

**"My House shall be a house of prayer for All People."
(Isaiah 56:7)**

**Founded: 10/31/1983. Now in our Forty-second year of
Ministry.**

**MISSION: Love God, Love your neighbor, and make disciples
of every person everywhere. (Matthew 22:37-39; Matthew 28:19)**

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

We extend a special welcome to our visitors.
You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.
In Romans 15:7 the Scriptures exhort us to:

"Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,
for the glory of God" (NABRE – 2011)

Participate in some or all parts of this worship event as you are 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 1-12-24 Epiphany WK 1, Year C

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."

Scientific Discovery, Academic Knowledge, the Holy Scriptures, and Spirituality are Universal
and Unified. (Br. Benedict 8-6-23)

Scripture Readings for this worship event:

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6 NRSV 1st Test. Pg. 690

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

Second Reading: Eph 3:1-6 NRSV 2nd Test. Pg. 193

Gospel: Matt. 2:1-12 NRSV 2ND 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, and the 2nd Testament numbers are found in the later portion. If this confuses you, ask someone around you to assist you. Thank you.**

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CALL TO WORSHIP

Visit and greet one another until the bell rings.

Bell's 1st ring. As our bell rings, please find your seat and pray silently for the next few minutes. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

Our St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1st St. in Elmira, NY, is a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY, given 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, and we now celebrate victory and gratitude for our Salvation. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) We ring the bell 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 _____. I am in_(city) _____, __(State)_____. Good morning. Welcome 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. To facilitate your full participation, please look for today's bulletin, Order of Worship, and Music Supplement available on Facebook Live; right-click the "Featured Links" icon. On Skype, look in the Chat window for two document icons. On our website, look at the large gold box labeled SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION at www.rayofhopechurch.com. For people watching on the Internet, we recommend you have two Internet devices on. Set one device on Facebook

Live to listen to the Music. Right-click on this link to access our [Facebook page](#). Open the Skype meeting on the second device to interact with us. Right-click on this Skype Link: <https://join.skype.com/qt6Y1PQvj04I>.

You do not need an account on Skype to "enter as a guest" when prompted. We announce all instructions, page, and song numbers and use a psalm response verse to assist people with various stages of visual impairment.

Leader-2: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____. Good morning, and welcome. (** Reader, please remember to look at the people and smile.**) We invite you to participate in some or all of the parts of this worship event as you feel comfortable.

Today is the Third of three Sundays of the Season of the Nativity, Christmas, it is the Feast of the Epiphany. Christmas is a Season in the Church, not just a single day.

Everyone is welcome to receive Holy Communion with us during the second half of this worship event. You need not be a member of this church or any church to receive Communion with us, if you choose to. To the people watching on the Internet, to participate in Communion, please also bring to your table 1) a cup with some wine or grape juice, 2) a small piece of bread, cracker, or matzo on a plate, and 3) a second cup with some water and a side napkin. We will use these in the second half of the worship service. Now, gather all these items, and we will start shortly.



ALL PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED SALVATION AS A FREE GIFT FROM GOD, ARE ETERNALLY SECURE IN GOD'S LOVE AND ARE BY MODERN TERMS, "SAVED." ALL LGBTQSIA2ss+ persons of every sexual orientation and every gender expression are SAVED and are called to live out the fullness of who they are so that God may be praised. Ray Of Hope Church, Inc. officially took this position on September 18, 2011 and changed the By-laws to secure this position. (www.rayofhopechurch.com/faith.htm) (www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm)

(The Congregation amended this By-law on September 18, 2011, and used to read: We believe that Salvation is

available to all who call on the Name of Jesus Christ, and are re-born into the Life of Christ.)([Article 10 STATEMENT OF FAITH 10.01 Short Form Statement Lines 1140 – 1143](#))



Bell's 2nd ring will announce the start of the worship event.

Leader – 2: (** Reader, look up at the people and smile.**) Thank you for choosing to spend time with us today. In Romans, Chapter 15, verse 7, the Scriptures instruct us to:

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

Leader -2: You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. (** Reader, please remember to look at the people and smile.**) Show the glory of God by introducing yourself and welcoming the **SAINTS** around you. To be extra careful, we observe COVID-19 safety protocols by waving across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

Pastor: Good Morning, **SAINTS**! Merry Christmas!

ALL: Merry Christmas!

Pastor: I ask you, in whose Name are we 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: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's love, and the Holy Spirit's fellowship is with you. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

ALL: And also with you, praise the Lord.

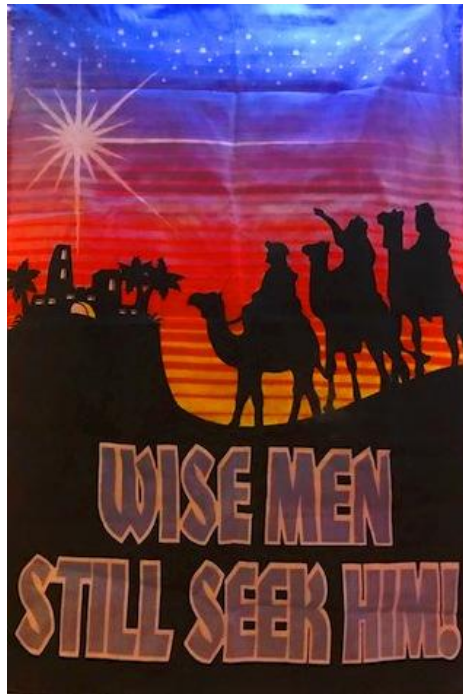
Pastor: Today is January 15, 2024, we are celebrating Epiphany I, Orthodox Christmas January 6 and 7.

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

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.



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

June 1, 2024, was the TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE ELMIRA CHAPEL.

Pastor: 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.



FIRST SONG: G&P 334 The First Noel Text and music: Trad. English carol, 17th cent.

1. The first Nowell, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

3. And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

5. Then entered in those wise men three,
Full rev'rently upon the knee,
And offered there, in his presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

6. Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord;
Who with the Father we adore
And Spirit blest for evermore.

The First Noel Text and music: Trad. English carol, 17th cent. Text: Irregular with refrain; trad. English carol, 17th cent.; verse 6, alt. Music: Trad. English carol, 17th cent. Glory & Praise Second Edition #334 Onelicense Song #84266 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127. Organ Performance Copyright notice: Rev. Clyde McLennan, performer of this collection, has assigned his performer rights in this collection

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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.

SECOND SONG: Glory & Praise #333

We three kings of Orient Are Text and music: Carols, Hymns, and Songs, 1863; John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891

1. We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, Moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Refrain

O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, Still proceeding,
Guide us to the perfect light.

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again;
King forever, Ceasing never

Over us all to reign.

3. Frankincense to offer have I:
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising Gladly raising,
Worship him God on high.

4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, Bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

5. Glorious now, behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
“Alleluia, Alleluia!”
Sounds through the earth and skies.

We three kings of Orient Are Text and music: Carols, Hymns, and Songs, 1863; John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891
Language: English. Text: 88 44 6 with refrain; based on Matthew 2:1-11. Text and music: Carols, Hymns, and
Songs, 1863; John H. Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891, alt. Glory & Praise Second Edition #333 Onelicense Song #84053
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THIRD SONG: Glory & Praise #330

Child Is Born. Words and Music by Gregory Norbet, Weston Priory

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WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins, our failures.

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: The Lord has heard our confession and has granted forgiveness, and so we declare together:

ALL: The faith community of Ray Of Hope Church openly declares the forgiveness of all your confessed sins in the Name of Jesus Christ. He forgives you, we forgive you, and God rejoices over your restoration in Christ. Amen.

Leader - 3: The Church now provides the service of praising God in thanksgiving together. Please rise as you are able as we sing "The Gloria." Look under your seats for a bell, and ring the bell just on the refrain throughout the song.

WORDS ONLY HERE. MUSIC SCROLL DOWN

"The Gloria"

From "Music for Worship"

© Words and Music: Gaude! Liturgical Arts 7/25/19 - 1/21/24 Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B. Dedication :Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. 40th Anniversary.

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.

Glory to God in the highest.

We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!

We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 1:

You are the One God,
Sovereign of the Universe,
Only Holy God, we worship You,
we give You thanks,
we praise You for Your great glory!

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,

and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 2:

Lord, Jesus Christ;
The Only Begotten Son of God
You are 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.

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 3:

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 God.
In the Holy Spirit, in the Holy unity of God.

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 4:

Amen; We give you thanks and praise.

Amen; We give you thanks and praise.

Amen; We give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

From "Music for Worship" © Words and Music: Gaude! Liturgical Arts 7/25/19 - 1/21/24 Br.
Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B.

Dedication: Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. 40th Anniversary.

Dedication:
Ray Of Hope Church
Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
40th Anniversary

The Gloria

"Music for Worship"

Words and Music
Gaude! Liturgical Arts
7/25/19-1/21/24
Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B.

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and

4
peace to all peo - ple on earth — Glo - ry to God in the high - est —

8
We give you thanks — and praise. Al - le - lu — ia

10
We give you thanks — and praise.

12 **Verse 1**
You are the One God, Sov - ereign of the Un - i - verse, On - ly

16
Ho - ly God, — we wor - ship You, — we

18
give you thanks, we praise You for Your great glo - ry!

21 **Refrain**
Glo - ry to God in the high - est, — and peace to all peo - ple on earth —

25
Glo - ry to God in the high - est — We give you thanks — and

2

28

 praise. Al-le-lu__ ia We give you thanks_ and praise.

31 **Verse 2**

 Lord, Jes - us Christ;_____ The On - ly Be - got - ten

34

 Son of God, You are Lord God,

36

 Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; Have mer - cy on

41

 us; You are sea-ted at the right hand of God; re - ceive our prayer.

46 **Refrain**

 Glo-ry to God in the high-est,___ and peace to all peo-ple on_ earth_

50

 Glo - ry to God in the high - est___ We give you thanks_ and

53

 praise. Al-le-lu__ ia We give you thanks_ and praise.

56 **Verse 3**

 For You a-lone are the Ho - ly One You a - lone are the Lord of all,

61

 You a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, With the Ho - ly

66

Spi-rit in the glo - ry of God. In the Ho - ly Spi-rit, in the

71

Ho - ly un - i - ty of God.

75 Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high-est, - and peace to all peo-ple on_ earth_

79

Glo-ry to God in the high-est_ We give you thanks_ and praise. Al-le-lu_ia

83

We give you thanks and praise.

85 Verse 4: Amen

A_ men_ We

We give You thanks and praise!

Lord we praise You, Lord we bless You, We

4

87

give You thanks and praise!

We give You thanks and praise!

give You thanks, We give You praise We give You thanks and praise

89

A men

A men. Al - le - lu - ia.

Lord we praise You, Lord we bless You men. Al - le - lu - ia.

PASTOR: Please remain standing for the opening prayer.

+ Opening Prayer

Leader-4: The Lord is with you, Alleluia!

ALL: And also with you, Alleluia!

Leader-4: Together, we lift up our hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader-4: We make this exhortation together:

ALL: Let us keep the Scriptures in mind and meditate upon them day and night, persevering in prayer, always on the watch. Let us beg the Lord to give us real knowledge of what we read and to show us not only how to understand it but how to put it into practice, so that we may deserve to obtain spiritual grace, enlightened by the law of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose power and glory will endure throughout the ages. Amen

Leader-4: Saint Origen, who lived from 185 – 254 A.D., wrote this prayer. His prayer is our prayer on this day. Please be seated now and listen with all your heart, soul, and mind as we open the Word of God.



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:

The Ingathering of the Dispersed

60 Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
2 For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the LORD will arise upon you,

and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ 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 in their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,^[a]
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ 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!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

a. 60.5 Heb *be enlarged*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2060%3A1-6&version=NRSVUE>
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permission. See notice above announcements in this bulletin.)

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

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 72, selected verses, with a responsorial verse.

The response today is " Lord, every nation on earth will adore you."

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

O God, give your judgment to the King,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgment.

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

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

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

**Before him his enemies shall fall,
his foes lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and the seacoasts
shall pay him tribute.

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

** The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all rulers shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him.

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

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

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

**Praise God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. Amen.**

+ 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**—² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,³ and how the **mystery was made known to me by revelation**, as I wrote above in a few words,⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of **the mystery of Christ**.⁵ 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:⁶ 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!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. [3.1](#) Or *of*
- b. [3.1](#) Other ancient authorities lack *Jesus*
- c. [3.2](#) Or *if indeed*
- d. [3.3](#) Or *wrote before in brief*
- e. [3.5](#) Gk *it*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203%3A1-6&version=NRSVUE>)
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+ 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

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, 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.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. 2.1 Or *astrologers*
- b. 2.2 Or *at its rising*
- c. 2.4 Or *the Christ*
- d. 2.6 Or *rule*
- e. 2.7 Or *astrologers*
- f. 2.9 Or *at its rising*
- g. 2.10 Gk *saw the star*
- h.

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%20%3A1-12&version=NRSVUE>. Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. See notice above announcements in this bulletin.)

Gospel Acclamation

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

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are: "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 LGBTQISA2ss+ Pride Activities, and Social Events Center of Elmira, NY.
The only Church in Central New York founded and fostered by the GLBTQISA2ss+ 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

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

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

**** Remember this, next Sunday, when we talk about the visit of the Magi to the Holy Family. They will be in Nazareth, not in Bethlehem, in a manger.

Some habits die very hard.

1) Suppose I were to tell you of a family who has been consistently seen going outside with their infant child and sitting in the snow. The family regularly goes outside; the mother and father are dressed warmly but the baby is always in diapers. What would you say about that family? Yet, this is precisely the romanticized image of Jesus's birth. It makes no sense. The baby is out in the snow.

2) Another problem with the manger crèches is that the people are often very light white-skinned, and Jesus is often a blonde baby. Again, this is an inaccurate tradition.

3) Another tradition that is taking a long time to correct concerns the Magi of tonight's gospel. Many of those same manger scenes that have a diaper wearing white Italian, blonde baby out in subzero snowstorms also have three kings representing three national kingdoms of the world standing inside the stable as though they, like the shepherds arrived moments after the birth of Jesus. There is some historical event involved, and there is the story that has grown up around the oral tradition (complete with painting, music, drama, movies and even an opera!). Finally, there is the direct application to our lives. First, the historical event.

4) The event we are celebrating tonight is called the Epiphany. An epiphany in the Scriptures is a showing of God, of God's presence, or God's power in an unusual way, and often more noticeable than usual. We have another showing of God in Christ in that event where religious leaders and religious specialists from the Far East, who were Jews, come to the home of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and offer homage and worship to the child.

THE 12 DAYS of CHRISTMAS 12/25 to 1/5, the Eve of the Epiphany

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."

Page 52: "One well-known prophecy, the oracle of Balaam, had spoken of a star that will herald the coming of the Messiah:

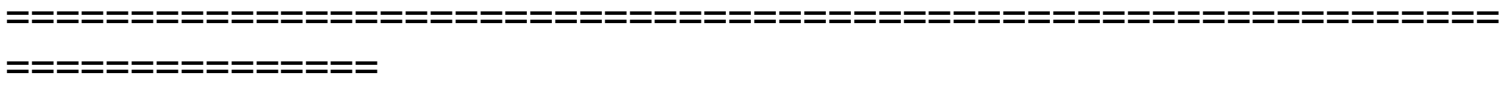
"I see him, but now; I behold him, but not nigh; a start shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel" (Number 24:17)

Page 53: "The Magi did not, we may suppose, suspect Herod's evil intentions and went off down to Bethlehem, some five miles to the south of the Holy City. The star they had followed now reappeared to them, and brought them with great joy to the end of their long quest, leading to the very house in which Mary and Joseph and the babe were now living. They were not embarrassed to find the Messiah to be still a little boy; and in the light of the Holy Spirit who had brought them safely to Jesus, they gave him divine honours, and proffered their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These gifts represented their act of faith in his kingship (the gold), in his priesthood (the frankincense), and in his humanity and mortality (the myrrh, a spice associated with embalming). In this way, the nations of the world were now associated with the holy remnant of the Jews in recognizing the future redeemer of the world." (pg. 53)

The Encyclopedia of Religion. Editor in Chief Mircea Eliade. Volume 9. Macmillan Publishing Company NY 1987. Article: MAGI pg. 79+

The Old Persian word *magu*, rendered in Greek y *magos*, is of uncertain etymology. It may originally have meant "member of the tribe," This meaning would have been further restricted, among the Medes, to "member of the priestly tribe" and perhaps to "priest" For a variety of reasons we can consider the Magi to have been members of a priestly tribe of Median origin in western Iran. Among the Persians, they were responsible for liturgical functions, as well as for maintaining their knowledge of the holy and of the occult. The fact that the Magi may have been members of a tribe that handed down the sacerdotal arts in a hereditary fashion naturally did not exclude the possibility that some of them undertook secular professions.

Page 80+ The Magi were the technicians of and experts on worship: it was impossible to offer sacrifices without the presence of a Magus. Durin the performance of a ritual sacrifice, the Magus sang of the theogoney (the Magi were possible the custodians of a tradition of sacred poetry.....) and was called upon to interpret dreams and to divine the future.they were most likely a clergy consisting of professional priests who were not tied to a rigid orthodoxy but were naturally inclined to eclecticism and syncretism. Nonetheless, they must have been jealous guardians of the patrimony of Zoroastrian traditions. By virtue of this they were the educators of the royal princes. No priesthood of antiquity was more famous than that of the Magi. They were renowned as followers of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster); as the teachers of the greatest Greek thinkers (Pythagoras, Democritus, Plat); as the wise men who arrived, guided by a star, at the manger of the newborn savior in Bethlehem; and as the propagators of a cult of the sun in Inda. But they were also known as the Chaldeans, the priesthood of Babylon.....



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 dream. Those who failed to give the dream and

interpretation were put to death for failing to guide the King. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, the prophet Daniel is able to tell the King his dream and interpret it. In Babylonian culture, Daniel became one of the magi and was elevated to the position of chief magi for some forty years. He held a position of great respect and power. Some scholars think Daniel might have influenced the writings of the prophecies of the Babylonian and then the Persian Zoroastrian magi to know that a Messiah, divine child king, would come from Israel and be God's anointed Messiah deliverer for all humanity. **Those same magi would have been familiar with Daniel's writings, where he predicted that the Messiah, King, and child would come 483 years after the Jewish people were released from captivity. (Daniel 9:25-26).** THE SAME DATING PROCESS MENTIONED ABOVE INFORMED BOTH THE ROMAN WESTERN AND GREEK EASTERN CHURCHES FOR BIRTH DATING. Perhaps some of the Magi remained faithful to the true God Daniel introduced them to. These might be some of the magi who have come 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.

We are all Magi: Very interested in Spiritual things.

You and I have made 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 – ethnic discrimination.

Ageism – too young, too old, a society stuck at adolescence.

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, intersexed,

FAMILIES OF CHOICE – JESUS -

OUR ACCESSORIES

Chasuble, robe, stole A CONGREGATION OF ROBES - MONKS COWL monks and nuns are LAY PEOPLE in Canon Law. Orders begins with DEACONS. The habit attracted me to religious life because it puts everyone on the same level.

Baseball uniform

Basketball uniform

Scout uniform.

Fire Department

Farm Hands, style boots, jackets, trousers, gloves, hats

Mennonite bonnet

Amish hats

Dress differently for a special banquet than we dress for a day on the beach

CHOIR ROBES

Dress up, celebration, FESTIVE tunics, FESTIVE Saris, FESTIVE CAFTANS

=====

*****OPEN MICROPHONE *****

=====

Brother: PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE: Family of President Carter, victims of all the fires in California, the children who have experienced trauma, the elderly who were forced from their nursing centers, the family members who still are uncertain if their loved ones are safe, Hurricanes, floods, war, disease, and healing; who else should we pray for?



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

Veronica: Worship is our primary activity as a church. We are grateful for all the people over these last forty-one years of ministry who have given help and assistance so that Ray Of Hope is here in this new year of 2025. Thank you to everyone who has contributed with your gifts "seen and unseen." Your giving has been exemplary and extraordinary; may God bless you.

We are an independent organization founded and funded by anyone who appreciates what we offer. Your support is one way to give God thanks and praise for this unique ministry for all people. There are many convenient ways to participate with your donation, including



this QRCode, this link in the bulletin: [Donate to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ](#); other live links on [our website](#), the envelopes and donation box next to the door always available in the Chapel. Checks sent in the mail are also accepted. [Right-Click Here](#) for our contact information, including our street address. We always say, "Give what you can, but never give your last."



The Reception of Holy Communion

OFFERTORY SONG TEXT ONLY: He Is Exalted. Words and Music by Twila Paris NOTEBOOK # 62

Verse

He is exalted
 The King is exalted on high
 I will praise Him
 He is exalted forever exalted
 And I will praise His name

Chorus

He is the Lord
 Forever His truth shall reign
 Heaven and earth
 Rejoice in His holy name
 He is exalted
 The King is exalted on high

He Is Exalted. Words and Music by Twila Paris ©1985 Jubilee Communications Inc. (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) Mountain Spring Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) CCLI Song #17827. Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

Leader - 3: (**You may improvise a prayer or use this one.) God, we bless you and praise you for all the gifts we have received to support this ministry. We

thank you for those who can give financially and those who give with their skills, prayers, talents, and other ways. We bless you for those who could not give at this time and pray that all their needs will be met. We dedicate all this to the Name of Jesus, Amen.

(We sing **The Doxology here.**)

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

Pastor or?: 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. For those 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.

Brother Benedict: Now, please lift your cup with me as I pray this prayer. 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.

Kaiden: Please set down your cup.

Pastor: Truly present and risen among us; **SAINTS** 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: (An improvised prayer is said here.)

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

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

Leader - 3: At Ray Of Hope Church, we pray together and ask the Holy Spirit to give us the same gifts 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 well-being. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen

Leader - 1: You may relax your arms and hands.

+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

WORDS OF INSTITUTION SONG: Remember Me. Words and Music by Gerrit Gustafson and Martin J. Nystrom © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music. c/o Integrity Music, Inc., P.O. Box 16813, Mobile, AL, 36695. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. CCLI Song # 451177 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

+ The Lord's Prayer

Kaiden: 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**

Music setting information: **The Lord's Prayer Composed by Albert Hay Malotte.** ©1935 G. Schirmer, Inc. (Admin. by Music Sales

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The Reception of Holy Communion

Pastor: Please raise the Blessed Sacrament as a sign of praise and pray together:

ALL: Behold the Lamb of God. Behold the Christ 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, they shall live forever, and I will raise them up on the last day.

Leader - 2: Blessed are those who come to this table; everyone is welcome.

ALL: Lord, you make me worthy to receive you, and by your Word, I am healed. 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! ____

Kaiden: Please open your kit and receive Holy Communion at this time. Receive now the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Gift of God for the People of God. Receive these gifts of love to strengthen your resolve to serve others and God and to fortify your Salvation. 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, and will be raised by Christ to new life, and live forever.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Veronica: We understand that some of you watching do not have actual Holy Communion Bread and Wine. We invite you to pray for a Spiritual reception of Holy Communion based upon a prayer in a Prayer Book at the Episcopal National Cathedral. This prayer assures all the benefits and blessings of a physical reception. Together;

Oh, My Jesus, I believe you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things and 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. Still, circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

+ Sign Of Peace

Leader-1: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Leader-1: 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.

Leader-1: 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.

COMMUNION SONG **Jesus Name Above All Names** words and music by Naida Hearn

Verse 1

Jesus, name above all names,
Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us.
Blessed Redeemer, living Word.

Verse 2

Jesus, loving Shepherd,
Vine of the branches, Son of God.
Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor,
Lord of the universe, Light of the world.

Verse 3

Praise him, Lord above all lords,
King above all kings, God's only Son.
The Prince of Peace, who by his Spirit
Comes to live in us, Master and Friend.

Jesus Name Above All Names words and music by Naida Hearn
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THE TREASURER'S REPORT FOR NOVEMBER, 2024, given by Ed Askins, Treasurer, at the December 19, 2024 of the Church Council.

General Fund opening balance at the beginning of November was \$401.88. Donations to the General Fund for the month were \$2,592.31. This included undeposited funds of \$77.67 which hit the bank early December. Pastoral compensation of \$495.00 per week for 4 week was paid equaling \$1980.00, Verizon \$62.38 and Paypal charges of \$24.64 came out of this account.

After these were paid the ending balance of this account at the end of the month was \$849.50.

Building Fund opening balance was \$1,134.08. Donations to the Building Fund were as follows: Brother Shawn Benedict \$640.00, Kaiden Benedict \$450.00. Regular bills that came out of the fund this month was the Credit Card bill with Key Bank of \$58.51, electric \$590.92, gas bill \$253.00, and the water bill of \$112.01. Ending balance of this fund was \$1,209.64.

Building Improvement Fund opening balance on this account was \$6,231.38. Donations to this account for this month were Ian and Christina \$450.00 at the beginning of the month and \$500.00 at the end of the month. The \$500.00 did not hit the bank until early December, so that is part of the Undeposited funds on the balance sheet. I paid Isaac's Heating and Air Conditioning \$5,960.75 for the boiler repair. The ending balance on this account is \$720.63.

NOTES OF THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR GENEROSITY GIVEN TO THE LORD THROUGH RAY OF HOPE

General Offering for the week of December 1 \$1,625.00 Attendance 11 on Sunday
Wednesday, November 27, Attendance 6

General Offering for the week of December 8 \$1,475.00 Attendance 9 on Sunday
Wednesday, December 11, Attendance 6

General Offering for the week of December 15 \$100.00 Attendance 15 on Sunday
Wednesday, December 18, Attendance 11

General Offering for the week of December 22 \$00.00 Attendance 14 on Sunday

General Offering for the week of December 29 \$1045.00 Attendance 14 on Sunday

General Offering for the week of January 5 \$600.00 Attendance 12 on Sunday
Wednesday, January 7, Attendance 5

**** Special Gifts this week and recently****

Thank you, Katrina for assisting in the Monastery with cleaning, cooking, running errands, spending many hours assisting with typing and clerical skills.

Thank you, Wayne and Glenn for paper products, coffee, and desserts.

Thank you, Lisa for the \$100.00 donation to the SE Tax line. Thank you, Ian for the \$500.00 donation to the SE Tax line. ** If we cross the \$1,000.00 amount, the funds stay in the account, on the line for the SE Tax, for the following budget year. ** Thank you, Kaiden for the \$400.00 donation to the Building Fund. Thank you, Christina and Ian for the \$450.00 to the Building Improvement Fund.

*****TOTAL of all donations for the week of December 29 to January 4 is \$2,495.00, AND there is already \$150.00 received for next week. ***** MANY, MANY, THANKS to EVERYONE and may all our efforts glorify God and assist the spread of the Gospel.

Thank you to all the people who are cooking, baking, and sharing treats during the Nativity Season.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU AGAIN TO THE CHAPEL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE FOR OUTSTANDING WORK ON THE DECORATIONS: Chairperson - Kaiden Benedict, committee helpers: Wayne Harris, Glenn Rathbun, and Katrina Lourdiane. Also, thank you to Glenn and Wayne for the new wreath.

Week of December 22-29 Brother Benedict donated \$700.00 to the Building Fund.

Everyone expresses gratitude to our Church Council Members: Christina McLaughlin - Acting Moderator, Veronica Floyd - Clerk, and Ed Askins - Treasurer for the many hours they each volunteer doing the behind the scenes administrative duties for the Church.. We do appreciate our Council Officers.

To be added to our email list, fill out the email information form at the hospitality table and place it in the offerings/donations box at the door. Internet participants can email rayofhopechurch@aol.com and write "email list" in the Subject box.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON OUR CALENDAR

Sunday, January 12, **EPIPHANY - Orthodox Christmas**(on or near 1-7-25)

January 13, Monday By-Laws work will likely continue 3 - 4:30

January 14, Tuesday 6:30 - 8:00

January 15 Wednesday Noon Mass

January 16, Thursday 6:30 - 8:00 PM COUNCIL MEETING COUNCIL Votes on new By-Laws and 2025 Budget

January 17, Friday Annual Reports to Veronica

Sunday, January 19, **Dr. Martin Luther King and Civil Rights Sunday AND The Baptism Of The Lord** **Annual Reports available.**

January 20, Monday, No events are scheduled for this date.

January 21, Tuesday, Bible Enrichment 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

January 22, Wednesday Noon Mass

SUNDAY JANUARY 26 Mother Mariane Cope and ANNUAL MEETING AND PASSING NEW By-Laws 2025 ?????

Monday, January 27, 2025 at Noon, The Third Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ Annual Prayers At Noon Together on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day will be held on both in-person and online, and online. The prayers are three psalms, a Scripture reading, and a closing prayer. Psalms will be sung congregationally and led by Pastor Br. Shawn Benedict of Ray Of Hope Church.

MARCH 5, 2025 ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP will be presented by the Elmira Area Clergy with up to ten churches participating. It will be hosted by Bethany Lutheran Church 256 S. Walnut St., Elmira, NY 7:00 PM. Details will follow in singing in the choir, and serving in the worship event. Please plan to be in attendance.

Inquiries Class #1 Friday March 7, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Statement of Purpose, Statement of Faith

Inquiries Class #2 Friday March 14, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Worship and Common Threads

Inquiries Class #3 Friday March 21, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Polity & Practice (Liturgical Calendar +)

Inquiries Class #4 Friday March 28, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Human Sexuality and the Bible

Inquiries Class #5 Friday April 4, 2025 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Human Sexuality and the Bible

??? APRIL COUNCIL MEETING BEFORE GREAT VIGIL MEMBERSHIP SO, APRIL 10????

APRIL 13, 2025 Palm Sunday 10:30 AM HOLY WEEK

APRIL 17, 2025 HOLY THURSDAY 7:00 PM

APRIL 18, 2025 PASSION FRIDAY 7:00 PM

APRIL 19, 2023 GREAT VIGIL OF THE RESURRECTION OUR EASTER EVENT MEMBERSHIP

May 11, Sunday Mother's Day and Foundresses Day
June 1, Sunday Ascension Sunday
June 7, Saturday, Pride Elmira
June 8, Sunday Pentecost
June 14, Saturday, Pride Corning
June 15, Sunday, Father's Day and 29th Ordination Anniversary
June 22, Sunday Juneteenth Celebration (19th)
June 29th PRIDE SUNDAY



We Are Sent Forth To Serve

Leader - 2: **SAINTS:** The Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Leader - 2: We bless and praise you, God, for this time of worship we have enjoyed together today. Send us forth now to share what we have experienced with others. We ask you, Almighty God, to bless us with quiet miracles, the warmth of love, and fill us with wonder and peace; (*+*) In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

Leader - 2: We pray Romans Chapter fifteen, verse thirteen together, saying:

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 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.



ENDING SONG G&P 318 **Joy To the World** Text: CM with repeats; based on Psalm 98; Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt. Music: T. Hawkes' Collection of Tunes, 1833; George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759. Joy to the World
ANTIOCH/George Frideric Handel/Isaac Watts

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found,

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,

And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

Joy To the World Text: CM with repeats; based on Psalm 98; Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt. Music: T. Hawkes' Collection of Tunes, 1833; George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759. Tune: ANTIOCH. Onelicense Song #84004. All rights reserved. Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127. Organ Performance Copyright notice: Rev. Clyde McLennan, performer of this collection, has assigned his performer rights in this collection to Hymnary.org. Non-commercial use of these recordings is permitted. Update: MyMIDI Worship Resources is the agent. Used with permission.

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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

Made by you and for you, because we are

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule

Elmira Worship- Sunday 10:30 AM – 380 W. First St. Parsonage/Monastery .
Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 10:15 AM.
Syracuse Worship- looking for a host in Syracuse. For more information
[Click Here](#).

Bible Enrichment- Tuesday 6:30–8 PM-380 W. First St. Parsonage /Monastery.
Or Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 6:15
PM [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. 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, the way it used to be from 7:00 AM to 11:59 PM daily, 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 to pray, read, or visit The Blessed Sacrament. 1-607-280-0374 Our regular services will be blended with live participation in the Chapel, live on Skype and Facebook. To read the information on how to use Skype to participate with us, [Click Here](#).. Recordings of most of our Worship events are on our Facebook page, to see [Click Here](#). We will reopen the Chapel as soon as it is reasonably safe and prudent.

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.

Visit us online:

Our website: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/> Mobile-Friendly website version: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/P2023-Bookmark.htm> Facebook Page (like and follow) [Click Here](#). Our YouTube page: www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyglbtqs

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)

