



## Celebrate our Savior's Birth Throughout the Year

I've always found Christmas and New Year to be an interesting time of year. We end our calendar year just one week after we celebrate our Savior's birth. God comes every year, as a baby in a manger, sent to live as a human not only fully human, but fully God. Jesus came not as a traditional king, but as a baby in a manger, essentially a barn. This coming of our King reminds us that God is consistently doing something new. This reminds us that God has no issues breaking our norms and boundaries to assure us that it is time to move forward in God's love. What a wonderful time to end a year in celebration with all our friends and family and to start anew in God's love, knowing that God will always lead us where we need to go.

New Year gives us an opportunity each year to reaffirm our commitment to God and our faith. It gives us the opportunity to step out in faith, remembering that God will lead us every step of the way. It gives us the opportunity to spend some time in prayer thinking about where we are in our faith journey and asking ourselves where we need to be. Spend time in prayer and understanding of your relationship with God. For anyone who is interested in exploring this further I have a covenant prayer that I am willing to share with you. (The prayer is long or I would simply give it here.)

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, it is good to remember that the 12 days of Christmas begin with Christmas Day. They do not end with it. Epiphany, Jan 6, which marks the coming of the Wise Men is the official beginning of the Season after Christmas, the Season of Epiphany. Epiphany is a season of manifestation of the divine. That means that when we say that we have had an Epiphany it means that we have seen God's work in action. We want to give you a gift on the Sunday closest to Epiphany. This gift will come in the form of Star Words or Star Gifts. A Star Word is a word given in a star, because the Magi followed the star. The word is a word given to you by God that you may meditate on throughout 2026. The word may not make much sense to you at first but it will come clear as the year goes by.

My star word for 2025 was challenge. I could not figure out why my word was challenge, but when I went through the call process and began with you, I came to discover that despite that challenge and others, God was reminding me that though God was calling me to do new things, I was not doing them alone. Sometimes when we are challenged by God, and remember that we do not go alone, wonderful things happen.

If you want a Star word, they will be in a basket in the sanctuary on January 4. You may choose a star word from the basket. If you are unable to come to church, but you would like to participate in Star Words in 2026, simply notify the church office. We will choose a word for you and send it by email or by mail. You are not required to participate, but if this Star Word tradition sounds interesting to you, you are more than welcome to choose a star and participate.

May this Christmas and New Year be your best yet as we head into a New Year of worship and service together.

Pastor Michelle