

Prayer after Receiving [*in unison*]

*We give You thanks for Your beloved Child, Jesus, who You made known  
to the magi from the east, who knew of Him only what the silent stars could tell.  
You have drawn us again to His feet and in Him we have found  
the fulfillment of all our searching.*

### GOING FORTH

✚ **Closing Hymn #257** “Arise, Shine Out, Your Light Has Come” [v.v. 1, 2, 5] DUNEDIN

✚ **Commission, Benediction and Passing of the Peace**

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among people,  
To make music in the heart.*

[~by Howard Thurman]

*God make us a sharer in the promised light.*

*May Christ Jesus fill us with a divine sense of what is right.*

*And may the Holy Spirit be to us like rain that gives life to the fertile earth.*

*We go in peace to love and act as Children of God.*

Postlude “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” by Robert J. Hughes Zoe Vandermeer

**liturgy:** unless otherwise noted, liturgy content is adapted from work by Thom M. Shuman @  
lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com or work by Nathan Nettleton @ LaughingBird.net]

**cover image:** collage by pastor alex

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Rev. Alex da Silva Souto, Pastor | Zoe Vandermeer, Music Director

Brinna Kolitz, Youth Leader | **Ministers:** All members of the New Milford UMC



**New Milford United Methodist Church**



# New Directions

*First Sunday of Epiphany*

*January 03, 2016 at 9:30am*

*You are invited to worship with us in the quiet of prayer, in the joy of song,  
and in the desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ.  
Part of our mission is to be a place for all people. All are welcome here!  
Whatever your gender, age, race, religious background, economic status,  
sexual orientation or condition of ableness, we greet you as a beloved child of God.*

\* The order of service is subject to change at the leading of the Holy Spirit.

*Italicized Bold print* invites congregational response in unison.

† Means you are **invited to stand** if able and comfortable.

## ENTRANCE & PRAISE

**Prelude** “Morning has Broken, Gaelic” arranged by Lani Smith Zoe Vandermeer

### Welcome & News

† **Opening Hymn #220** “Angels from the Realms of Glory” [v.v. 1-2] REGENT SQUARE

### † Call to Worship

We gather wondering, 'where will we find the Babe born in Bethlehem?'

*We will find the Babe in the laughter of children,  
in the wisdom of grandparents.*

We gather asking, 'where will we find the Child of Christmas?'

*We will find the Child where the needy are gifted with hope,  
where the oppressed are set free.*

We gather wanting to know, 'where will we find the Christ who has come for us?'

*We will find our Hope where fear is overwhelmed by grace,  
where hatred is overwhelmed by love, where all people are overwhelmed by joy.*

**Prayer of Invocation** [adapted from prayer “Watching” from Sacredise.com] Pastor Alex

**Hymn of Praise #220** “Angels from the Realms of Glory” [v.v. 3-4] REGENT SQUARE

## PROCLAMATION & RESPONSE

**Children’s Message** “An Epiphany Blessing” Pastor Alex

[from concept by Lauren F. Winner & onthechancelsteps.

All children are invited to proceed to Sunday School for lessons on “Matthew 2:1-12” “Follow the Star”]

*May we be Christ's light in the world. Amen.*

† **Gospel Reading** Matthew 2:1-12 [NRSV]

† **Sung Response #247** “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright” [v.v. 1, 2]  
WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET DER MORGENSTERN

**Reflecting on God’s Message** “Become Light” Pastor Alex

**Second Reading** Isaiah 60:1-6 [NRSV]

**Sung Response #257** “We Meet You, O Christ” STANLEY BEACH

## Prayer for Reconciliation

*We search for Your light, Star Caster,  
but too often end up settling for the dimness of temptation.  
Our motives for seeking to find Christ are not always pure,  
for we expect Him to fulfill our desires, rather than Your hopes for us.*

*We want the gifts of wealth, health, success, fulfillment,  
rather than those of servant-hood, of compassion, of peace.*

*Forgive us, Shaper of our lives, that we are so foolish to put our desires ahead of Your grace.  
Help us to be like those wise people of so long ago, who found hope, instead of a destination;  
who found grace, instead of gratitude; who found salvation, instead of a sign.*

*As we journey with your Son, our Brother and Savior, Jesus Christ,  
fill us with the light of your joy and love.*

## Assurance of Pardon

Up, on your feet! Grace has been poured into our hearts,  
love has flooded our souls, the light of hope shines in us.

*This is the light which has come to all, the light we will carry  
and give to everyone we meet. Thanks be to God. Amen.*

## Invitation to Offering

**Offering of Tithes and Gifts** “Close to Thee” by David Paxton Zoe Vandermeer

### † Doxology #94

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

## Offering Prayer

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*[Communion is a time when we celebrate and share in the presence of the risen Christ around His Table. This is an open Table and all are invited. You need not be a member of this Church or any Church; you need not be baptized. You need only desire a closer encounter with God. John Wesley, the founder of the people called Methodists, believed that it is possible to have a conversion experience during Communion, and so all are welcome at the Lord's Table]*

**The Great Thanksgiving** [please refer to insert]

**Sharing of the Bread & Cup** “Just as I Am” Edward Broughton Zoe Vandermeer  
[video reflection: Psalm 72 by TWOTP]