



Sharing Star Words

When extraordinary things happen in the sky, we stop and notice. We look for comets, shooting stars, full moons. We watch for rocket launches, satellites drifting in space, and the space station circling our orbit. The Magi were paying

close attention to the sky when they saw something different—a star that shone so brightly, they were compelled to follow it. Just as the Christmas star once shined for all people to see, the light of Christ still shines for all people. May we use these star words as reminders of the Christmas star we invite into our lives so that we might be led toward Jesus Christ.

What Are Star Words? The use of star words, also called “star gifts,” is a prayer practice -connected to Epiphany and the new year - that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are written or printed with stars. These Star Words are then arranged, usually face down in baskets. At some point during worship marking Epiphany, individuals are invited to pick a word and to use that word as a guiding word throughout the year. You are encouraged to place your Star Word somewhere you will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word.

There Are Several Theological Statements Being Made in this Tradition:

1. The Magi followed a star, which ultimately led them to Jesus. Therefore, we too use all the resources we have available to us—including creative prayer practices and intention words for the new year—to move closer to Jesus.
2. We trust that God uses multiple ways to speak to us and guide us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight.
3. It is all too easy to miss God in our daily midst. Having an intention word to consider both in present days, as well as to reflect on at the end of the year, allows for us to see God in ways we may not have seen God before. This is the greatest gift.
4. We know that the most common prayer practice for many involves speaking to God as opposed to silence or contemplation. We believe that star words invite a new

prayer rhythm of reflection and review that can be a powerful new way to connect with God.

5. By not choosing our own Star Words, we practice the spiritual task of receiving. It is not we who are in control in this moment. Instead, we trust that God is present, and we let go of our desire to cultivate or control.

Ways to use Star Words for prayer:

A. Look up the definition of your word, even if it is a word, you know well. You may even look into the etymology of the word, and how its meaning has changed throughout history. If you drew a non-English word, do as much research as you can into the meaning of the word in its original culture.

B. What does this word remind you of? Does it recall any memories or experiences? How might God be speaking to you through this word?

C. See if you can find your word—or a synonym—in the Bible. What scripture passages can you find? How is the word used in these passages? Are there other scripture passages that remind you of your word?

D. Consider are there scriptures that you would connect with your Star Word?

E. Write or speak aloud a prayer using your word.

F. Return to your Star Word regularly to see where and how it is showing up in this new year.

Happy New Year!!

May your Star Word be a blessing and ever-ready traveling partner in 2026. *Pastor Sharyl*