

*Readings for January 7, 2024*  
*United Church of Strafford, Vermont*

**Responsive Reading** *from Isaiah 60*

**Leader:** Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

**People:** **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.**

**Leader:** Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

**People:** **Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,**

**Leader:** A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.

**People:** **They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.**

*Matthew 2:1-12*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 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.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘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.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 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.”

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. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.