

Westminster United Church

Order of Worship

January 6, 2019



**We Celebrate Epiphany
on the First Sunday of the New Year**

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

(★ invites people to stand as they are able; people's part in bold type)

Entry Into Celebration

(Roger Lynn, progressivechristianity.org/11/19/14, *adapted*)

Today, on the first Sunday of the New Year,
we celebrate Epiphany,
also known as Three Kings' Day...

Quiet Time

Drawn by God's presence

We gather.

Inspired by God's Spirit,

We worship.

Empowered by God's grace,

We live.

Opened by God's love,

We share...



The singing bowl is sounded three times

Opening Prayer and Reflections

God of All Creation – God of Light and Wisdom –

on this First Sunday of the New Year,
be with each one of us,

As growth, creativity and healing.

Spirit of the Living God –
continue to live within our faith community,

**Giving courage, dispelling fear, resolving
conflict, and giving fire to inflame with love.**

God – Spirit of Peace – dwell with us
so that we may know

**Your presence in silence and stillness,
and your vision for your people.**

God – Spirit of Love and Power – open our living
to your power so that we may

**Open ourselves to the joy and pain of others,
and to justice, truth and freedom.**

Quiet Time

God of all creation, come into our bodies...

**Come into the body of Christ, the church,
making us your new creation.**

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

★**Opening Hymn VU 91** “*The First Nowell*”

A Conversation “*Why Do We Celebrate Epiphany?*”

★**Hymn VU 81** “*As with Gladness Men of Old*”

A Litany for the New Year

(based on Ecclesiastes 1:4-9, *adapted*)

A new year begs for change
even as we dig in our feet.

What are we to make of new horizons
and lost opportunities?

**A generation comes and a generation goes,
but the earth remains forever.**

A new year is charged with renewal,
even as our expectations wane.

What are we to make of hope and despair?

**The sun rises and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place it rises.**

A new year is full of resolutions and ambitions.

What are we to make of grand attempts
and arresting failures?

**The wind blows from the north and
goes round to the south. The wind returns.**

A new year startles and seduces.

What are we to make of the one in the mirror,
and the one in the flesh?

**All rivers and creeks run to the sea,
but the sea is not full.**

A new year strains away from the familiar.

What are we to make of nuance and nativity?

**What has been is what will be;
What has been done is what will be done.
There is nothing new under the sun.**

Sharing the Peace

May a heart of peace rest with you.

And also with you.

Hymn MV 14 “Where Two or Three Are Gathered”

**Where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there, I am there.**

READINGS

From the Old Testament
Isaiah 60: 1-6

From the New Testament
Matthew 2: 1-12

A Responsive Reading
from the ‘New Testament’

“*Like the Wise Ones, We Ask...*”

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.
Matthew 2.2



One: When a star in the sky marked where the new
King of the Jews had been born, wise and learned
ones came to Jerusalem looking for him. Like the wise
ones we ask,

People: Where can we find you, Affirming One?

One: They brought the child, with his mother Mary,
their most precious gifts and worshipped him. We have
no treasure to offer nor any star to guide us. We bring
only devotion to your will. Like the wise ones we ask,

People: Where can we find you, Amazing One?

One: Do we look for someone who is rich and
powerful, living in a five-star hotel, or for the One who
had nowhere to lay his head? Like the wise ones we
ask,

People: Where can we find you, Gracious One?

One: Are you in the crowded shops during the post-
Christmas sales? Will we find you in the endless round
of New Year’s Eve and other parties, or squatting
homeless in some condemned building? Like the wise
ones we ask,

People: Where can we find you, Imagining One?

One: You were in the world but they did not know you.
 You came to your own and they did not receive you.
 There was no room for you at the inn.
 Is there any room for you in our hearts?
 Like the wise ones we ask,

People: **Where can we find you, Caring One?**

One: Amen.

Reflections on This Morning's Readings

Let us recognize the seeds of truth and wisdom
 in these readings.

**And may these seeds of truth and wisdom
 be planted in the fertile soil
 of our hearts and minds. Amen.**

Centering

And now, for a few moments,
 let silence gently enfold us...

Silence

In this day made fresh,
 we embrace hope for our lives,
 and hope for the church. Amen.

Sermon “*The Magi and Their Gifts*” Rev Del Stewart

Pastoral Prayers

The Lord's Prayer (Unison)

Presentation of Our Gifts and Offerings

★Offertory Hymn VU 537

“Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands”

Offertory Prayer

★Closing Hymn VU 87

“I Am the Light of the World”

Parting Words

The time has come for us to leave this place.
 As you depart, ponder in your hearts the wonder
 and mystery of this season; and rest assured
 that God's presence goes with you.

**We face the world with renewed hope and
 faith; God's Word abides in us.**

Let your hearts burn within you as you dare to trust.

God's love is real and alive in us.

Live in gratitude each and every day.

We will love sincerely and live confidently...

The singing bowl is sounded three times.

Words of Blessing (Min)

May the God you see in all the colours of creation
 arouse in you a sense of awe and wonder;
 May the God who is a sacred presence
 be real to you;
 May the God who is a source of inspiration and
 courage keep calling you forward.
 May your God go with you, and bless you...

Choral Response MV 209 “*Go, Make a Diff'rence*”
 (refrain)





Just as **Advent** (the beginning of the church year) leads to Christmas, the season of Christmas in turn leads to **Epiphany**.

Have you ever had a moment of sudden clarity? When a truth is revealed to you, even though you have been living with something for a long time? The penny drops

and you finally figure out what is really going on or have a deeper insight into what is actually happening. The truth of the matter knocks you over and the fog clears. In other words, have you ever had an epiphany?

Epiphany is a season to mark the revelation and manifestation of Christ, particularly in the child Jesus. We celebrate Epiphany on January 6 (the 12th day of Christmas), with the commemoration of the Magi's visit to Jesus.

Without Epiphany, there would not be a need to celebrate Christmas. If we did not recognize Jesus as the Christ (the anointed one), we would not need to celebrate his arrival. In fact, many traditions around the world have huge Epiphany celebrations with parades, food, gifts, and water blessings. Many of us are ready to return to our regular routines once Christmas is behind us. But you can extend your observance of Christmas—and of Epiphany—by keeping a connection to God's story.

Let's continue to make room for Christ and the radical, countercultural messages that Christ brings.

from adventunwrapped.ca - visit the website to read more

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Lectionary Readings for Sunday, January 13 *~ Baptism of Jesus ~*

Isaiah 43: 1-7

Psalm 29

Acts 8: 14-17

Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22