

Epiphany
January 2, 2022
Golden Ears United Church
An Affirming Christian community for faith, justice and music

Prelude

Land Acknowledgement

Long before my people journeyed to this land, Indigenous people were here the Katzie and Kwantlen First people, and they received from their Elders an understanding of creation and of the Mystery that surrounds us all that was deep, and rich, and to be treasured. When they shared their vision, my people did not hear. My people tried to force Indigenous peoples to be like us, and, in so doing, we helped to destroy the vision that made them what they were. We are in the midst of a long and painful journey as we reflect on the cries that our church did not or would not hear, and how we have behaved as a church. As we travel this difficult road of repentance, reconciliation, and healing, we commit ourselves to work toward ensuring that we will never again use our power as a church to hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority. We pray that all Indigenous people will hear the sincerity of our words today and that they will witness the living out of our apology in our actions in the future.

Greetings and Announcements

One: God is good

All: all the time.

One: All the time

All: God is Good.

Lighting the Christ Candle

One: We light this candle, honouring the One who said “I am the Light.”

Gathering:

VU 79 Vs 1

“Arise, Your Light Is Come”

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**Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit’s call obey;
show forth the glory of your God,
which shines on you today.**

Call to Worship (based on Isaiah 60:1–6)

One: Arise! Shine!

All: For our Light has come!

One: The glory of the Lord is in this place.

All: The glory of the Lord is in you, in me.

One: See! Be radiant!

All: Our hearts thrill and rejoice!

One: Let us worship in gratitude, in joy, together.

Opening Prayer (All)

God of all gifts, we give you thanks for the joy of worshipping together this day. Throughout time and space, you have called to us to rise up and shine, to be light for the world. Today, you continue to call to us, that we might inspire others by our rising—that our gifts

might join with others as we rediscover that we are yours. May this time of worship help us to follow the Light, that we might be reenergized and recharged to be your disciples. May your Spirit rest upon us now and in all that we say and do. We pray these things in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying:

**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.**

Hymn VU 371

Open My Eyes That I May See

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**Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.**

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

**Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.**

**Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.**

Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

**Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.**

**Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.**

Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Prayer of Confession (All)

Holy One, on this day of Epiphany, we hear a story of travellers who bring extravagant gifts to Jesus, which sometimes causes us to think that our gifts are not good enough. We hold ourselves to the world's standards of what gifts should be, and fail to see that what we offer is like those early gifts—what we offer is the best that we have. So, forgive us when we compare ourselves with others. Forgive us when our fear stops us from rising up to shine. Inspire us to look at what we have in gratitude,

so that we might then share these parts of ourselves for your glory and for the transformation of the world that you love so much. We long to be reflections of your Light, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Throughout scripture, we are reminded that grace is God's greatest gift to us. Let us draw nearer to that gift, soaking in its light so that we might indeed Arise and Shine!

Learning Time – Exploring the Epiphany Box

Hymn VU 87

I Am the Light of the World

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**“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.**

**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**

**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**

**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**

**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**

Scripture:

Ephesians 3:1–12

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow

heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Matthew 2:1–12

The Visit of the Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and

worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Sermon

Hymn MV 182

Grateful

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Refrain:

**Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.**

**Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,
joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.**

**You are more than we imagine,
Ancient, Holy, Living Lord*.
Even when we doubt your presence
you are faithful to your Word.**

**May our lives proclaim your justice,
may our voices sing your praise.
May our hands work in your service
to the glory of your name.**

Offering Invitation

We are indeed recipients of God's grace and generosity. But in receiving, we are also called to give, to share, and to live lives of gratitude, for this is the backbone of discipleship. Like the Magi, we give what we have, not knowing how our giving will shape lives and transform us and the world. All offerings of time, talent, and treasure will gratefully be received. There are a number of ways in which to give, PAR pre-authorized remittance, etransfer@goldenearsunited.ca or a click on the donate button on our website. Now is the opportunity to courageously share your gifts to further the church's work and the Spirit's mission.

Offering

VU 93 V4 *

“When Heaven's Bright with Mystery”

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♪ **When heaven's bright with mystery
and stars still lead an unknown way,
when love still lights a gentle path
where courts of power can hold no sway,
there with the Magi, let us kneel,**

our gifts to share, God's world to heal.

Prayer of Dedication

All: Great giver of gifts, bless what we offer this day. Through your Spirit, may all that we offer be transformed and, along with us, help continue the ministry to which you have called us. May all that is given truly enable your mission to love and serve your world. Amen.

Prayers of the People

MV 96

When You Call For Me

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♪ **And when you call for me,
I have already answered.
And when you call for me,
I am already there.**

Repeat

Gracious God, you are the one who separated Light and Darkness at creation, the one who declares all of creation to be good. You are the one who reminds us of the vastness of that creation each time we look at the stars, or attempt to count grains of sand. You are the one who gave the Magi the star to follow and the courage to journey together, leading them to a child who would change how they would see themselves and others and how they would respond

with their own gifts, a child who would give them a glimpse at what it is like to listen to a voice other than the one that seems to be in control. In this time of prayer, we ask for similar courage: courage for our world, our communities, our families, and ourselves.

Wondrous God, as we look out into the world, we see many places, many situations where courage is needed, where differences are clashing, where gifts are being hoarded and squandered, not shared as they are meant to be and used in ways that tear down rather than build up (*name situations that are weighing on your heart*). May your Spirit rest in all of these situations and places. May gifts be redistributed and shared in ways that bring people peace and you glory.

Mysterious God, as we look around in our communities, we see people hurting, people working hard, people pushed to the edges, endangered because of who they are, because of who they love, because of the colour of their skin, because of what they believe. Again, we see gifts hoarded and squandered because of the unwillingness to share, unwillingness to change, and unwillingness to truly love our neighbours. Like the Magi, we must change our paths (*name local situations that need to change, local gifts that need to be shared*). May gifts be redistributed and shared in ways that change minds, open hearts, and bring you glory.

Compassionate God, we turn our focus now to ourselves and those we love, for we, too, need your transformation, grace, and love. As we look inward, we see situations that have caused hurt, pain, and sighs too deep for words. Even

in our midst, we see gifts that are hoarded and squandered, people who are afraid to share their gifts because of fear. We see gifts that aren't shared until it's too late. May our own gifts be redistributed and shared in ways that mend relationships, help broken hearts to heal, and help us to see ourselves as worthy and able to truly love you and our world. God who weaves all of our prayers together, may you gather all of these prayers, both spoken and held in our hearts, and weave your courage into them, so that new paths and new gifts are both revealed and shared for the transformation of this world and the coming of your reign. In the name of Jesus, the courageous one, we pray. Amen.

Hymn MV 213

Take Up His Song

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**Take up his song of peace
and go into the world.**

**Take up his song of peace
in ev'ry moment.**

**In ev'ry moment of the journey,
we're laying down our lives;**

**lay them down, in peace,
lay them down, and take up his song.**

Sending Forth

One: We have heard the words of the prophet: Arise and Shine!

All: As we go, may we too Arise and Shine!

One: We have heard the story of the Magi sharing their gifts.

All: As we go, may our gifts be shared with all.

Benediction

One: May God's love and grace shine upon you.
May the Light of Jesus shine from within you.
May the joy of the Spirit shine all around you.
And may you and those you love, wherever they might be, remember to share your gifts for all the world to see.
Amen, Amen,
and may it be so,
this day and forever more.

Postlude