

Melville United Church
Sunday, January 7, 2018
Epiphany



* Congregation please stand as you are able.

Bold print invites congregational response.

Presiding today: Ruth Cooke

Welcome & Announcements

Sharing the Light

Prelude/Centering Time

Call to Worship (Responsive):

What do you do when God calls?

Wake up. Pay attention. Act.

What do you do when God asks you to do something difficult?

Wake up. Pay attention. Act.

What do you do when God asks you to do something impossible?

Wake up. Pay attention. Act.

Because with God, nothing is impossible.

Not even changing ourselves?

Not even changing the world!

What do we do?

Wake up. Pay attention. Act.

And with all this living,

we worship God.

Opening Prayer (Unison):

Come light our world, O God. Cast love into the corners where hatred hides. Shine peace upon the shadows of strife. Turn off distress and turn on joy. Light our world with the sunshine of hope. We pray in the name of the Light of the World. Amen.

*Hymn: The First Nowell **VU 91**

Prayer of Confession:

Wandering Christ, we are not careful what we wish for.

We wished our lives weren't so boring,

Melville United Church
St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON: 519-843-1781
Team Ministry

Minister of Worship & Pastoral Care	Rev. Marion Loree
Minister of Faith Formation & Outreach	Jen Auger
Minister of Music Team:	Rob White, Suzanne Flewelling
Church Secretary:	Gerri McCullough
Custodian:	Robert Mitchell
Chair of Church Council:	Allan Hons
Pastoral Care	Alison Rainford, Rev. Marion Loree
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Secretary's Office hours:	8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. T., T. & F.
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And you sent us wild and wonderful new neighbours.

We asked for adventure,

and you asked us to help the world.

We asked for good weather,

and your sunlight showed us what is hidden in the shadows.

O God, don't you know what we're asking for?

Or is it we who don't know what we're asking for?

(We reflect silently on those places in our lives where we need God's light)

Words of Assurance:

A child, a vulnerable, helpless infant,

Becomes the centre of our encounter with God.

In Jesus, we become whole.

In Jesus, we discover new life, new purpose, old love.

Just as the magi discovered majesty and regal authority,

vested in dependency and in vulnerability,

so we discover God's work in our healing forgiveness

as a place of dependency and vulnerability.

Praise God for the chance to change!

Praise God for the continuing opportunity to grow! Amen.

Theme Conversation for the Young & Young at Heart: "Star Gifts"

Children's Song: See amid the Winter's Snow (Verses 1, 2, & 5) **VU 76**

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-7 *(The Message)*

People Returning for the Reunion

60 1-7 "Get out of bed, Jerusalem!

Wake up. Put your face in the sunlight.

GOD's bright glory has risen for you.

The whole earth is wrapped in darkness,

all people sunk in deep darkness,

But GOD rises on you,

his sunrise glory breaks over you.

Nations will come to your light,

kings to your sunburst brightness.

Look up! Look around!

Watch as they gather, watch as they approach you:

Your sons coming from great distances,

your daughters carried by their nannies.

When you see them coming you'll smile-big smiles!

Your heart will swell and, yes, burst!

All those people returning by sea for the reunion,

a rich harvest of exiles gathered in from the nations!

And then streams of camel caravans as far as the eye can see,

young camels of nomads in Midian and Ephah,

Pouring in from the south from Sheba,

loaded with gold and frankincense,

preaching the praises of GOD.

And yes, a great roundup

of flocks from the nomads in Kedar and Nebaioth,

Welcome gifts for worship at my altar

as I bathe my glorious Temple in splendor.

Psalm 72:1-8; 10-14 VU 790 (Parts One & Two)

Reader: Allan Hons

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12 *(The Message)*

Scholars from the East

^{2 1-2} After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory- this was during Herod's kingship-a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

³⁻⁴ When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified-and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

⁵⁻⁶ They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land,

no longer bringing up the rear.

From you will come the leader

who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel."

⁷⁻⁸ Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East.

Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

⁹⁻¹⁰ Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

¹² In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.
Thanks be to God!

Ministry of Music: "When Heaven's Bright with Mystery"

Meditation: "Get Out of Bed, Fergus!"

***Hymn:** Will You Come and See the Light **VU 96**

Offering:

Offering Song: When a Star is Shining VU 97 vs 2

Sung to the Tune of VU 248

**2 Where the world is waiting for an unknown day,
where a voice forgotten cries,
'Prepare the way!'
where an earthly power
makes the heart turn cold,
there the gifts are offered:
incense, myrrh and gold.**

***Offertory Prayer (Unison):**

Like the magi, who offered their gifts, expressions of who and what they were, so too, O God, we bring our gifts to offer to your people. We do not know who will be the recipients of these gifts. Rather, we offer them as thanksgiving to the One who has come among us, the One who said, "whatever you do to the least of these, my brothers and sisters and siblings, you do unto me." As we worship, may we feel Christ's constant presence among us. Amen.

Prayer Prelude: Gather Us In MV 7

Gather us in, ground us in You.

Gather us in, ground us in You.

Gather us in, Gather us in,

ground us, ground us in You.

(repeat)

Prayers of the People:

Prayer of Jesus:

***Hymn:** A Light is Gleaming **VU 82**

Blessing/Sending Forth:

God chooses messengers and prophets in every age.

God's work needs your prayer, your love, your self.

In faith, we hear and answer.

In hope and joy, we go to bear witness to the love that frees and heals.

***Parting Song:** Go, Tell It on the Mountain (Verse 3 & Chorus) **VU 43**

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

**Down in a lonely manger, the humble Christ was born,
And God sent our salvation that blessed Christmas morn.**

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

Postlude:

Prayer of the Week:

Light of the world, Light in the shadows, Light for the way ahead, may your Word shine out from the deepest corners, casting light upon our path, guiding our way, that no matter the journey, we may abide in you. Amen.

Partners in Prayer: St. John's Anglican Church, Elora

Prayer Cycle for Hamilton Conference: Grace, Hanover

Prayer Tree Captain: Alison Rainford

Welcomers: Bob Zirk, Mark Andrews
Joan and John Cuming

Counters: Kaillie Rawn, Karen Smillie