

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and God's glory will appear over you.

*Isaiah 60:1-2*

### **The Light Has Come**

Today is Epiphany, when foreign dignitaries follow a rising star in the night to find and honor the Christ child. As we begin the new year, there is ample reason to fear the world is trapped in the shadow of hatred and violence. But we have seen the promise of new life, born to us in Christ Jesus. We see it in Scripture. We see it in the healing and hope that Jesus brought to those he met in the flesh, and the healing and hope we have seen in our own lives and the lives around us. We see the promise of new life in the life of this presbytery, even new life after a church has closed, but also as new opportunities to serve rise up before us.

I once wrote a response to the Isaiah prophecy that reflects my hope for the new year, and my confidence in God's provision to us—the light that shines in the darkness, the salvation that overcomes despair, the life that triumphs over death.

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
Arise, shine; for the star shines bright  
shouting hope against the darkest night.  
Arise, shine; for the Creator of the Universe  
hangs a light in the skies  
to celebrate the birth of the Christ child,  
the infinite possibility—God's dream of shalom—  
contained in Mary's little bundle of joy.

Because you were born homeless,  
the lost are found, the poor find their brother.  
Because you were born of Mary,  
women know they give life to forever.  
Because you cry in the night,  
our cries never go unheeded.  
Because cows breathe your lullaby,  
all Creation is saved.  
Because foreign kings sought your star,  
love floods the barriers of race and holy war.  
Because you submit to the waters of baptism,  
the unworthy reveal your glory,  
and hear the words of the Almighty:  
"You are my child, beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
Arise, shine; for the star shines bright  
tearing open the depths of our dark night.  
Arise, shine; for the Creator of the Universe  
hangs a light in the skies  
to celebrate our birth, our rising  
to catch the infinite in our souls.

May we see the light that Christ brings to us. May we be the light that others need to see as they search the night for a path forward. Happy New Year, everybody.

Giving thanks for Immanuel, God with us,

*Wendy*