

## “Light and Dark” acknowledgement for Epiphany Season 2022 at Holden Village

The season of Epiphany begins on January 6<sup>th</sup> and continues until Ash Wednesday. The word Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning “appearing” or “manifestation.” The weeks of Epiphany celebrate the incarnation, the revelation of God in Jesus, the appearance of the Magi, and the unveiling of God’s presence at Jesus’ baptism. In this season, many of the readings, songs, and images use metaphors of light and darkness—connecting Christ the “light of the world” with the changes we experience in the natural world (in the northern hemisphere) as the late winter days lengthen and light becomes more prevalent.

As we begin Sacred Space tonight, we acknowledge that the images of light and darkness that are present in our worship have been used in the Christian Church in ways that harm. We have used language and images in ways that equate black and dark with dirt and sin, and have failed to welcome the treasures of darkness in God’s good creation. We have equated light and whiteness with goodness and purity, and we have failed to notice how we applied these metaphors in ways that oppress.

Through what we have done and what we have left undone, we have enacted and internalized this oppression and done damage to the humanity of Black/African American, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian/Asian American, Arab/Middle Eastern, and other people of color. These images have been used to justify racist actions and structures, reinforce white supremacy, and to subjugate some while uplifting others. We repent of our participation in this legacy, and we claim the transformative power of the Spirit to courageously embrace the learning and commitment birthed from acknowledging these shameful practices.

As we move forward in worship at Holden Village, we will choose images to express more closely what the biblical authors intended with their focus on light and dark. We will lean into and assert the under-emphasized images of holy darkness—images of renewal, rest, mystery, awe, holy fear and transformation. And in some cases, we will let the images stand, as we bring awareness of their limitations and work to bring wholeness to people and communities who experience harm.

Dualistic images and the concept of race itself are of human origin, part of the sin that binds us all. **God** makes no such division. In the dark of night, the quavering shadows of dusk and dawn, or the brightness of day—in the womb, in the tomb, the birthing and the dying, and in our darkest hour, God is fully present. As Psalm 139 reminds us: night and day, dark and light are all one to God—part of God’s wholeness, into which we are all invited.