



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

**January 6, 2016**



The moon is a silver crescent in the clear dark sky this winter night, a reminder of how much time has passed since the full moon of Christmas. On such a night it is easy to picture a mysterious star shining so brightly in the night sky that it drew strangers from afar to the unlikely place where the holy infant lay.

Epiphany draws me, as the Magi were drawn by the light of the star. They journeyed with such clear direction, such certainty, but without really understanding where their travels would lead them. It always seems to me to be the perfect image to lead us into the new year.

I'm grateful for this bright light in the middle of the week that also means returning to work and school routines. I am so blessed to work for the United Church, no complaining here, but it **was** lovely having time for runs and walks, baking and eating, games and doing nothing, and just being with family and friends without our normal schedules. Of course, for those working in congregational settings, this is their time for relaxation, after the busy time of extra services and special events through Advent and Christmas.

These annual patterns of our lives are something that I tend to take for granted, until I read something like the story in this morning's newspaper about the refugee

children starting school in Canada this week for the very first time. For some it is their first time in school at all. For others, "just" the first time in this completely different culture. What a mixture of excitement, relief, and courage those families must be experiencing as they encounter new schools, new languages, and new pretty well everything else in their lives.

We have a big decorative star with a light inside it hanging in the window at our house, and I'm leaving it up through Epiphany. It's a humble reminder of the star that called those ancient ones to travel far to worship a newborn baby, and that still calls us to draw near to the wondrous gift of our saviour Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

Nora

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