

NEW MARYLAND UNITED CHURCH

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

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January 24th, 2021 11 am
The Season Of Epiphany

Welcome and thank you for joining in our worship this holy morning! We hope you feel at home in our midst. Let us pause to remember that in this region we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territories of the Wabanaki peoples—predominantly the lands of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik and Passamaquoddy. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with its people. If you are visiting or new to the congregation please introduce yourself to Rev. Dr. Burke. Grace and peace to you all!

Thought for Meditation:

Hope has two beautiful daughters: their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are. St. Augustine

THE GATHERING

WELCOME & LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

INTROIT: Moon Joyce: *Down To The River To Pray* (trad- adapt. Alison Krauss (on O Brother Where Art Thou?)

As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord show me the way

Oh sisters let's go down
Let's go down come on down
Oh sisters let's go down
Down in the river to pray

**As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown
Good Lord show me the way**

**Oh brothers let's go down
Let's go down come on down
Come on brothers let's go down
Down in the river to pray**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Light of Christ be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: Let us worship together!

OPENING PRAYER ENDING WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Ancient One, yet New Every Morning, your people are gathered.
Hold us in this time of worship: hold us in our weariness and
impatience. Hold us in our energy and curiosity. Hold us, with
your story, your silence, your presence. And hear us as we pray,
saying:**

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, the power and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: A Reading From the Book of Esther
This happened in the days of Ahasuerus, who ruled over one hundred
twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia.**

In those days when King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in the citadel of Susa, he gave a banquet for all his officials and ministers. The army of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces were present. He displayed the great wealth of his kingdom and the splendour and pomp of his majesty for many days, one hundred eighty days in all. When these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in the citadel of Susa, a banquet lasting for seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

On the seventh day, when the king was merry with wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who attended him, to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing the royal crown, in order to show the peoples and the officials her beauty; for she was fair to behold.

But Queen Vashti refused. At this the king was enraged, and his anger burned within him.

MUSIC: Moon Joyce: (#79 MV) *Spirit, Open My Heart*

Chorus

**Spirit open my heart to the joy and pain of living
As you love, may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit open my heart.**

**God replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender,
And my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender... Chorus**

**Write your love upon my heart as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word and deed, may my living bring you glory...**

Chorus

**May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another... Chorus**

SERMON: *A Queen, an Orphan and Staring Down the Powerful: The Story We Almost Did Not Hear*

MUSIC: Moon Joyce: *I Am Willing* Holly Near

Chorus

I am open and I am willing

For to be hopeless would seem so strange

It dishonours those who go before us

So lift me up to the light of change

There is hurting in my family

And there is sorrow in my town

There is panic all across the nation

And there is wailing the whole world round...*Chorus*

May the children see more clearly

And may the elders be more wise

May the winds of change caress us

And even though it burns our eyes...*Chorus*

Give me a mighty oak to hold my confusion

Give me a desert to hold my fears

Give me a sunset to hold my wonder

Give me an ocean to hold my tears...*Chorus*

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BLESSING: (#214 MV) *May God's Sheltering Wings*

May God's sheltering Wings

her gathering wings protect you.

May God's nurturing arms,

her cradling arms sustain you,

and hold you in her love,

And hold you in her love.