



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.**

THE WORD

Refrain:

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

O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

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

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