# Gifts for Another Way An Epiphany Worship Service by KAIROS for Justice Seekers

*Written by Shannon Neufeldt. Originally published in* Gifts for Another Way: Epiphany Year B Resource for Justice Seekers *by KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, 2017.*

*Check* [*www.kairoscanada.org/resources/order*](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.kairoscanada.org%2Fresources%2Forder&data=02%7C01%7CASmith%40united-church.ca%7C7742bea601a24d4de68708d715e3d121%7Ccf18b5a826784011931215f0f7157574%7C0%7C0%7C637001940515279046&sdata=K1IN7Nj1Le83T5d2DCV1bTzjyLxI1uoofbi3U6xJZvc%3D&reserved=0) *for current worship resources.*

### Acknowledging the Traditional Territory

(*If you do not know whose territory you gather on, it is best to ask local Indigenous peoples or seek local written documents. However, you can also start by looking at this interactive map:* [*native-land.ca*](https://native-land.ca)*.*)

May righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more (Psalm 72:7).

We acknowledge with gratitude the gift of this place and the Original peoples. We gather on the traditional territory of the [*insert Indigenous group name*] Indigenous Peoples. This territory is covered by the [*insert name of treaty if there is one*]. Today this land is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, including survivors and intergenerational family members who have been impacted by the legacy of the residential school system. We honour them too, as we stand committed to be partners in healing, reconciliation, and justice.

As the wise ones of old carefully observed the heavens before immersing themselves in a journey across the land, let us examine where we are and all who share this watershed, that the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known (Ephesians 3:10).

### Call to Worship

It is a gift to live on this land.

**It is a gift to be nourished by the water, soil, plants, and animals of this watershed.**

It is a gift to be people of tradition and Spirit.

**It is a gift to gather from many lifestyles for this time of worship.**

God calls us to worship with a voice of the waters, a voice over the cedars, a voice flashing forth in flames of fire.

**Let us lay our open hands, open hearts, open minds before God in worship now, prepared to take another way.**

And we join our voices to say

**Praise be to God: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.**

### Opening Hymns

VU 376 Spirit of the Living God

VU 79 Arise Your Light Has Come

### First Scripture Reading

Isaiah 60:1‒6

### Learning Together/Ritual Action

(*Prepare enough footprints [traced feet of different sizes and colours] so that each worshipper can receive two, along with a pen or marker, as they arrive.*)

Our theme for today and for this season is about gifts that help us travel or live in another way. It all begins with the story of the Magi who bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the child, is the hope of a people. Then the wise ones return home by another road, bypassing the imperial order, opening up the possibilities of a new story—the Jesus story. The imperial order, the colonial norm, is the superhighway that stretches out in front of us with nearly every choice we need to make. The Spirit-led path, a perfect adaptation of the movement to place and season that obeys the natural order, also lies before us and represents another way we could travel.

* What gifts do we bring to walk in another way, the non-imperial way, the way of all peoples living together in justice and equity? Does anything get in the way of the choice you want to make?
* What gift would sustain you this week in walking another way?

Take the footprints you were given when you arrived and describe in a few words the gift you can give for walking another way; write (or draw) this on one footprint. This first footprint will be saved for the offering.

Then describe in a few words (or a picture) the gift that would support you in walking another way this season. What could sustain you? Write this on the other footprint. Take the one that describes this gift you are looking for, the gift that would sustain you, and exchange it with the footprint of someone sitting close to you. Do it silently. Pray for your neighbour in the coming weeks, so that they will receive the gift they need. Put your neighbour’s footprint somewhere you will see it each day as a reminder of all the gifts God has given us and that other way we have been called to, and pray.

### Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

Holy One, you have searched us and known us.

You are acquainted with all our ways.

Even before a word is on our tongue,

Holy One, you know it completely.

You know exactly what we mean when we say together:

**We confess our involvement in a colonial system**

**and grieve the gifts that are lost to intergenerational pain.**

**We confess our apathy and inaction in the face of violence**

**and grieve the gifts of health and wellbeing that are lost.**

**We confess our ability to ignore warfare fuelled by resource greed**

**and grieve the gifts of cultures and community lost.**

**We confess the human-centred ways that lead to the devastation of our watersheds**

**and grieve the gifts of beauty and sustenance that are lost,**

**sometimes forever.**

**We confess that we are often the beneficiaries of these systems of destruction**

**and ask forgiveness for our complicity.**

Jesus has given us the gift of assurance,

the gift of forgiveness is ours to receive.

The Spirit has given us the gift of guidance,

the gift of a new way is ours to walk.

Thanks be to God.

### Hymns

VU 81 As with Gladness Men of Old

VU 83 Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

VU 104 We Have Come at Christ’s Own Bidding

### Prayer of Illumination

**God the giver of all good gifts,**

**who sent the Son to guide us on paths of righteousness.**

**Grant us open minds and open hearts that we may truly hear your Word,**

**and go forward in a new way,**

**changed by your message,**

**through the presence of the Spirit.**

**Amen.**

### Second Reading

Matthew 2:1‒12

### Sermon

*Isaiah 60:1‒6*

Isaiah writes to a city in despair, a city emptied of its treasures. In the midst of the Babylonian exile, Jerusalem has lost its leadership and skilled craftspeople. Those that remain are struggling to survive, let alone imagine a future. Isaiah sees beyond survival and proclaims that it is time for salvation and liberation. The exile will end, the rejection will end, and the community will be gathered once again in Jerusalem. There will be joy as the people travel home, and whatever hardship they have experienced in the time away from home will be transformed into light.

There are many cities in despair in our modern world due to unjust global financial systems and the devastation of climate change. Who is in exile? What will bring the exile to an end? All of these factors cause people to migrate; may their journey end in finding home.

*Matthew 2:1‒12*

Sometime after the birth of Jesus, a group of astrologers were overjoyed to discover that the star they had been following stopped over a house in Bethlehem. They had found what they were looking for—the child who had been born “king of the Jews.” King Herod, who believed he was the king of the Jewish people, was horrified by the threat of another contender for the throne. He had good reason to be worried; after all, Jesus was the liberator who had come to make all people free from tyranny and oppression. The magi realized that Herod was dangerous, and after they had worshipped the tiny king and offered their gifts, they returned home along a different road.

What would it mean to make all migrant workers free from tyranny and oppression? We have more influence on our “rulers” than we might imagine.

*Scripture commentary by the Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis from “Light of a Star,” Epiphany Year C Worship Resources for Justice Seekers by Kairos (*[*www.kairoscanada.org/epiphany*](http://www.kairoscanada.org/epiphany)*).*

### Hymns

VU 678 For the Healing of the Nations

MV 146 The Kingdom of God

### Offering

(*Choose a lively song that people can sing without hymn books, such as MV 54 Alleluia or MV 191 What Can I Do? Invite everyone forward to place their monetary offering and gift written on a footprint into the baskets or plates placed at the front of the church. Consider having an offering plate for KAIROS.)*

We as people of faith and conscience have been called to walk another way—the way of peace, justice, and right relations with all creation.

This is one opportunity to step into that future, bringing your whole self—our gifts and your offerings.

Would all who are able please stand. We’ll start with the front rows and have you bring your footprint forward to the basket of gifts. This is also the time to offer a financial gift for the ongoing collective work of justice.

### Prayers of the People

We pray for the ecumenical church in Canada and around the world as we seek to live in right relations with each other and all our neighbours. Give us the gifts of strength and courage to step forward and lead our communities in another way—the way of peace and justice.  
In your mercy,  
**O Holy One, receive our prayers.**

We pray for our world, especially those suffering from violence in their homes, their communities, and their countries and those suffering the poverty and discrimination that results from global inequities. We know there is another way without war. Give our world the gift of peace.  
In your mercy,  
**O Holy One, receive our prayers.**

We pray for the sick and distressed among us. Give them the gift of healing and resilience.   
In your mercy,  
**O Holy One, receive our prayers.**

We pray for those who mourn. Give them the gift of serenity.  
In your mercy,  
**O Holy One, receive our prayers.**

Creator God, we wait for you. Renew our strength that we might mount up with wings like eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint in the pursuit of your way…

### Lord’s Prayer

Now we pray together as Jesus taught us…  
**Amen**

### Hymn

VU 422 God Be With You Till We Meet Again

### Benediction

May the God who is revealed in the mystery of whirlwinds and transfigurations

Be the God who goes with you now and always

As you come down from the mountain

And travel the other way.

*Thank you to KAIROS Canada for granting us permission to share excerpts from their 2018 and 2019 Epiphany resources. Please visit* [*www.kairoscanada.org/resources/order*](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.kairoscanada.org%2Fresources%2Forder&data=02%7C01%7CASmith%40united-church.ca%7C7742bea601a24d4de68708d715e3d121%7Ccf18b5a826784011931215f0f7157574%7C0%7C0%7C637001940515279046&sdata=K1IN7Nj1Le83T5d2DCV1bTzjyLxI1uoofbi3U6xJZvc%3D&reserved=0) *to order the current resource.*