



Ray Of Hope

**Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ**

**"My House shall be a house of prayer for All People."**

(Isaiah 56:7)

**Founded: 10/31/1983. Now in our Fortieth year of Ministry.**

MISSION: Love God, Love your neighbor,  
and make disciples of every person

everywhere. (Matthew 22:37-39; Matthew 28:19)

"It is time to put our faith into action."

"Faith without works is dead." (James 2:14-26)

Veronica Floyd, Moderator

Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B, Appointed Pastor

We extend a very special welcome to our visitors.

You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.

Scripture exhorts us: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God" Romans 15:7 (NABRE – 2011)

Guests are invited to participate in all parts of the worship service as they feel comfortable. We are building a wonderful Christ-centered Community here, and we invite you to share in our joy! After the Worship Service, please join us for refreshments and sharing.

Today is January 8, 2023, we are celebrating

Epiphany I, Orthodox Christmas January 6 Year A

**The grace, the goodness, the loving-kindness of our God has appeared, bringing salvation to everyone.** (Titus 2:11, 3:4)

Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian faith of ancient ecumenical consensus.

St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as

***"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."***

**Scripture Readings for this worship event:**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 60:1-6 NRSV 1<sup>st</sup> Test. Pg. 690

**Psalm:** Psalm 72:1-13 responsorial in this bulletin.

**Second Reading:** Eph 3:1-6 NRSV 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. Pg. 193

**Gospel:** Matt. 2:1-12 NRSV 2<sup>ND</sup> Testament page 2

\*We use the term 1st for the "Old" Testament and 2nd for the "New" Testament. The NRSV Bible 1st Testament numbers are found in the front portion of the Bible and the 2nd Testament numbers are found in the later portion. If this confuses you just ask someone around you to assist you. Thank you.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

**Visit and greet one another for a social time before the Bell is rung.**

**Bell's 1<sup>st</sup> ring.** As the bell rings, please find your seat and spend the next few minutes in silent prayer. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

The St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1<sup>st</sup> St. in Elmira, NY, was a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY, in September 2005. The bell rings out 39 joyful rings, in contrast to tolling the bell in single rings. The 39 joyful rings honor the 39 lashes Jesus endured that we now celebrate in victory and gratitude for our salvation. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) The bell is rung before worship and Bible Enrichment sessions. Listen carefully and see if you can hear all 39 rings.



## WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND GIVE THANKS

### + Pastoral Welcome

**Leader – 1:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_ in the State of \_\_. You have chosen the most excellent way to start 2023 by giving God thanks and praise. We welcome you to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith community founded in Central New York and now all across the world through the Internet, where everyone is welcome. We extend a special welcome to our visitors and guests here in the Chapel and online through Skype and Facebook. To be added to our email list, email [rayofhopechurch@aol.com](mailto:rayofhopechurch@aol.com) and write "email list" in the Subject. Visitors in the Chapel can fill out the email information form at the hospitality table and place it in the offerings/donations box on the wall.

You are invited to participate in some or all the parts of this worship event as you feel comfortable. At Ray Of Hope Church, we assist people at various stages of visual impairment by announcing all instructions, page and song numbers, and by using a psalm response

verse.

**Leader-2:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Today, those participating through the Internet may receive Holy Communion with us during this worship event. You do not need to be a Member of this church or any church to receive Holy Communion at Ray Of Hope Church. We celebrate the Lord's open table, where everyone is welcome. Those celebrating at home, please prepare the following items at this time and bring them to your table; 1) a cup with some wine or grape juice, 2) a small piece of bread, cracker, or matzo on a plate, 3) a second cup with some water, and 4) a side napkin. We will use these items for Holy Communion during the second half of the worship service.

**Leader-1:** The bulletin with the worship order is available in multiple ways. On Facebook Live, click on the "Featured Link" in the window. The bulletin will appear in a second window. Simply flip or slide between the Order of Worship bulletin and the webcast. On Skype the "Order of Worship" is posted in the Chat window. Right-click on the link, choose to open it in a new window or new tab. Finally, the Order of Worship bulletin and the Skype link are posted in the large gold box labeled SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION at [www.rayofhopechurch.com](http://www.rayofhopechurch.com). Take a moment now and gather these items. We will start shortly. This morning, Ed Askins is going to play a piano prelude for our service. We ask everyone to listen attentively to enjoy this prayer time and not visit during the music. Thank you.

### Music Prelude.



**Bell's 2<sup>nd</sup> ring to announce the start of the worship event.**

**Leader – 2:** We are glad you have chosen to spend this time with us to celebrate the events of the Twelfth Day of Christmas, the Feast of the Epiphany, and Orthodox Christmas. You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. In Romans Chapter 15:7, the Scriptures instruct us to:

**ALL: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." (NABRE)**

**Leader -1:** God is glorified when we welcome one another and introduce ourselves to those around us. You are truly welcome here. \*\*During COVID, we may wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

**Pastor:** I ask you, in whose Name we are meeting?

**ALL: We meet in the name of God our Creator, Christ Jesus Our Lord and Saviour, and in the name of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Pastor:** Peace be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Pastor:** Today is January 8, 2023, we are celebrating Epiphany I, Orthodox Christmas January 6 Year A

**The grace, the goodness, the loving-kindness of our God has appeared, bringing salvation to everyone. (Titus 2:11, 3:4)**

**Ray Of Hope Church began on 10/31/1983.**

Today we are celebrating the eleventh Sunday in our 40<sup>th</sup> year of ministry. Welcome to the **"WOKE"** Church of Elmira, NY, and the world.

**Romans 13:11 "Now is the time to WAKE from your SLEEP."**

We are proud to be known as the "WOKE" Church of Elmira and Central NY. Popularized by African-American young men, the definition of "woke" is: having or being marked by an active awareness of systemic injustices and prejudices, a liberal progressive orthodoxy, especially promoting inclusive policies or ideologies that welcome and embrace ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities. Awake and aware.

Source: Dictionary.com:

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/woke>

In Theological terms: Awakened by the Holy Spirit, alive in Christ, actively supporting persons of all Religions and faiths and those with no faith or religion.

See the Ray Of Hope Church Statement of Purpose for more information on these ideas. Right Click Here:

<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm>

**We need an epiphany.** We need an epiphany. What is an epiphany in God-consciousness? With today's Gospel reading we begin a series of readings over the next few weeks where we study epiphanies that happened in the adult life of Jesus of Nazareth that showed forth the truth that He is "God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God." (Quotation from the Nicene Creed 325 A.D.)

Today's epiphany in the Gospel reading; the visitation of the magi from far-Eastern lands. Magi were what I like to call "religious specialists." They had studied the Scriptures and were very aware that this was the time for the God/child to be born and be Messiah. There was a group of magi who arrived in Jerusalem to inquire where he was. There is no Biblical references to their number being three and there is no reference to them being kings. They were, magi, religious specialists.

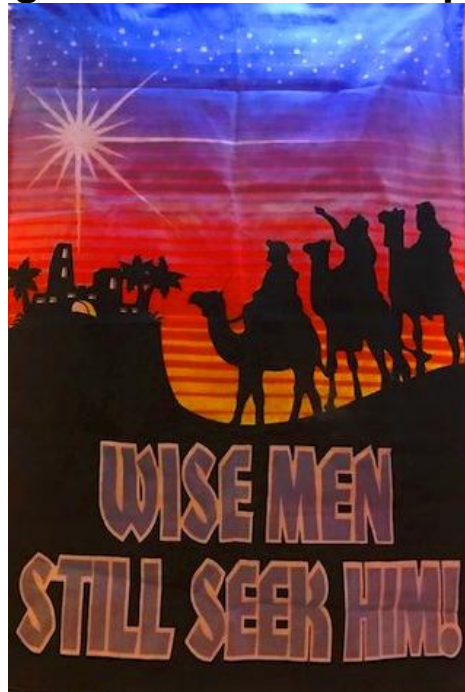
However, speaking of love and peace, we stop and pray for all the people in the war still raging in Ukraine. We pray to end these hostilities that started approximately 318 days ago. Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The Winter conditions are very harsh when the power system is not functioning. It is frigid in Ukraine these days.

(Add your silent prayers for the people in this war.)

**Pastor:** With our whole heart, mind and soul we begin to worship God in

the beauty of holiness, spirit, and truth. (Psalm 96:9; John 4:23-24)

**ALL: Together, we give God thanks and praise.**



Opening Invitatory

**Leader -3:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the City \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. I will lead the Invitatory prayer.

**Leader - 3:** We have come to give God praise, thanks, honor, and glory.

**ALL: On this day we consider the visitation of the magi who recognized the divinity of the Son of God.**

**Leader – 3:** God sent the Only Begotten Son to live among us and set us free so we can grow into the fullness of God's vision for us.

**ALL: Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

**Leader – 3:** Here we are, ready to hear your voice, O Divine Holy Spirit. Like the magi, like Joseph and Mary, we desire to do your holy will.

**ALL: O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.**

**FIRST SONG:**

**+ The Candle Of Hope**

**Leader -1:** Please be seated. The Advent Wreath is wholly transformed into the Christmas Wreath with gold and all the colors. We did not include the Candle of Hope in the middle of the Advent wreath until Sunday, December 25, the start of this Christmas Season. And so, now, we light our Resurrection Candle Of Hope in honor of the "Blessed Hope," the return of Christ who will transform the living faithful and raise all to new life.

**Jesus said:** (John 5:25 and Titus 2:13)

**ALL: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."** (John 11:25, 26)

**Leader -2:** While lighting the Candle Of Hope, it is our custom to read panel entries from the Names Project Aids Memorial Quilt to remember those who died of AIDS. Unfortunately, some churches continue to reject sick, lonely, and dying people with HIV/AIDS who need spiritual guidance.

**Leader -3:** Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Today we are reading the names on Block # 58

- Raymond (1)
- Steve Richards (2)
- Doug Jabez (3)
- David S. (4)
- Paul Popham (5)
- Mike Davis (6)
- Luke Bear (7)
- David Lawrence (8)

We remember them here and pray for their families.

**Leader -2:** At this time, we also remember in our hearts the names of our

family and friends who have died from COVID-related illness and other causes of death. We pray for their family members as they remember their loved ones during this time of year. May the candle's flame remind everyone of the joy and happiness known in life, the comfort offered by the Holy Spirit in our loss, and the "Blessed Hope" we have in the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**ALL: Amen**

(NAMES Project website where you can visit over 48,000 panels and over 100,000 names on the Quilt virtually:

<https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>)

**SECOND SONG:**



**WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS**

**+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins.**

**Leader -2:** Please be seated. (wait) After gathering, greeting one another, and praising God in song, we now prepare our hearts to accept renewal when we listen to the Word, the Holy Scriptures. In preparation, we silently confess our sins to Christ and receive the forgiveness He promises to give us.  
(silent prayer)

**Leader -2:** We pray together:

**ALL:** I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do. I declare in the midst of this assembly of believers that I am truly sorry for having offended anyone, and God, in any way. **Therefore**, I ask you, my brothers and sisters, all the angels and the saints, to forgive me and pray for me to the Lord our God.



L-4: Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_. Filled with the Holy Spirit we are called to show the Light of God in all areas of our lives. Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

L-4: With Christ living in us we are called to bring His presence to every situation in life. Christ, have mercy.

**ALL: Christ, have mercy.**

L-4: The birth of Christ into the world is central to our understanding that Jesus is Lord. Wise persons studied the Scriptures and knew it was the correct time for his birth. That we would be serious in our study of Scripture and respond with such resolve, we pray; Lord, have mercy.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy.**

L-4: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

**ALL: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

**Pastor:** We pray that all of God's people may one day be united in God's Kingdom without the loss of anyone. Therefore, we ask Almighty God to have mercy on all of us, forgive all our sins, and keep us in everlasting life.

**ALL: Amen.**

**Pastor:** Please rise as you are able to give God thanks and praise for the forgiveness of our sins by praying the Gloria. Try to imagine the shepherds in the fields who suddenly heard millions of angels and spirits in the heavens praying the first part of this prayer. The Church has prayed this prayer since the earliest records of worship services.

**Spoken:**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth.  
You are the One God, Sovereign of the Universe,**

**Only Holy God, we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of God:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord of all,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,**

**with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the  
Holy Unity of God. Amen.**

### **+ Opening Prayer**

**Leader 5:** O Loving, Eternal, and Holy God, our hearts and minds are open to hearing these very familiar Scripture readings. We ask that your Word cause action and change in our lives. We pray that your Word will transform and equip us for many more years of ministry. We pray through Christ, our Lord;

**ALL: AMEN.**

**Leader 5:** Please be seated now as we listen attentively to the Scriptures.

**ALL: We read the Word to recall, reflect on, and rejoice in the action of God in life.**



## **THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD**

### **+ First Reading**

**Reader:** \*\*\*\* If an introduction is needed:\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

The first reading on this, the Third and final Sunday of Christmas, the Feast of The Epiphany is in Book of Isaiah, chapter 60, verses 1-6.

You will find this on page 690 in the front of the NRSV Bible. Here begins the reading:

Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

<sup>5</sup> Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

<sup>6</sup> A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

**Reader:** This is the Word of the Lord!

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

### + Psalm

**Reader:** \*\*\*\* If an introduction is needed:\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

The Psalm today is number 27, verses one through thirteen, with a responsorial verse. The response today is the song " Lord, every nation on earth will adore you."

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

O God, with your judgment endow the king,  
and with your justice, the king's son;  
He shall govern your people with justice  
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

Justice shall flower in his days,  
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.  
May he rule from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;  
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.  
All kings shall pay him homage,  
all nations shall serve him.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

For he shall rescue the poor when they pour out,  
and the afflicted when there is no one to help them.  
The King shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;  
the lives of the poor he shall save.

**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

## + Second Reading

**Reader:** \*\*\*\* If an introduction is needed:\*\*\*\* Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am in the City of \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_.

The second reading is in the Book of Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 1-6. You will find this on page 193 in the back, the second testament of the NRSV Bible. Here begins the reading:

3 This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you **Gentiles**—<sup>2</sup> for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,<sup>3</sup> and how the **mystery was made known to me by revelation**, as I wrote above in a few words,<sup>4</sup> a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of **the mystery of Christ**.<sup>5</sup> In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:<sup>6</sup> that is, the

**Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**

**Reader:** This is the Word of the Lord!

**ALL:** Thanks be to God!

**+ The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**

**Reader:** We sing an acclamation before and one after the reading of the Gospel. Please rise as you are able for the Gospel Acclamation.

**Gospel Acclamation**

## We Love Your Word!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
October 31, 1993  
Revised 8/2013

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "We love Your Word, O Lord for it set us free. We know the truth, O Lord; We are Yours e - ter - nal - ly. So we stand to hear Your Word. We praise You for Your Word. Al-le - lu - a! for Your Word. It heals our hearts, souls and minds. For Your Word, Al - le - lu - ia! Thank You Je - sus!"

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**Reader:** The Gospel reading is Matthew, chapter 2, verses 1-12 on page 2 in the second testament of the NRSV Bible. This takes place in the home in Nazareth, not in Bethlehem. (Luke 2:39)

**Reader:** Truly present among us, the Lord is with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Reader:** A reading of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**ALL: Glory to you, O Lord. May the Word of God be in our (+) minds that we will understand it, on our (+) lips that we will speak it, and in our (+) hearts that we will love it.**

### The Visit of the Wise Men

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told

him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> '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.'"

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

**ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

## **Gospel Acclamation**

January 8, 2023 Epiphany I Year A page: 16

## Forever, We Are Yours!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church  
for the 1996 New Year,  
The Year of The Holy Spirit!

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
December 31, 1995

Glo-ry to the One God! Glo-ry to our Sa - vior Je - sus the  
Christ! And, to the Ho - ly Spi - rit, for - ev - er You're Our God!  
You brought us out of dark - ness, in - to Your mar - ve - lous Light! Your Word is our  
joy! For this we give You glo - ry, both now and ev - er more!  
For - ev - er we are Yours! For - ev - er we are Yours!

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 **Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.**   
The LGBTQIA2SS+ Pride Activities, and Social Events Center of Elmira, NY.  
The only Church in Central New York founded and fostered by the GLBTQSA2SS+ community for 39 years. October 31, 2022 - 39th Anniversary now in our 40th year in Ministry.

**But by the grace of God I am what I am, and God's grace toward me  
has not been in vain. 1 Cor. 5:10**

### + Sermon

Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian faith of ancient ecumenical consensus. St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as **"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."**

<http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/faith.htm>

### Luke 2:39 **The Return to Nazareth**

<sup>39</sup> When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

January 6 original Christmas Nativity Mass, still is in some sections of the world Church



Prophecies in the Book of Daniel reveal when the Messiah would appear on the world stage, when he would die, and when he would set up his Universal kingdom. The date of his death was therefore the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, the first Spring month on the Hebrew calendar.

Calendar at the time of Daniel was the lunar 30-day month calendar. Then there was the Julian Calendar until 1582 and then the modern Gregorian – a solar calendar with leap years. The Eastern Church was using a Greek calendar. There is a great note on this at Matthew 2:1 at the word "born" on page 1301 of your Scofield III Bibles. However, the church generally agreed until very recently that this meant Jesus died on April 6 after the calendar conversions were reconciled. A **Tradition** then followed that Jesus was conceived on the same date. Therefore, he was born on January 6. In 336 the Roman Empire began to formally celebrate Christmas on December 25, by the authority of the Emperor Constantine. Constantine declared Christianity to be the prominent religion of the Empire. By the fourth century, two dates had gained preeminence: Roman Calendar December 25 in the west, and January 6 in the east. Although the modern Armenian church continues to celebrate Christmas on January 6, December 25 ultimately prevailed, and January 6 was recast as the feast of Epiphany, commemorating the arrival of the Magi in Jerusalem. The period between these two dates constitute the famous "twelve days of Christmas." These are celebrations, not historical dates. In 1870 Christmas was declared a federal holiday. (see pages 29-33 Tim Dowley The History of Christianity © 1970, 1990 Lion Publishing)

.....  
Some quotations from "Born To Be King" by Dom Bernard Orchard, O. S. B. beginning on page 51.

"We now come to an incident in the early life of Jesus that is related only by Matthew; Luke, who knew our Gospel of Matthew, makes no mention of the flight into Egypt at all, thus ignoring entirely a period of some four to five years

in the childhood of Jesus. But then there was no need for him to repeat what the evangelist Matthew had already adequately recorded. .... The child had already grown into a toddler; and everything was going on nicely when all of a sudden a party of distinguished visitors came to the village and knocked at their door. ... They proved to be a deputation from the East, and had been guided to the door by a special star which they claimed to have first seen in their own country, and which had led them to Jerusalem in their search for the king promised of old to the Jews. ....”

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**Magi** ([Latin](#) plural of *magus*; [Ancient Greek](#): μάγος *magos*; [Old Persian](#): *maguš*, [Persian](#): مَغْ *mogh*; [English](#) singular *magian*, *mage*, *magus*, *magusian*, *magusaeon*; [Kurdish](#): *manji*) is a term, used since at least the 6th century BC, to denote followers of [Zurvanism](#) or [Zoroaster](#). a practitioner of magic, to include astrology, alchemy and other forms of esoteric knowledge.

The word *mágos* (Greek) and its variants appears in both the [Old](#) and [New Testaments](#).<sup>[8]</sup> The Strong's Concordance says “magician, i.e. Oriental scientist; by implication a magician; - sorcerer, wise man. Ordinarily this word is translated "magician" in the sense of illusionist or fortune-teller, and this is how it is translated in all of its occurrences except for the Gospel of Matthew, where it is rendered "wise man". However, early church bishops and theologians, such as [St. Justin](#), [Origen](#), [St. Augustine](#) and [St. Jerome](#), on up to the fifth century did not use the term “wise men,” but transliterated the word in its ordinary sense, i.e. as "magician".<sup>[9]</sup>

The Bible does not say how many or what gender they were. Travel! Wives and Children

The Magi are found in every ancient civilization

=====

From a previous bulletin: The prophet Daniel was taken into the court of eunuchs to serve King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon some **six hundred years earlier**. The eunuchs were often

court magi and were called upon to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and give him direction. In one particular dream God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar the empires of the world to the end when Messiah would set up His Kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar called upon his magi to 1) tell him the content of the dream, and 2) give him the interpretation. He set a serious standard this time; the magi who failed to give the dream and interpretation were put to death for failing to guide the King. The prophet Daniel was able through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit to tell the king his dream and to interpret it.

Therefore, since Daniel was successful, in Babylonian culture, Daniel became one of the magi and was elevated to being the chief magi for some forty years and he held a position of great respect and power. Scholars suggest Daniel influenced the writings of the prophecies of the Babylonian and then the Persian Zoroastrian magi to know that a divine child king, would come from Israel and he would be God's anointed Messiah deliverer for all humanity. **Those same magi would have been familiar with Daniel's writings where he predicted that 483 years after the Jewish people would be released from captivity, the Messiah, King, saving child would come. (Daniel 9:25-26).** THE SAME DATING PROCESS MENTIONED ABOVE THAT INFORMED BOTH THE ROMAN WESTERN AND GREEK EASTERN CHURCHES FOR THE DATING OF THE BIRTH. Perhaps some of the Magi remained faithful to the true God Daniel introduced them to. These might be some of the magi who went to Jerusalem to wait, watch, and pray for the birth of the coming King. Now that it had happened, we have the account of Matthew telling us they were convinced that these prophecies would have been recently fulfilled.

The magi studied the skies and star patterns as one of the sources of religious knowledge. The gospel tells us a new manifestation was showing in the skies and the Magi recognized it as the star that would guide them to the divine child.

It has been pointed out that Herod was likely terrified to see Parthian magi and troops coming into Jerusalem looking for a newborn king of the Jews! These magi were from enemy territory.

.....

Catholic and Protestant theologians are in agreement that the redaction of the event into three kings, who are later assigned the names Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior, each bearing one gift, and

each king representing the three main groupings of the human race (one is black, one is asian, and one is euro-centric and white) is mostly the result of Medieval legends, mystery plays, sacred plays that were presented in public--\*. The gifts are variously interpreted as gold for the kingship of Christ, incense for his divinity, and myrrh for his redemptive suffering. Sometimes the gifts are said to represent virtue, prayer, and suffering. The gifts are definitely partial fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah 60:6,11,13 and Psalm 72:10-11.

.....  
We are Magi:

Very interested in Spiritual things

You and I have taken great effort to stand up to our established religious institutions and try to move them forward on matters such as

Dignity of all persons of every ethnicity, every gender, every orientation

Dignity of women and the work necessary to root out culturally established misogyny

Addressing culturally rooted racism

Ageism

Structure of the Church – the place of anyone who is not a white male in that church

Definition of leadership in the church- Women Deaconesses, Married Women, Single Women, Women in Sacred Orders of Deacon, Priest, Bishop, Pope

MAGI meant RELIGIOUS LIFE. How should RELIGIOUS LIFE LOOK TODAY NEO-MONASTIC MOVEMENT

MAGI – Saints – established list – WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE SAINTS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT confirmation, laying on of hands, second blessing, speaking in tongues

## End of Biblical mysticism

Full participation for divorced and remarried – there is a time for everything including ending unhealthy relationships

Stop casting aside LGBT bisexual, intersex,

FAMILIES OF CHOICE – JESUS -

### WE NEED AN EPIPHANY

1) Churches are disaffiliating from one another over LGBTQSIA2ss inclusion and leadership. Article: There Go The Churches by Mark Tooley January 2, 2023

## There Go the Churches

The floodgates are opening, and congregations are leaving the United Methodist Church



Mark Tooley • January 2, 2023

(<https://ministrywatch.com/there-go-the-churches/?fbclid=IwAR1LaPYykXnh3aE5p7-49m4DJfvL5OIRzalyeAaNYQ3l34p9Zc9jFVpc-Ok> )

Recently, the number of congregations / churches approved for disaffiliation was at 1, 314. "Hundreds more have already voted to exit and are awaiting final approval." By the end of 2023 it may be between three to five-thousand congregations who will leave and take the church property with them. The cause? ".. decades of rancorous debate over the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ United Methodists," (source: Emily Mc Farlan Miller

<https://ministrywatch.com/after-years-of-loud-debate-conservatives-quietly-split-from-united-methodist-church/> )

New denomination: Global Methodist Church (<https://globalmethodist.org/>)

New denomination: Methodist Collegiate College

([https://www.whiteschapelumc.com/uploads/1/2/6/9/126965458/01\\_why\\_discernment.pdf](https://www.whiteschapelumc.com/uploads/1/2/6/9/126965458/01_why_discernment.pdf) )

New denomination: independent Methodist congregations.

Mark Tooley: " American nondenominational Christianity **continues** to grow while most denominations decline.

Unsurprisingly, the liberal denominations of the old Mainline Protestant world are the fastest to decline. The Episcopal Church just **announced** that in 2021 it lost 56,314 members while attendance dropped 36% from 2020. Sixty-two congregations were permanently closed. Average worship dropped from 55 to 21 persons. Ninety percent of Episcopal churches have fewer than 100 attendees on Sunday.

Many Methodist congregations seek to escape this grim fate." (<https://ministrywatch.com/there-go-the-churches/?fbclid=IwAR1LaPYykXnh3aE5p7-49m4DJfvL5OIRzalyeAaNYQ3l34p9Zc9jFVpc-Ok> )

(<https://ministrywatch.com/there-go-the-churches/?fbclid=IwAR1LaPYykXnh3aE5p7-49m4DJfvL5OIRzalyeAaNYQ3l34p9Zc9jFVpc-Ok> )

**WE NEED AN EPIPHANY**

2) Transgender Inmate Executed in Missouri (<https://gaycitynews.com/transgender-amber-mclaughlin-executed-missouri/>) Amber McLaughlin, 49, was executed on January 3.

A transgender woman serving on death row in Missouri was executed by lethal injection on January 3 in a case that raised serious questions about judicial fairness and featured transphobic rhetoric by the state’s governor during the final hours of her life.

Officials in Missouri said Amber McLaughlin, 49, died at 6:51 p.m. local time at Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center. Multiple news reports described McLaughlin as the first out transgender person to be executed under the death penalty in the United States.

McLaughlin was serving time for raping and killing her ex-girlfriend, Beverly Guenther, in 2003. She was convicted in 2005, but the jury in St. Louis County deadlocked after failing to deliver a sentence.

=====

18? people on Death Row in Missouri. The previous person executed in the State was a black male.

**WE NEED AN EPIPHANY**

Keeping our eyes on the Bethlehem Star of Jesus. The Star of God, the Superstar, Christ Our Lord. We continually hasten to His Throne.

**Special Music: Mrs. Christina McLaughlin**

lyric: I'll hasten to His throne.



**WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

**+ The Prayers of the People**

**Leader – 3:** Having heard the Word Of God, we bring our prayers to God in Christ through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. Today we will offer communal prayers. Our response will be: Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader – 3:** Oh God, thank you for guiding Ray Of Hope through 2022. We ask for your blessing in this new year of 2023. Give us a new epiphany and vision for this new year. In thanksgiving, we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 3:** We give you thanks and praise for a very beautiful season of Advent and Christmas. Our congregation has been blessed by a very Holy Christmas season of love, peace, and joy. In thanksgiving we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 4:** We continue to pray for the children and people of all ages whose lives have been changed forever by war. We know these terrible times have also caused many people in the attacked regions to doubt you even exist. We ask You, God, to heal and strengthen the people traumatized by the destruction of their homes, schools, places of worship, and towns. For these intentions, we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 4:** We know you are the Prince of Peace. In this age of the Church, we know people have the free will to choose peace. We look forward to the New Heavens and the New Earth, where Peace will be established, and you will reign over it. While we are in this age, we thank you for the possibility of peace, and we pray that world leaders will work toward peace; we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 4:** We thank you for our Country, the United States of America. We pray that liberty, opportunity, and freedom increase for everyone; we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader -2:** We ask your blessing on all people suffering from climate change's effects, especially the loss of sources of food, heat, water, and shelter. We pray the leaders of the World respond to this emergency both in short and long-term planning. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader -2:** Gathered together, we ask your blessing on all religious leaders of every Religion known to humanity. We pray that religious

leaders everywhere recognize and act upon their obligation to guide all people to you, Almighty God. We also pray that religious leaders will guide people to work for freedom, equality, and respect for everyone. We ask your blessing, Almighty God upon every community of seekers and those with no faith or formal Religion. We pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader- 2:** We pray for those driven from faith because of the misuse of Religion. We pray for those who have been cast aside, excommunicated, and wrongly not included in the worship community. We hope all people grow to realize that they, too, are God's living light. We eagerly await your promised renewal of all creation when you shall be all in all. We pray to the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 15:28)

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 3:** We bless you, Almighty God, for all the people who have come through the doors of Ray Of Hope Church. As we continue in the 40<sup>th</sup> year of ministry, we ask for your grace and guidance to remain faithful to this unique work of the Gospel; we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 4:** We invite you to add your petitions in silent prayer.  
**(silent prayer)**

**Leader –4:** We pray to the Lord for these silent prayers.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader – 3:** Lord Jesus, we lift our spoken and unspoken prayers to you. We ask you in intercede for us as our High Priest at the right hand of God.

**ALL: Amen**





(Visit our moving prayers page [Right Click Here.](#))

## **+ Offertory And Preparation of our at-home Holy Communion Altar/tables.**

**\*\*\*\* Leader:** At this time, we show our gratitude to God and our dedication to the Church of Jesus Christ, His Body present in the world, by offering our financial gifts and support for this ministry. In the Chapel, use the donation box next to the door before, during, or after this worship event. In addition, there are donation envelopes available on the hospitality table by the door.

Internet participants may use the [PayPal link](#) in your bulletin or mail a check to Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. First St. Elmira, NY 14901. Additionally, the electronic links are always available in posted bulletins, on Facebook, and our website. So please give what you can, but never give your last.

We also prepare our Holy Communion Altars and Tables at home and in the Chapel. Folks viewing on the Internet, please turn to page three and follow the instructions under leader two.

We are using the small Communion set at your seat in the Chapel. Shake the kit gently in case the contents have settled. After receiving Communion, someone will collect the cup.

Everyone may help set the Chapel Communion Table, and you may walk to the donation box during this time.

( \*\* Viewers on the Internet, please read the following statement. \*\* Communion is a gift for the worship community to celebrate together, an action of the local church.

However, if this is an extraordinary situation, and you believe the Holy Spirit is calling you to celebrate at a time other than the live webcast, then yield to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Hopefully, you will be able to join us in a live virtual worship event soon. (\*This practice policy was changed on

Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 2020.\*) )

## SONG:

**Leader -2:** (\*Pray a prayer over the offering, giving thanks and praise.\*) Please rise as you are able to conclude the Service Of The Word Of God with a doxology.

**ALL: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below. Praise God above ye heavenly hosts. Praise God the Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**



## WE CELEBRATE THE SACRED MEAL OF CHRIST

**Kaiden:** Please gently hold the communion kit in your hands for the following two prayers. Those at home with bread, please lift it now.

(\*The Pastor may invite someone to say this prayer out loud.\*)

**Pastor:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have this bread, which the Earth has given us, and human hands have lovingly made. Now, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, this bread will become for us the Bread From Heaven (Exodus 16:2, Psalm 78:24, John 6:32, 41,50,58), the Bread of the Angels (Psalm 78:25), the Bread of God (John 6:33), the Living Bread (John 6:51), the Bread Of Life (John 6:35, 48, 58), the Bread of the New Covenant (John 6:32, 49, 50,51, 58), the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the very Body Of Christ (John 6:52-56, 1Corinthians 10:16).

**ALL: Blessed be God forever.**

**Kaiden:** Please set down your bread. In the Chapel, please continue to hold your communion kit.

Viewers at home pour your wine or grape juice into your cup if you have not already done so. Then add a small amount of water to the cup. With this water, we remember Jesus is human. With this fruit of the vine, we remember He is divine forever.

**Pastor:** Now, please lift your cup with me as I pray this prayer.  
(\*The Pastor may invite someone to say this prayer out loud.\*)

**Pastor:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have this fruit of the vine, which the Earth has given us and human hands have lovingly made. Now, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, this fruit of the vine will become for us the Cup of Our Salvation (Psalm 116:13), the Cup of Everlasting Life (John 6:54-57), the Cup of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25), the very Blood Of Christ (John 6:54-56; 1Corinthians 10:16).

**ALL: Blessed be God forever.**

**Pastor:** Please set down your cup.

**Pastor:** Truly present and risen among us; the Lord is with you!

**ALL: And also with you!**

**Pastor:** As His Body, we lift up our hearts!

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!**

**Pastor:** As His Church, we give thanks to the Lord, our God!

**ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

**Pastor:** It is truly right and just....

May our voices be one with all the Faithful from every time and place as we sing our song and join in their unending

January 8, 2023 Epiphany I Year A page: 28  
hymns of praise.

## Holy, Holy, Lord!

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
October 31, 1993  
Revised 8/2013

Ho - ly Ho - ly Ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
5 might. Hea-ven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the  
10 high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est.  
16 Bless - ed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
22 Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho -  
27 san - na in the high-est.

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### + We Invoke the Blessing Of The Holy Spirit

**Cheryl:** At Ray Of Hope Church, we pray together and ask the Holy Spirit to give us the same gifts that Jesus gave when He instituted Holy Communion for His Church. We invite you to extend your hands forward over the bread and fruit of the vine or extend your arms out with palms turned up in prayer and say the following Invocation of the Holy Spirit with me.

**ALL:** O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful

**ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in precisely the exact same manner that He gave them, and commissioned us to do often in His Holy Name. You alone, O Loving, True God, authenticate for us that this is the Messiah, Christ, New Covenant Meal that Jesus instituted for **our physical and spiritual** wellbeing. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen**

**Cheryl:** You may relax your arms and hands.

**Pastor:** Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29,36) Behold Jesus truly present in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. Behold Him who said whoever eats of this Bread and drinks of this Cup though they die shall live forever. (John 6:50, 51, 54) Blessed are those who come to His Table. All are welcome.

**ALL: Lord, you make me worthy to receive you, and by your Word, I am healed.** (This prayer is credited to Fr. James Callan, Spiritus Christi of Rochester, NY.)



## The Reception of Holy Communion

### + The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

**Veronica:** Push down on the tab of your kits. Open the first seal and remove the bread. Please lift the Eucharistic Body Of Christ, the Bread of Salvation, and together we will say our Lord and Saviour's words of institution when he gave us the Blessed Sacrament.

**ALL: Before He was given up to death, a death He freely accepted, He took the bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is my body which will be given up for you. Do this in memory of me.**

**Pastor:** You may now receive the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ.  
The Gift of God for the People of God.

**Veronica:** We are not going to open the seal on the cup just yet.  
Please lift now the cup of salvation, and together we will say:

**ALL:** When the supper was ended, He took the cup. Again He  
gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to His disciples,  
and said:

**Take this, all of you, and drink from it: This is the cup of my  
blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will  
be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do  
this in memory of me.**

(\*\* pause for adoration\*\*) (\*\*you may bow or genuflect if you choose to\*\*)

**Pastor:** Open your kit and receive the Cup of Salvation, the Blood of  
Christ. The Gift of God for the People of God.

**Pastor:** I assure you, by the promises of Christ, that anyone who  
receives this Holy Communion today will indeed receive sanctification  
and healing in mind, body, soul, and spirit, be raised by Christ to new  
life, and live forever.

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

## + A Proclamation Of Our Faith

**Leader-2:** We proclaim our faith together.

**ALL:** Lord, by your cross and resurrection, you have set us free.  
You are the Savior of the world.

### PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

**Pastor:** Some people are watching from a location where they do not have actual Holy Communion Bread and Wine with them. We offer the following prayer for them based upon a prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer book for a Spiritual reception of Holy Communion. This prayer assures all the benefits and blessings of a physical reception. Together...

**Oh, My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I welcome you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and the life to come. Amen.**

Spiritual Communion Prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer Book.

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

## + The Lord's Prayer

**Leader -4:** Having heard the Word of God and remembering the sacrifice of the cross, we invite everyone to pray together the prayer of Jesus.

**ALL: 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,  
forever and ever. Amen**

**+ Final Doxology**

**Pastor:** Together we pray:

**ALL:** It is through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, forever and ever.

**Doxology/Amen!**

To my friends in Christ  
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts  
October 31, 1993

All hon - or and glo - ry be un - to \_\_\_\_ You. Al - migh - ty

5  
God \_\_\_\_ world with - out end. \_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_ men! Al - le - lu - ia

11  
A \_\_\_\_ men! Al - le - lu - ia! All hon - or and glo - ry to you! A - men! \_\_\_\_

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**+ Sign Of Peace**

**Veronica Floyd:** The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.  
**ALL:** And also with you.

**Veronica Floyd:** Please take a moment to share a sign of Peace with those around you. \*\*During COVID, we wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

**Veronica Floyd:** Now, we clean our tables and altars. Please be sure all of the crumbs are in your cup. Add some water and swirl it around inside the cup. Drink the water. Dry the cup with the side napkin. Clear your worship table and altar.

## **SONG:**

### **A silent prayer one might pray during Holy Communion:**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free us from all our sins and from every evil. Keep us faithful to your teaching, and never let us be parted from you. Amen.

**A silent prayer one might pray during Holy Communion:** Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need of thy mercy.

This prayer is known as the Fatima Prayer. It is prayed thousands of times every day by people praying the Rosary. Looking closely, one can see it is a very gracious prayer that prays for the salvation of all people. Read more of my commentary on this prayer: [Click Here](#).

**General Offering** for the week of December 18 \$93.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

**General Offering** for the week of December 25 \$113.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 12

**General Offering** for the week of January 1 \$1,343.00 (some people give monthly rather than weekly) Attendance 9

**\*\*\* Donations for the end of the year special gifts are now being received.** One area of need is toward the Pastor's self-employment tax. This gift has to be in to the Treasurer in the next few days if you wish to participate.

### **\*\*Special Gifts recently given.\*\***

Thank you, April for your gift of \$110.00, Veronica \$200.00, Lisa \$200.00 toward the Pastor's self-employment tax.

Many thanks to Ed Askins for the hours spent on repairing the interior walls and ceilings in the monastery.

**We give God thanks and praise for all these gifts given. We appreciate the special gifts being made at this time.**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**OUR CALENDAR**

January 10 Tuesday Bible Enrichment 6:30 p.m.

January 15 Sunday Civil Rights Sunday, The Memorial of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 17 Tuesday Bible Enrichment 6:30 p.m

January 22 the **39th Annual Meeting in the 40th year of Ministry**, also The Memorial of St. Marianne Cope of Syracuse, NY, "Beloved Mother of Outcasts ". In 1866 she helped found St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Utica, NY and in 1869 she was the primary founder of St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, NY and Administrator – a remarkable duty for the times. These two hospitals were among the first fifty hospitals founded in the United States. She and six Sisters of St. Francis arrived in Honolulu in 1883 where they stayed and took care of people with Leprosy. We will have much more to say on Sunday, January 23.

Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023

**Holy Week 2023**: Palm Sunday April 2 10:30 a.m. Holy Thursday April 6 7:00 p.m. Good Friday April 7 7:00 p.m. Vigil of the Resurrection Saturday April 8 7:45 p.m. No service on Sunday April 9.



**We Are Sent Forth To Serve**

**Pastor:** The Lord is with you!

**ALL: And also with you!**

**Pastor:** (a prayer is said) .... In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**ALL: Amen**

**ALL: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen** (Romans 15:13)

**Leader-4: We go forth in peace and love to serve all the people, and the Lord ...**

**ALL: ... on our journey into renewal, fresh beginnings, new possibilities, and a renewed embrace of our potential! Thanks be to God.**

**SONG:**

Visit and follow us on our new TikTok Page: [Right Click Here](#) Here is the link if you need to copy and paste it into your browser:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@rayofhopechurchlgbtqisia? t=8UgoVv5ekqg& r=1> Thank you, Heather and Michael for making this project possible and producing our videos.

=====

Volunteer opportunities: As discussed at our Priorities Meeting #2 there are some exterior building volunteer opportunities. There are also some first floor interior volunteer opportunities – painting, patching using drywall mud, and a larger project day for removal of carpet and replacement with new carpet. If you have some time to spare and interest in these types of work please let Brother know with advanced notice so the necessary supplies will be ready.

**\*\*\* Millennial Series by Dr. John F. Walvoord**

<https://walvoord.com/series/328>

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:7 This is all God's fault,

God's design, God's doing from start to end.

Br. Benedict at the time of Renewal of Vows, June 20, 2021: "Looking forward, I like to say the first twenty-five years were spent on **stabilization, survival, and sustainability**. The second twenty-five years will be spent on growth to help Ray Of Hope **thrive, train, and transplant** this Congregation to new leadership. The founders and foundresses successfully transferred the leadership to a new generation, us, and now we must do the same. I plan to fade into the Congregation and continue providing support to the new leadership. My goal is to leave the Congregation with new leadership, in good standing, and thriving."



We never held a vote to decide if we would be an **INCLUSIVE** church for you.  
We are not an **OPEN AND AFFIRMING** church for you.  
We are not a **RECONCILING CHURCH** or  
**RECONCILING CONGREGATION** for you.  
We are not an **OPEN MINDED** or **ACCEPTING** or **WELCOMING**  
church where you can attend as long as you blend in quietly and discretely.  
**WE ARE YOU!**  
**THIS is the church where YOU belong.**  
**Ray Of Hope Church is the church by us, for us, and made by You.**

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

=====**Who can receive the Holy Spirit**=====

**Everyone has access to the Holy Spirit, the gift of God to us.**  
Read this on our website. [Right Click Here](#)



**WHO SHOULD RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION, THE EUCHARIST, AT RAY OF HOPE CHURCH?**

Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion, also known as The Eucharist, The Lord's Table, or The Blessed Sacrament at Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

It is not required that you be a member of this church or any other church, to receive Holy Communion at / or with Ray Of Hope Church.

This Holy Communion is the Table of Jesus Christ, who is really present among us. Jesus invites you to receive Him in this Eucharistic banquet. If this is your first time receiving The Blessed Sacrament, let us know before you receive or right after, so we might pray a special prayer of thanksgiving with you.

Unfortunately, through the centuries many institutional churches have established rules, teachings, and practices that would exclude people from Holy Communion. There has been an almost endless list of reasons to exclude people from the Blessed Sacrament. Yet, together, during the worship service, we recite the very words of Jesus, the Words of Institution, "This is my body. This is my blood," and we rehear Christ present with us saying: "Take this, all of you and eat; Take this all of you and drink" of this gift.

I have thought about this extensively and have decided to take these words "Take this, all of you.." as a command to the church to give, and bring, the Eucharistic Gift to everyone who will receive. This approach also requires us to teach people about this gift. I have stated in other places, **it is uniquely and deliberately the work of Christ in His Church** to offer the necessary education, guidance, and practices that help people live a life centered and purposed on finding and sharing the Will of God. The Lord's Table is central in that life.

The Eucharist belongs to the Church. The Blessed Sacrament is Christ in us, through us, and with us; made known in the breaking of the Bread of Life and drinking of the Cup of Salvation. We are to take this gift to the whole world.

We begin by inviting those who are on the fringe of Society, those who have been pushed aside, those who are poor, who are not accepted, who are sick, who need God's help in special ways. We welcome and bring the Eucharist to everyone who has been told they cannot receive it by other Denominations. In conclusion, to all persons who have ever been told "no you cannot" go to

Communion in any other church; hear us, "yes you can" at Ray Of Hope. All are welcome. Or as we like to say as one of our mottos, when we quote Fr. Bartholomew J. O'Brien; "You are as welcome here as Christ Himself."

Come to the Table of the Lord. There is a place set for you too. (Excerpted from the Pastoral Report given at the Annual Meeting 34 on January 28, 2018 by Pastor Br. Shawn F. Benedict, updated 3-6-21)

Visit our page on the Sacraments. [Right Click Here](#).

See this in a PDF format from our website and share it with others or download it to your computer / device. [Right Click Here](#).

## Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule

**Elmira Worship-** Sunday 10:30 a.m. – 380 W. First St. Parsonage/Monastery .  
Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 10:15 a.m.

**Syracuse Worship-** looking for a host in Syracuse. For more information  
[Click Here](#).

**Bible Enrichment-** Tuesday 6:30–8 p.m.-380 W. First St. Parsonage  
/Monastery. Or Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign  
on by 6:15 p.m. [Click Here](#).

**\*\* to call the Pastor: Rev. Shawn Benedict: 607-280-0374\***

### **Policy Concerning Minors at Events**

Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ welcomes all youth and children to worship with us and participate in our activities. We endeavor to provide a safe and non-threatening environment for all children. To this end, we have a Policy Concerning Minors at Events, which is available from the Clerk upon request and is on our website;  
[http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/Minors\\_At\\_Events.htm](http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/Minors_At_Events.htm). Please enjoy your visit with us, and we hope you will return.

NOTE: On June 15, 1996, as a part of the Ordination Ceremony and his profession of Benedictine Vows, Rev. Leo W. McDermott, II retired the use of his secular birth name and was given a new name in religion, Brother Shawn Francis Benedict.

The Chapel is not open to the general public at this time as we try to do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. Call for an appointment if you want some time to come in and pray. All of our regular services will be blended with live participation in the Chapel and live on Skype and Facebook Live. To read the information on how to use Skype to participate with us [Click Here](#).. Visit our Facebook page [Click Here](#). As soon as it reasonably safe and prudent the Chapel will be reopened.

Visitors: Please feel free to fill out the information slip below and place it in the collection plate. Please indicate any special needs you may have. All information will be used for church purposes *only*.

(Optional) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be included on the church Email list.

I would like to schedule an appointment with the Pastor.







## Ray Of Hope Church Statement Of Purpose

In the Spirit of God, and in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, we the Faith Community at Ray Of Hope Church commit to:

- **guide** and welcome all people to the Free Gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus, with a God-ordained celebration of all sexual orientations, and gender expressions, with an open ministry to persons affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends,
- **declare** and openly assert the truth that same-sex relationships, founded and fostered in God-centered love, are holy and blessed, and in fact originate by the work of the Holy Spirit; and, that God equally uses blessed same-sex and heterosexual Holy Unions and Marriages to bring God's own love and good news of "Salvation to all who believe" into the world,
- **uphold**, proclaim, and teach the historic Biblical Christian Doctrine, build community through worship and prayer, break the bread, and live the ministry of the Holy Spirit,
- **change** the world around us by living Gospel principles of social justice in everything we do, thereby exposing all forms of prejudice, oppression, racism, homophobia, sexism, and misogyny,
- **proclaim** the ray of hope, which is the soon coming return of Christ Jesus, and the fullness of His Eternal Community where the Will of God will establish liberty, justice, equity, and peace for all God's People and the universe.

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Visit us online:

Our website: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/> Facebook Page (like and follow) [Click Here](#).

Our YouTube page: [www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyqlbtqs](http://www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyqlbtqs)

—————Scripture verses to share with others:—————

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 2:11, 3:4 The grace, the goodness, the loving-kindness of our God has appeared, bringing salvation **to everyone**.

John 5:24 Those who hear my word and **believe in God** who sent me, **have** eternal life, will **never** come under judgment and have passed from **death to life** already.

Romans 10:13 "For **whoever** calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (repeated @ Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) "everyone, anyone who" asks. "Lord" here refers to God principally as in the book of Joel that is being quoted, so all persons who call on God shall be saved.

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

(Isaiah 43:19 ESV)

"Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)