

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

A Service of the Word

Hicks Memorial Chapel

in celebration of **Epiphany** of the **Lord**

(January 6)

GATHERING

Prelude

Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning

arr. Robert A. Hobby

Brightest and best of the stars of the morning, Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid; Star of the East, the horizon adorning, Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining, Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall; Angels adore Him in slumber reclining, Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion, Odours of Edom, and offerings divine? Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean, Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation, Vainly with gifts would His favour secure; Richer by far is the heart's adoration, Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning, Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid; Star of the East, the horizon adorning, Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

- Reginald Heber

*Call to Worship

Leader: We gather in the Light

that was before, is now, and ever will be.

People: We seek the Light's ancient wisdom.

Leader: We gather in the Light

that is God's continuing gift.

People: We live into the Light's new wisdom.

Leader: We gather in the Light

that is our own, emerging anew each day.

People: We seek to share this wisdom,

nurtured in the Light from Bethlehem's cradle.

*Opening Prayer

Leader: God of Light and Love,

in this very moment the star still beckons. Gather us and let the star call us to new ways

of healing and hope, restoration and renewal,

as we discover again Christ's call to discipleship. Amen.

*Carol

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

GtG #143

Call to Confession John 3:19-21

With these words, Jesus calls us to confess our sin: "Light has come into the world,

but people loved darkness instead of light

because their deeds were evil.

All who do evil hate the light, and will not come to the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light,

so that it may be seen plainly that what each one has done

has been done through God."

Let us confess our sins together.

Prayer of Confession

People: God of Glory,

you sent Jesus among us as the light of the world,

to reveal your love for all people.

We confess that our sin and pride

hide the brightness of your light.

We turn away from the poor;

we ignore cries for justice;

we do not strive for peace.

In your mercy, cleanse us of our sin,

and renew us once again with your Spirit,

that forgiven and renewed,

we may show forth your glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

silent confession

Orison

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

GtG #662

Assurance of Pardon Luke 1:78-79

Leader: "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel.

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

*Gloria (GtG #113, refrain)

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

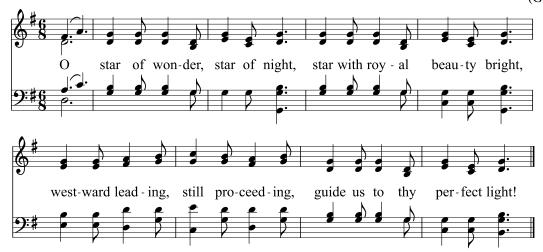
*Passing of the Peace

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Refrain:

Text and Music: John Henry Hopkins Jr. (GtG #151)



Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Refrain

Matthew 2:1-12

Refrain

Offering

On this day, we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of the light in the darkness.

Having received the self-revelation of God in the person of Jesus,

we rededicate ourselves in discipleship and service

of the one who enters into our ordinary lives.

During this time of offering, all are invited to renewed commitment to our Lord by writing an offering of service or a prayer of commitment and placing it on the Lord's Table –

the place where we gather in communion with Christ and one another.

We have seen the light of the world.

We have been called to follow the star of promise.

Like the Magi,

let us bring our gifts – gifts of time and talent, of commitment and service – to honor the babe of Bethlehem and bring the light to all the dark places in our community and our world.

What Child Is This (stanzas 1, 2)

GtG #145

As the music continues, all are invited to write an offering of service or a prayer of commitment and lay it on the Lord's Table.

What Child Is This (stanza 3)

GtG #145

An Epiphany Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Father, we thank you for revealing yourself to us in Jesus the Christ, we who once were not your people but whom you chose to adopt as your people. As ancient Israel confessed long ago, we realize that it was not because of our own righteousness, or our own superior wisdom, or strength, or power, or numbers. It was simply because you loved us, and chose to show us that love in Jesus.

As you have accepted us when we did not deserve your love, will you help us to accept those whom we find it hard to love? Forgive us, O Lord, for any attitude that we harbor that on any level sees ourselves as better or more righteous than others. Will you help us to remove the barriers of prejudice and to tear down the walls of bigotry, religious or social? O Lord, help us realize that the walls that we erect for others only form our own prisons!

Will you fill us so full of your love that there is no more room for intolerance? As you have forgiven us much, will you enable us with your strength to forgive others even more? Will you enable us through your abiding Presence among us, communally and individually, to live our lives in a manner worthy of the Name we bear?

May we, through your guidance and our faithful obedience, find new avenues in ways that we have not imagined of holding the Light of your love so that it may be a Light of revelation for all people.

We thank you for your love, praise you for your Gift, ask for your continued Presence with us, and bring these petitions in the name of your Son, who has truly revealed your heart. Hear us as we pray with one voice the as Jesus' taught.... Our Father...

SENDING

| *Sending Hymn | What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright | GtG #152 |
|---------------|--|----------|
| or Hark! Th | e Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World) | GtG #127 |

*Dismissal Isaiah 60:2

Leader: Arise! Shine! Your light has come!

People: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us. Leader: Now go in peace, beloved people of God, to walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

Postlude

Arise, Your Light has Come!

(GtG #744)

^{*}please rise in body and/or spirit

Worship Notes

The word "epiphany" (from the Greek *epiphaneia* or *theophaneia*) means "appearance" or "manifestation" of God and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness. ... Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God's true Light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

See Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2003, 94-95).

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer: United Church of Christ, *Worship Ways* http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/year-a/ace/epiphany-service-prayers-3.html

Prayer of Confession: PC(USA) Book of Common Worship, 193.

An Epiphany Prayer: author unknown