

“TAKE 10”- Worship While Away! (Sunday, January 6, 2019)

Share: Arise! Shine! Our Light has come!
The Light of Life streams into every dismal corner.
Christ has put the door of eternity ajar.
Fear and shame flee like shadows before the dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around.
The Lord is our everlasting light.

Read these words from a hymn today *As with Gladness Men of Old*

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 by Thee!

As they offered gifts most rare, at Thy cradle, 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!

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.

Read this scripture from worship: Matthew 2:1-12 (The Message)

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 knelt 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.

Talk together, responding to these questions:

- How does the mystery, wonder, and majesty of Christ's birth continue on past Christmas?
- Today we celebrate Epiphany, which means "revelation" or "manifestation." The news of Christ's birth is revealed to all the world, symbolized by the wise men. What difference does God's revelation make?
- What does the offering of the wise men to the Christ Child mean?
- What kind of gifts may we offer to Christ?
- How might the star, the wise men, and their gifts point us forward to the evolving life of Jesus?

Pray together:

Glorious God, each day provides opportunity to awaken to the radiance of your presence and to welcome your blessing into my life. How often I forget that I am your home! Help me to draw more closely to you, that I may manifest your love more deeply in the world. May every bright place and darkened corner grow ever more luminous as I bear your light this day. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bless one another:

Take each person's hand and say. "God's grace is for you, God's love is upon you, God's call is within you. Be kind to yourself and others this week as a child of God."