



***Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church***  
**Pastor: Reverend Russel W. Shuluga**

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**Welcome Visitors:** We are pleased you have chosen to worship with us today. If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us.

May God bless your experience in worship with us today.  
We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might better serve you.

**ORDER OF WORSHIP  
EPIPHANY OF THE LORD SUNDAY  
JANUARY 3, 2021**

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**CENTERING**

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING WORDS:

Pastor: The magi came from distant places, following a star.

**People: We come to worship, and the star sheds light on our lives.**

Pastor: The magi brought gifts to offer the Child.

**People: We too bring gifts: ourselves, our hopes, our dreams.**

Pastor: Shepherds and magi – the poor and the powerful – all were welcome in Bethlehem.

**People: We too have come to Bethlehem and return to our homes rejoicing.**

**PRAISING**

OPENING HYMN

"The First Noel"

No. 245

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Arise, shine! Your light has come!

**People: The light of Christ Jesus is shining this day.**

Pastor: Arise, shine! Your light has come!

**People: The light of Christ Jesus is shining for us.**

Pastor: You are members of Christ's body and share in Christ's promised salvation.

**People: The light of Christ Jesus is shining in us!**

Pastor: Arise, shine! You are the light of the world.

**People: Christ's light shines through us with justice and peace.**

Pastor: Arise, shine! May our worship be filled with light and love.

OPENING PRAYER

Pastor: At the threshold of this new year, O God, we come before you in the light of your love, ever mindful of the gift of your Son. We come before you with the promise that this year will be different...

**People: that we will follow the star instead of the crowd.**

Pastor: We come before you with the promise that this year will be different...

**People: that we will do what Mary did and rejoice in God.**

Pastor: We come before you with the promise that this year will be different...

**People: that we will do what Joseph did and listen to our dreams.**

Pastor: We come before you with the promise that this year will be different....

**People: that we will do what the Wise Men did and go to worship**

Pastor: We come before you with the promise that this year will be different...

**People: that we will do what the shepherds did and praise God for all that we have seen and heard. O God, we have such good intentions as the year stretches out before us. When the night becomes it's darkest and we cannot see our path, guide us back to Christmas and the light of the star. We embrace our promise that this year will be different because we are different because of your gift of love. The holiday is over, but the work of Christmas is just beginning. Keep us steadfast in our task to bring the light of Christmas to the dark corners of our world as we strive to follow in the footsteps of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ. We come now, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, to worship you. Amen**

INTROIT

"Sing We Now of Christmas"

No. 237

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

## CALL TO CONFESSION

In the light of Christ, we see the shadows of our world and of our hearts. Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

## CONFESSING

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O God, as we begin a new year, we confess our sin in year that is past. We have often sought our own welfare and not the welfare of others. We have complained about the state of the world while doing little to change it. We have spent time worrying and talking that should have been spent praying and listening. We have invested energy in our appearances that should have been invested in the renewal of our hearts and minds. Forgive us, we pray, and make us new persons in Christ. Let the new year be what the old year should have been. Amen.**

### SILENT CONFESSION

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

**Pastor:** This is the good news: Christ is the light of the world who grants forgiveness and healing of our sins.

**People:** **Thanks be to God!**

## HEARING

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Pastor:** O Lord, open our eyes, our ears, our minds, and our hearts;

**People:** **that we might behold wondrous things out of your word.**

### FIRST LESSON:

Isaiah 60:1-6

**Pastor:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**People:** **Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL LESSON

**Pastor:** The Lord be with you,

**People:** **And also with you.**

**Pastor:** A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

**People:** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

### THE GOSPEL IS READ

Matthew 2:1-12

### THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

**Pastor:** The Gospel of the living Christ.

**People:** **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## PROCLAIMING

### SERMON

"God Meets Us Where We Are"

Rev. Russel W. Shuluga

## RESPONDING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

THE LORD'S OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

**Loving and receptive God, who acted in the Bethlehem birth and who sustains the whole human family, we come to you seeking to be wise men and women. May our gifts be a sign, as were the gifts for those travelers of old, what wisdom is marked by an offering of self and substance to the Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.**

## SENDING

BENEDICTION

**Pastor:** Go forth in the light of God's star. Go forth committed to a journey of faith and courage. Go forth to give the precious gift of your life to Christ.

**People:** **We will go forth and let the star guide us. We will share with others the journey of life. We will praise God for the gift we have received is beyond measure – Jesus Christ.**

CLOSING HYMN

"We Three Kings"

No. 254

**'WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD'**

Liturgist: Gail Gratton