



Isaiah 60: 1-6 (NRSV)

¹Arise, shine;
for your light
has come, and

the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift 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 on their nurses' arms. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A 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.

Opening

- 1. Pray:** O God, who searches all our hearts, you have formed us as a people and claimed us for your own. Let your Spirit impress your truth on our inmost being and help us go closer to your heart in our journey together. Amen.
- 2. Share:** What would be your word of the year, describing your hopes and dreams in the year 2024?

Dive Into the Text

- The prophet Isaiah saw the rising of God's light over the world, and God's people reflecting and radiating God's light and attracting the world. How do you interpret the metaphor of light in this passage? How do you see the light of God in Jesus Christ today?
- In verse 4, God's light will draw together the dispersed exiles of Israel and Judah for their reunion. How has Christ's light reconciled God's people in your life and the church?
- Many Christian traditions celebrate this Sunday as the beginning of the Epiphany season, the manifestation of Jesus Christ to all God's children, including Gentiles represented by the Magi. Did you have any moment of epiphany with a sense of clarity or revelation during the last week? If so, what was the work of the Spirit, and what was your part?



Wesleyan Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

Put me to doing, put me to suffering;

Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

Exalted for you or brought low for you;

Let me be full, let me be empty,

Let me have all things, let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Go Deeper

1. We may forget and go back on what we say, but God never forgets or breaks God's promises, and God's word is the firm foundation on which we stand. It is WE who need a constant reminder as often as possible. What promise of God do you need to remember today?
2. Humans are creatures of habit, and having a regular rhythm of life can provide us with a sense of security. What habits would you like to strengthen in this new year? What habits would you like to move away from?
3. John Wesley, one of the founders of the Methodist movement, took the new year as an opportunity to renew our covenant with God with self-examination and confession that culminates in the renewal of commitment to discipleship—pray together with the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer (see left).

Close in Prayer

Close your time together in prayer.