

Bower Hill Community Church (Presbyterian USA)
Order for Worship ~ Epiphany Sunday ~ 4 January 2026

Preparation for Worship:

"Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world."
~John Milton

Prelude

We Three Kings of Orient Are

Raymond Haan

Call to Worship:

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come,
People: and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
Leader: Behold the glory of the Lord.
People: Alleluia.

Prayer of Adoration:

God of every nation, by the light of a wondrous star you led wandering magi to the humble infant Jesus, revealing to them your salvation for the world. In the miraculous and the mundane, in union with all who have glimpsed the light of your grace, lead us to Christ, that we may offer our worship and serve him with sincerity of heart; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

***Hymn 151**

We Three Kings of Orient Are

1 *We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.*
Refrain: *O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!*
2 *Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign. [Refrain]*
3 *Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising gladly raising, worshiping God Most High. [Refrain]*
4 *Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. [Refrain]*
5 *Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice:
Alleluia! Alleluia! sounds through the earth and skies. [Refrain]*

Call to Prayer

Isaiah proclaimed: Darkness will cover the earth, and thick darkness will cover the peoples; but the glory of the Lord will rise upon you, and God's light will appear over you. Let us acknowledge the darkness in our own lives and in our world, so that we may receive the light of God's mercy. Together let us say:

Gathering Prayer

Merciful God, light of the world, we confess that we have not resisted the darkness of sin. You deliver the poor and helpless, but we have ignored their cry. You take pity on the weak and destitute, but our hearts grow hard in the face of their need. You heal the wounded and save the oppressed, but we place our trust in weapons and violence. For these and all our sins, forgive us. Awaken us to sincere repentance, that we may shine with the light of your grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. [Silent prayers]

Words of Assurance

Beloved of God, you are called to the light, held, loved, known, and redeemed. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ: in him we are forgiven. Amen.

***The Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

***The Peace**

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

Prayer of Illumination

O God, nations shall come to your light and rulers to the brightness of your dawn. By the compelling radiance of your Spirit, draw us near, reveal your truth, and teach us faithful obedience to your holy Word. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

Leader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.

*Hymn 150

As with Gladness Men of Old

1 *As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to thee.*
2 *As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before thee, whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.*
3 *As they offered gifts most rare at thy manger, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.*
4 *Holy Jesus, every day keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.*

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon

"A Star to Follow"

Rev. Dr. Brian Snyder

*Affirmation of Faith

"Credo for Christians"

**I worship and adore God, source, essence, and aim of all things,
Spirit that enlivens all beings.
I follow the way of Jesus, who found God in himself
and shared a way for others to find God in themselves.
He was born through love,
He lived for love,
He suffered for love,
He died for love,
But love never dies.
I submit myself to the leading of the love that is God,
that I may be compassionate toward all beings,
that I may live and serve in community with others,
that I may ask for and offer forgiveness,
that I may praise and enjoy God forever. Amen.**

Offerings and Gifts of Self

Offertory

*The Doxology

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Old Hundredth

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below!

Praise God above, ye heavenly host! Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen.

For a gender-neutral version, see hymn 607.

*Prayer of Dedication

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Communion is served both at the front of the church and in the pews. Please approach the front of the church by way of the center aisle, receive the elements, and return to your seat by way of the side aisles. If you are receiving communion in your pew, simply remain seated, and it will be brought to you. Taking part in communion is a personal choice; everyone is free to participate or abstain.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

Remain seated

Holy, holy, holy Lord! God of power, God of might!

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

Communion Music

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Or "Mother" or "Parent"

Welcome and Next Steps

***Closing Hymn 152**

What Star Is This with Beams so Bright?

1 *What star is this, with beams so bright, more lovely than the noonday light?*

'Tis sent to announce a newborn king, glad tidings of our God to bring.

2 *'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed, "From Jacob shall a star proceed;"*

and lo! the eastern sages stand to read in heaven the Lord's command.

3 *While outward signs the star displays, an inward light the Lord conveys*

and urges them, with tender might, to seek the giver of the light.

4 *O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,*

let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.

***Charge and Benediction**

Postlude

Sussex Carol, Russell Schultz

Feel free to exit during the postlude, mindful of those who wish to stay and listen.