

**New St. James Presbyterian Church, London, Ontario**  
**Sunday, January 3, 2016**  
**Rev. Andrew Reid**  
**Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Matthew 2:1-12**  
**“Following the wandering star”**

Once upon a time, long, long ago, in a country far, far from here, a group of people set out on a journey. It would be a long, hard journey, so they took only what they could carry with them. They did not know where their journey would end. All they knew was that this was a journey they must make. So they set out, and travelled a long way, over hard country and through strange countries. Until they reached the end of their journey.

Or so they thought. But it wasn't the end, and they had to set out again and travel farther before their journey came to an end. And when it did, they got down on their knees and they worshipped the God who had brought them there.

Once upon a time, another group of people set out on a journey. This was not the first journey some of them had made, for they had had to leave their homes some time before and travel to another land. But now they had to travel to yet another land. They did not have much, but they could only take what they could carry with them. It was a long, tiring journey, and it took a lot of preparation before they could begin, but they got it all arranged and they set out.

They reached the end of their journey in a land that seemed very strange. The people spoke a strange language, and they lived in very different houses, and the weather was very different from what they had been used to in their home. But people welcomed them and helped them settle in to their new home. And one of the first things they did was find a church where they could thank God for travelling with them and looking after them.

Right now, in many countries across the world, people are setting out on journeys. Some of them are setting out on journeys they have chosen to make. But many of them are setting out on journeys because they must. Life has become too hard and too dangerous where they live. And they want to find a safe place where they can live in peace and freedom. Some of them are taking great risks to travel, in boats that are not safe and with people who say they are going to help and take their money, but don't help at all.

But others are good, caring people, and are helping the travellers on their journeys. And more good, caring people are waiting to welcome them when they reach the end of their journeys. Many of these good, caring people are followers of Jesus Christ, just like many of the people who are making the journeys.

The people who set out on the journey once upon a time, long, long ago - these are the wise men from the east that we read about in the Bible. They followed the star that they had seen at its rising. And they found the Saviour of the world. All because they were willing to go where God led them.

The people who set out on the journey not so long ago – these are the people who have become our Karen friends here in New St James, in London, and across Ontario. They have been a blessing to us as I hope we have been a blessing to them. And we give thanks to God for what we have done together.

The people who are setting out on journeys right now – they are refugees from Syria and Lebanon and Iraq and camps in Thailand. They are looking for a new life in safety and peace.

We thank God for what we have here, and for the people who have travelled here already. We pray for the refugees everywhere as they set out on their journey to a new home. And we prepare to welcome them when they arrive with us very soon.

Because we are all God's children. We are all followers of Jesus Christ. We are all on a journey together. It is a journey that has brought us together here today. We give thanks to God for all that God has done for us. We give thanks to God for all the blessings God has given us. We give thanks to God for the people God has brought into our lives. And we pray for God's blessing for each one of us as we continue on our journey, until we all reach the end of our journey in God's eternal kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy.

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This sermon was preached as part of the Da See Bli See Poh celebration of the London Karen Community. As it was preached, it was translated into the Karen language by Rebecca Aye.