

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Epiphany Sunday
January 5, 2025

*** Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

GATHERING BELL

At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

PRELUDE

Three Kings of Orient, Janet Linker

Shannon Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

**Whoever you are...and wherever you are on life's journey...
you are welcome here!**

OPENING REFLECTION

Paul

CALL TO WORSHIP

Ellen Bradley

When you feel the fog of boredom, let the light of your soul shine. A true seeker never runs out of spiritual journeys

May the light within us drive us out of the ruts of routines to glimpse the light of the transcendent.

When people have sought the Divine, they discover their heart longs for God, for good, for life, for creative encounters with all that is holy.

We do not have to travel to Bethlehem to experience the light of goodness and God-ness. Our heart points us toward many roads of grace and growth.

Holy One, help us to follow the stars that shine for us.

Holy One, help us to be the Magi of this time and place.

**HYMN NCH 160, vs 1,2,4

All

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World) ***

Hark! the herald angels sing, Jesus, the light of the world;
Glory to the Christ-child bring, Jesus the light of the world.

refrain

We will follow the light, beautiful light,
come where the dewdrops of mercy are bright,
Shine all around us by day and by night,
Jesus the light of the world.

Joyful, all you saints arise, Jesus the light of the world;
Join the triumph of the skies, Jesus the light of the world. *refrain*

Hail the Bearer of God's peace! Jesus the light of the world;
Hail the Sun of righteousness! Jesus the light of the world. *refrain*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Paul

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts

as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Ellen

OFFERTORY

Go, Tell It on the Mountain, arr. Joe Ridenour

Choir

****DOXOLOGY** (tune: *St. Anne*)

**Praise God who calls us to arise
and journey through the night,
who by a star still gleaming guides
the way to Christ our Light!**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Ellen

God of ever-present stars, guide our feet to places of pilgrimage. For some this very ground is holy ground. For others it's the paths in the Monument. For some it is the light within the eyes of those they love. Holy One, we are grateful for the many places of holy ground in our life. AMEN

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:1-12

Ellen

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

MESSAGE

"The Magi as Role Models"

Paul

****HYMN**

As the Magi Scanned the Heavens (tune: *Holy Manna*)

All

As the Magi scanned the heavens looking for a cosmic sign,
give us faith to search creation for a glimpse of truth divine.
As the Magi made their journey though their end remained unclear,
guide us down the unknown highways, choosing wonder over fear.

As the Magi sought out wisdom in a strange and foreign land,
lead us out beyond our comfort in our quest to understand.

As the Magi found their Savior in a helpless baby's face,
give us eyes to see your glory in the most unlikely place.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

All are welcome who practice the way of compassion.

Paul

**HYMN NCH 164 *Arise, Your Light Is Come*

All

Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!

Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the brokenhearted ones and comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing: God's power will make us strong.

**BENEDICTION

Paul

**SUNG BENEDICTION *World Peace Prayer*

All

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace,
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe!

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

RECESSIONAL *As With Gladness Those of Old*, Wayne L. Wold

Shannon

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- ◇ *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. Traditional spiritual arr by Joe Ridenour, © 1977.
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Today's Worship Leaders

preacher
liturgist
musicians

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
Ellen Bradley
Shannon Jones, Karen Caton, Chancel Choir