



**We saw the star in the East,
and we came to worship him.**

(Mt 2:2)

ENGLISH SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Date: 18 January 2022 (Tuesday)

Time: 8:00pm

Venue: Methodist International Church

Order of Worship

We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him.

(Mt 2:2)

L: Leader

C: Congregation

R: Reader

**Please stand*

***Call to Worship**

Rev. Eden Fletcher

L In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Brothers and sisters, we are united today with fellow believers in the four corners of the world as we gather to pray for the visible unity of the Church. We do this with worship resources prepared by the Middle East Council of Churches. Our texts are inspired by the visit of the Magi to the new-born King, as described in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew: "*We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him.*" Let us fix our eyes on the star that was seen in the East and allow it to lead us too.

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving and joy, bringing all the sick, the suffering, the marginalized, the refugees, and the uprooted before him, knowing that God can dispel our darkness with his light. As we pray today for the unity of the Church, may we and our communities also be lights that guide others to Jesus the Saviour.

L Glory be to you Father Almighty, for you have revealed yourself through your creation and invited all people to stand in your presence. We have seen the star of Jesus in our lives and have come to worship him just as the Magi did. We offer him ourselves today and we ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit among us.

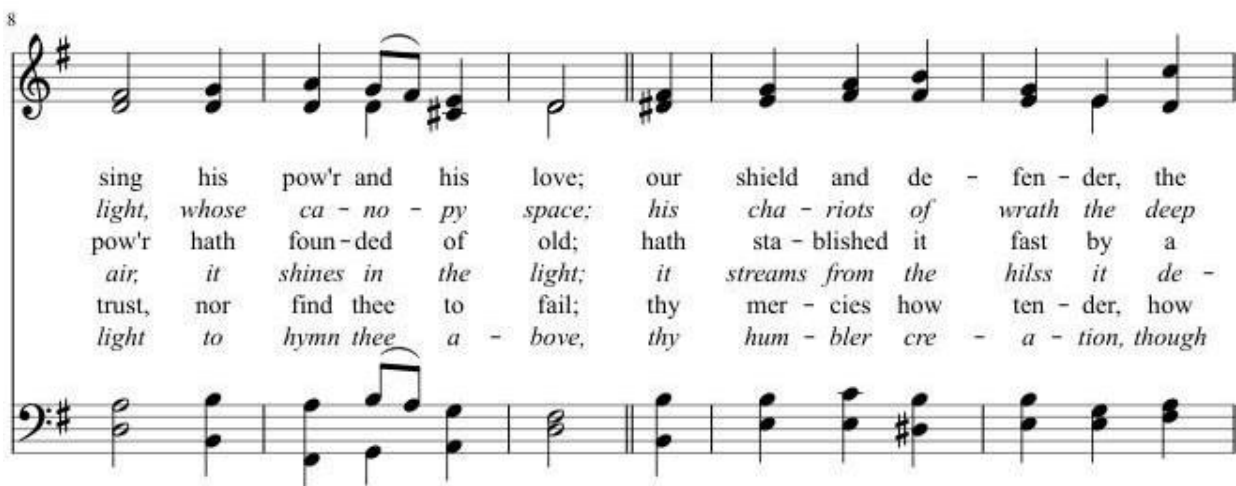
C Unite us with one another as we come from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, old and young, men and women to bow down before you and offer you homage, our heavenly king. Amen.

Hymn: O Worship the King (verses 1-2, 5-6)



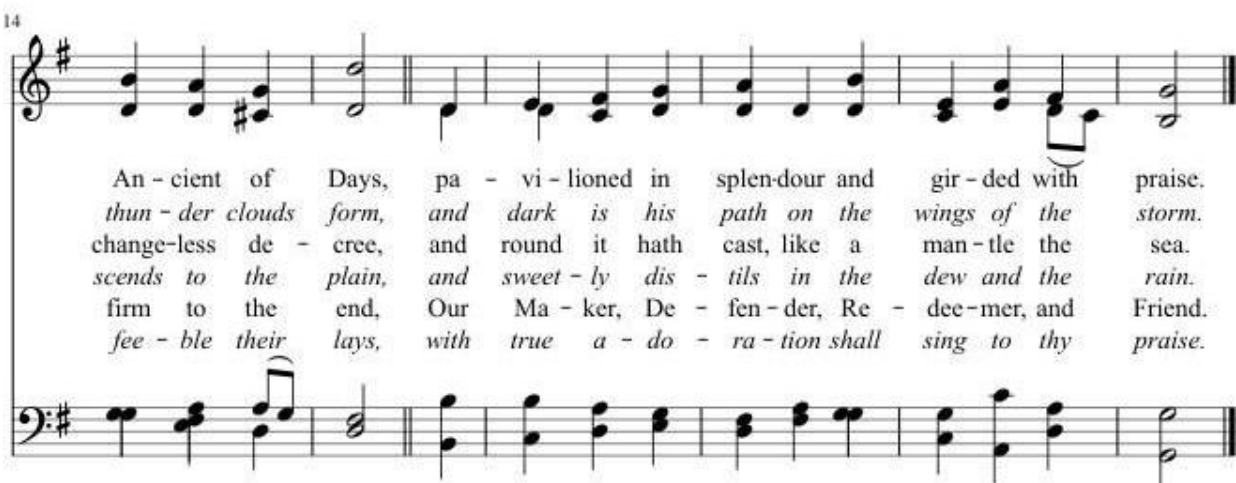
1. O wor-ship the King, all glo - rious a - bove; O grate - ful - ly
 2. O tell of his might, O sing of his grace, whose robe is the
 3. The earth with its store of won - ders un - told, Al - migh - ty thy
 4. Thy boun - ti - ful care what tongue can re - cite? It breathes in the
 5. Frail chil-dren of dust, and fee - ble as frail, in thee do we
 6. O mea - sure - less might, in - ef - fa - ble love, while an - gels de -

8



sing his pow'r and his love; our shield and de - fen - der, the
 light, whose ca - no - py space; his cha - riots of wrath the deep
 pow'r hath foun - ded of old; hath sta - blished it fast by a
 air; it shines in the light; it streams from the hilss it de -
 trust, nor find thee to fail; thy mer - cies how ten - der, how
 light to hymn thee a - bove, thy hum - bler cre - a - tion, though

14



An - cient of Days, pa - vi - lioned in splen-dour and gir - ded with praise.
 thun - der clouds form, and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.
 change-less de - cree, and round it hath cast, like a man - tle the sea.
 scends to the plain, and sweet - ly dis - tils in the dew and the rain.
 firm to the end, Our Ma - ker, De - fen - der, Re - dee - mer, and Friend.
 fee - ble their lays, with true a - do - ra - tion shall sing to thy praise.

Prayer of Praise and Confession

Rev. Paul Mak

L We glorify you, O Lord, creator of heaven and earth, for you have set the lights in the vault of the sky. You separated light from darkness and arranged signs to mark sacred times, and days and years. You studded the firmament with stars. How majestic are your works, the heavens declare your glory and the skies proclaim the work of your hands!

C We glorify you, O Lord.

L We praise you for you did not abandon us despite our rebellion but sent your Son to brighten our darkness and be our light and our salvation. In him was life, and that life was the light of all humanity. And the light shines in the darkness.

C We praise you, O Lord.

L We worship you, O Lord, for you accompany us in the chaos of our life through the power of your Holy Spirit. You light up our paths and give us wisdom and faith in a world of untruth and doubt.

C We worship you, O Lord.

L We thank you, O Lord, for you send us into the world to reflect this light around us, in our various churches and diverse cultures and to witness to Jesus, the one true King, offering ourselves to him.

C We thank you, O Lord.

L May all the peoples bow before you and worship you. We have often preferred darkness, but you have given us light. Therefore, we come to you confessing our sins and saying:

C We confess before you that we have turned away from your ways and disobeyed your ordinances. We have disfigured your good creation and squandered its resources through our consumerist practices. We have polluted your rivers and seas and poisoned your air and soil and contributed to the extinction of many species.

(Silence)

C We have acted selfishly towards our brothers and sisters. We have allowed our own needs and desires to prevail over our commitment to justice. We have built walls between us and planted the seeds of distrust towards the other.

(Silence)

C We have separated people based on ethnicity, religion and gender and we have claimed Jesus on our side in any war we waged. Forgive all these thoughts and deeds, O Lord, as we come before you in repentance.

(Silence)

- L Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have sent in the fullness of time to redeem all the people, we ask you to have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and transform us into his glorious image so we can shine as a beacon of hope in our troubled world.

(Silence)

- L Almighty God hears our prayers, has mercy on us and forgives our sins.
C **Thanks be to God, whom we praise with all our voices.**

Chant: Trisagion

Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one, have mercy on us.

Psalm 8 *(responsively)*

Ms. Cecilia Wong

- R O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
- C **Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.**
- R When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;
- C **what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?**
- R Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.
- C **You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,**
- R all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
- C **O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

Chant: Tui Amoris Ignem (Taize)

♪ Ven, Es-pí-ri-tu de Dios y de
tu a-mor en-cien-de la lla-ma. Ven
Es-pí-ri-tu de a-mor. / **Ho-ly Spir-it,**
come to us, kin-dle in us the fire of
your love. Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us,
Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us. /
Vem Es-pí-ri-to de a-mor, vem
a-cen-der em nós o teu fo-go. Vem
Es-pí-ri-to de a-mor, vem Es-pí-ri-to
de a-mor. / **Šven-to-ji Dva-sia a-teik,**
tu sa-vo mei-lēs ug-nī už-dē-ki.
Šven-to-ji Dva-sia a-teik, Šven-to-ji
Dva-sia a-teik. /

هَلُمَّ يَا رُوحَ اللَّهِ أَضْرِمْ فِينَا نَارَ الْمَحَبَّةِ
هَلُمَّ يَا رُوحَ اللَّهِ ، هَلُمَّ يَا رُوحَ اللَّهِ

Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us, kin-dle in us the fire of your love,
Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us. Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us.

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

Ms. Piia Lempiäinen

- ² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
- ³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
- ⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
- ⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- ⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Ms. Piia Lempiäinen

⁸ For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

***Gospel Reading:** Matthew 2:1-12

Br. William Ng

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.”’

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon

Rev. Maggie Mathieson

***Nicene Creed** (*according to the tradition of the Eastern Churches*)

Rev. Eden Fletcher

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.


Sharing Christ's Light

Rev. Eden Fletcher

- L A star led the Magi to Christ. Today this star points to the presence of Christ, who has been revealed to us and whose light shines on us. As the Magi followed the star to Bethlehem, we gather under this star today, add our own stars to the sky by uniting our own gifts and prayers for the visible unity of Church. As we journey towards that goal, may our lives together give a luminous witness that leads others to know Christ.

Choir: Let Us Light a Candle

We Three Kings of Orient Are

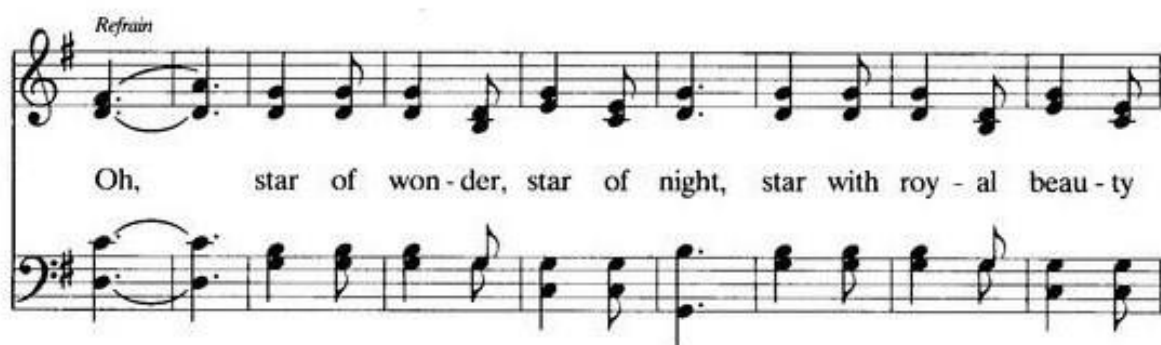


1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing gifts we tra - verse a -
 2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I bring to crown him a -
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense owns a de - i - ty
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a life of gath - er - ing
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri -

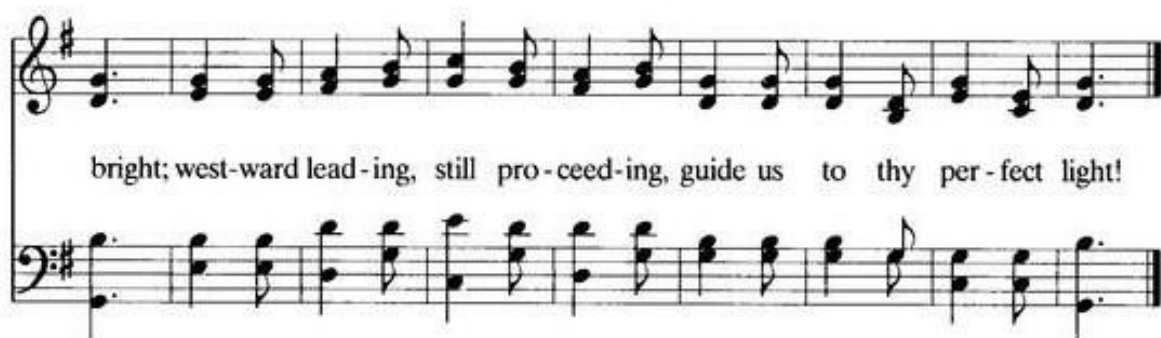


far, field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 gain; king for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.
 nigh; prayer and prais - ing, glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God Most High.
 gloom; sor - row - ing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 fice; heav'n sings al - le - lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.

Refrain



Oh, star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty



bright; west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

Text: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891, alt.
 Music: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891

THREE KINGS OF ORIENT
 8 8 4 4 6 and refrain

Prayers of Intercession

Ms. Edwina Antonio, Mr. Habib Yossef Hanna Ibrahim, Rev. Dr. Judy Chan

- R With faith and confidence, we come in prayer, before God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

The Magi came from the East to pay homage and offer special gifts from their cultures and countries.

We pray today for all Christian communities around the world in all of their diversity of worship and tradition:

Lord we ask you to preserve these treasures, particularly in areas of the world where the presence and survival of Christians is threatened by violence and oppression.

C O Lord, hear our prayer

- R The early years of the Lord's life were marked by violence and massacres at the orders of the despot Herod. We pray for children living in places in the world where violence continues and where its results are tangible:

Strengthen, O Lord, the bonds of unity and mutual love among our churches and help us to cooperate and witness to your holy Name. Inspire us to work without ceasing in order to defend the oppressed and include the marginalized. Encourage us to stand together in the face of tyranny and oppressive regimes as we seek your Kingdom among us.

C O Lord, hear our prayer

- R After the visit of the Magi, the holy family experienced migration through the wilderness and became refugees in the land of Egypt.

We pray for all the refugees and uprooted people in this world:

Equip us, Lord, to show hospitality to those driven from their homes, and grant us the spirit of welcome to those looking for a safe haven.

C O Lord, hear our prayer

- R The birth of Jesus was good news for all, gathering people from different nations and religions in worship of the holy child.

We pray for our efforts to seek harmony and dialogue with other religions: Lord, give us humility and patience to walk with others with respect on their journey.

C O Lord, hear our prayer

- R The Magi returned to their home by a different way.

We pray for our churches in this changing world:

Lord, help us to find new and creative ways to follow you and to witness to you so that the world may believe.

C O Lord, hear our prayer

R When the Magi saw the holy child, they rejoiced with great joy. Heavenly Father, fix our eyes on him so we do not lose our way. Unite us in the Lord Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and who has taught us to pray, saying:

C 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: Shine Jesus Shine

1. Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me
2. Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me
3. As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me

Chorus:

Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light

***Sending and Blessing** *(all ordained ministers invited to come forward)*

Ministers Go now and live as children of light.

C For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

Ministers Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness.

C Let us wake from sleep and Christ will shine upon us.

Ministers Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

C Amen. Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Word of Thanks

Elder Dr. Wong Fook-ye

You are welcome to donate to the retiring offering for the COVID-19 Relief Projects in South Asia by Hong Kong Christian Council.

Service Leaders

Rev. Eden Fletcher, Methodist International Church

Rev. Maggie Mathieson, Kowloon Union Church

Rev. Paul Mak, Methodist International Church

Ms. Cecilia Wong, Methodist International Church

Ms. Piia Lempiäinen, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission

Br. William Ng, Order of Friars Minor

Ms. Edwina Antonio, Kowloon Union Church

Mr. Habib Yossef Hanna Ibrahim, Kowloon Union Church

Rev. Dr. Judy Chan, Kowloon Union Church

Music Team, Methodist International Church

The service is recorded for broadcast on Radio 4 on January 23 (Sunday) at 11:05am-12:00nn (www.rthk.hk). You can listen on that day or via the archives of RTHK Radio 4 under “Church Service” programme.

2022 Joint Statement

We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him (Mt 2:2)

The evangelist Matthew mentions a "star of Bethlehem", which was seen by wise Magi "from the east" and who described it as the "star of Him" of the new "born king of the Jews" (Mt 2: 2). This event became the occasion for their trip to Bethlehem but also for the conclusions of the message and the symbolism that came from "His star".

In the tradition of the East, the Star seen by the Magi is considered a natural event but also as an extraordinary miraculous and supernatural sign of God. The appearance of the star is interpreted as the appearance of an Angel or as an appearance of Christ himself. This interpretation is related to what the Old Testament says about the Star that will rise from Jacob (Numbers 24:17).

The appearance of the magnificent Star leads the Magi from the East and the shepherds of Bethlehem to the birthplace of a new king. This is the Almighty God, who miraculously enters human history. The Magi and the shepherds meet the Great King in the face of an infant who was born in a cave, a stable for animals. The message is clear. God comes not with noise and fanfare but with simplicity and humility. His power is infinite Love. In the manger of the infant Christ, the Jews are united with the Gentiles. A new people who, guided by Christ, walk to meet God the Father.

The bright star, symbol of the epiphany and presence of the Savior Christ, leads all of us Christians, the new people of God, to a new reality of life. In the kingdom of Divine Love, Christ respects our freedom and loves us despite our insentient behavior. He is always ready to answer our cry for help, and to guide our hesitant and uncertain steps through all the obstacles that stand in our way. He respects us as his equals. His highest will is to see us in eternity, truly as equals, friends and brothers, and sons of the Father.

This is the message that the bright and shining Star addresses to all of us Christians. First. A message of Unity. Dialogue, reconciliation and peace-building between the various Christian communities is not only a wish but an urgent need, even if it seems a long and difficult process. The arduous path to unity is illuminated by faith, perseverance and hope.

Secondly. A message of experiencing the Christian life. Christianity is a journey. The Magi traveled to the place where the Star led them. We Christians follow the bright and shining Star, Christ, in a path of faith, love, justice and peace. In this journey we as Christians bear witness to the salvation we have experienced through Christ. We work humbly for justice and peace. We are not hiding in the safety of our local religious communities, but having the Mystery of God alive before us we feel ready to come out of ourselves and serve our fellow human beings and the whole creation.

Following Christ is our new path, and in a volatile and changing world Christians must remain as fixed and determined as the constellations and the shining planets. But what does this mean in practice? Serving the Gospel today requires a commitment to defending human dignity, especially in the poorest, the weakest and those marginalized. It requires from the churches transparency and accountability in dealing with the world, and with each other. This means churches need to cooperate to provide relief to the afflicted, to welcome the displaced, to relieve the burdened, and to build a just and honest society. This is a call for churches to work together so that young people can build a future that accords to God's heart, a future in which all human beings can experience life, peace, justice, and love. The new way between the churches is the way of visible unity that we sacrificially seek with courage and audacity so that, day after day, "God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

As Christians living in the Far East we have our faces turned to the light of the Bright Star, Christ. We unite our prayers so that Christ "as a morning star rises and lights our hearts" (2 Peter 1:19).

Diocesan Ecumenical
Commission of the
Hong Kong Catholic Church

The Ecumenical Patriarchate
Orthodox Metropolitanate
of HK and South East Asia

Church Unity and
Relations Committee of
Hong Kong Christian Council

January 2022

- * The Liturgy is adapted from the 2022 edition of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity material published by the World Council of Churches. For the original text, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3z6PWeF>



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Hong Kong Christian Council**

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