

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

January 3, 2021 Epiphany
“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

We enter this time of worship in search of light to guide our way.

We come because we have seen the light from afar and want to worship the Christ Child.

May God bless our time of worship and our continuing journeys of faith.

May a faithful journey be our gift to the Christ Child in this new year.

Opening Prayer Everlasting God, the radiance of all faithful souls, you brought the nations to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, we pray, and show yourself to all the nations, through him who is the true light, the bright and morning star, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading “*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.*” Read Isaiah 60.1-6

Prayer of Confession Holy Source of righteousness and peace, we have failed to share the good news of your love and grace. We have not been generous with one another, finding fault instead of extending compassion. We have not loved one another as Christ loves us, assigning blame instead of seeking understanding. Forgive our selfish ways, and help us live in the light of your righteousness and justice throughout this new year. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts.*

Words of Assurance The Holy One reaches out to us in

compassion, filling us with radiant love in this new year and always. In the light of Christ, you are forgiven. Thanks be to our loving God.

Scripture Reading “*...sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*” Read Ephesians 3.1-12

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

An Epiphany Prayer (insert) and **The Lord’s Prayer**

Scripture Reading “*...they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage*” Read Matthew 2.1-12

Meditation *Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you... the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.* When God’s people living at the time of Jesus’ birth read these words from the Hebrew Scriptures, they realized that Isaiah’s prophecy had been fulfilled. The Light of the World had come in the infant born in a Bethlehem manger. When the Wise Men arrived at the place where Mary and Joseph and child were, they knew that they were the “kings” coming to the brightness of the Morning Star, Jesus Christ.

Throughout history, humanity has taken a look back and has often seen the natural progression of events that led up to current times. Think back to last year at this time; we were about to enter a new year of 365 days with seemingly endless possibilities. As 2020 dawned, most of us “ordinary folk,” unlike the scientists and medical professionals, didn’t know what lie ahead. Perhaps we had plans to travel (I had planned to go to the Midwest to see my son and brother in May), perhaps we were going to host

family and friends from away, and, of course, we all counted on Easter and Christmas and all the Sundays in between in our sanctuary where we could worship God with one another.

As 2020 began, we were confident that all these things would take place. But then March arrived and we've been dealing with, what is for many, the worst event of our lives. Now we look back and, yes, we see what didn't happen BUT we also look back and see how resilient we've become. We've learned to worship in new ways; we've reached out into our community with different ministries; and perhaps we've learned to take care of ourselves a bit better. Those plans for 2020 have been delayed – with the hope that they will come to pass in 2021 and beyond.

When the Magi followed the star that rose in the East and found the Christ Child, they could look back and see what they weren't quite sure of as they began. Would they find the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy? Would they come upon harm in a foreign country? Would they ever make it back home again? So many questions. And, yet, they were successful for one very big reason: God was with them.

As 2021 dawns there is hope that, with the vaccine, the pandemic will begin to slow down. Life will return to "normal," whatever that means for each of us. And, while we have no guarantee, perhaps we will celebrate Christmas in our sanctuary at the end of the year. One thing is for certain: God will be with us, as God has always been as humanity looks back at history and realizes that we aren't doing any of this alone. May you realize God's strength and presence every day of the new year ahead; may you know the peace that comes with putting your trust in God, come what may.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion (insert)

Words of Benediction Follow the kings of old and search for God's Son. Go forth, following the Light of the World. Follow the magi in search of the Child of Peace. Go forth, proclaiming hope and blessing to the poor and the needy. Follow the star to behold the glory of God. Go forth with the promise of new life in Christ.



Epiphany

Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.