we seek the advice

of people who are different from us, like the wise men;

**a time when we turn away from bad habits
and things that keep us separate from God's love,
like taking a new road;**

*a time when new beginnings give us new opportunities to start fresh,
like a new birth.*

**Help us to seize these opportunities
so that we can find new ways of living in your light.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

WORDS of ASSURANCE

CHOIR ANTHEM:

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~Joanne Diplock

REFLECTION: "New Year, New Roads, New Possibilities"

~Rev. Susan Reed

RESPONDING TO GOD IN PRAYER AND ACTION

*HYMN OF RESPONSE: VU #81 – "As With Gladness Men of Old" (Dix/Kocher)

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~Joanne Diplock

**1 As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright,
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore your splendour see.**

- 2 As with joyful steps they sped,
to that lowly manger bed,
there to bend the knee before
Christ, whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with eager pace
ever seek your throne of grace.**
- 3 As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger crude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.**
- 4 Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds your glory hide.**
- 5 In the heavenly country bright
none shall need created light;
you its light, its joy, its crown,
you its sun which goes not down;
there for ever may we sing
hallelujah to our King.**

INVITATION to the OFFERING

THE PRESENTATION of our TITHES and OFFERINGS

Offertory Music *as the offerings are collected*

~Joanne Diplock

***Offering Verse: VU #55 – "In the Bleak Midwinter"**

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(Rossetti/Holst)

~Joanne Diplock

- 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him - give my heart.**

*Offertory Prayer

(Written by Laura Turnbull; from *Gathering A/C/E 2020-2021.*)

**Come, O Holy One, be our light.
Come, O Sovereign One, be our guide.
Receive our gifts.
They are the work of our hands and the commitment of our hearts.
We bring not gold but money.**

**We bring not frankincense but our devotion.
We bring not myrrh but our lifelong dedication.
May we serve, through these gifts, with confidence and humility.
In the name of the Christ Child, we pray. Amen.**

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

SENT INTO GOD'S WORLD

READING "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman

*HYMN: *VU #87 – "I Am the Light of the World"*
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(Strathdee)
~Joanne Diplock

**'I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.**

- 1 When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found
their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun: R**
- 2 To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth
and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above! R**
- 3 To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,**

to see God's children everywhere! R

**4 To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth! R**

***SENDING FORTH**

(Written by Lori Erhardt; from *Worship for All Seasons II: Year B.*)

*Let us go forth in the light of God's star,
committed to a journey of faith and courage.*

**We go forth with the light of Christ in our hearts,
eager to learn the mystery of all we are meant to do and be.**

Let us live in tenderness toward all people.

May we go to share the gifts we have received.

*May the blessing of God, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit
be with us all now and all our days.*

Amen.

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

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(Price/Besig)

~Joanne Diplock

**May the Lord go with you,
let him take your hand.**

**Keep His love within you,
until we meet again. Amen.**

POSTLUDE *(Music played with permission under license #A-620529 One License)*

~Joanne Diplock