**Opening Prayer**

Dear God, reveal to us this day what our eyes look for but cannot see; what our ears hear and cannot understand. Shine your light on the pages of our lives. In the places where we share the dark, everyone looks bright, and everything looks right. We are not anxious to move out of our darkness where we are fooled. In the darkness, our motives are not clear, our ideas are not voiced, and our relationships are not questioned. But when your light shines, everything is like an open window. We see clearly. Help us to move on with you, Light of lights. We praise you and pray in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

**Call To Worship** (Congregation reads the **BOLD**)

Children of God, we enter the new year as we ended the last: gathered for worship!

**We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light.**

The prophet Isaiah calls to us from deep in the past: “Arise, shine; for your light has come.”

**We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light.**

The magi followed a star to find a small child who is the Light of the world.

**We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light.**

So, let us receive the call of Isaiah and follow the example of the magi as we begin this new year turning our faces to God whose glory shows up among us as a vulnerable child, a poor carpenter, and a foot-washing servant who is the salvation of the world.

**We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light today and every day. Amen.**

**Please announce the Hymn of Response:**“In the Bleak Midwinter” **#**221

**Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.”

When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

*You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,*  
        *by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,*  
            *because from you will come one who governs,*  
            *who will shepherd my people Israel.*”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%202#fen-CEB-23175a)]

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

The word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**