

**ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH**  
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY  
**WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND**  
**UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE**

**January 5, 2025**

EPIPHANY // IN-PERSON & ONLINE SERVICE

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Liturgist: Lisa Cooper Green

[CC] = closed-captioned

**Have your juice and bread/crackers prepared for holy communion.**

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**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME**

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PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer  
Accompanist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“We Three Kings of Orient Are”

GTG #151

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

*Refrain*

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light!*

Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign.

*Refrain*

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh;  
prayer and praising gladly raising, worshipping God Most High.

*Refrain*

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

*Refrain*

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice:  
Alleluia! Alleluia! sounds through the earth and skies.

*Refrain*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.  
**Nations shall come to your light and rulers to the brightness of your rising.**

OPENING PRAYER

**Eternal God, by a star you led Magi to the worship of your Son. Guide the nations of the earth by your light, that the whole world may see your glory; we pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

SCRIPTURE READING #1

Matthew 2:1 – 8

ANTHEM

“Jesus, the Light of the World”  
(George Elderkin)

SJU Chancel Choir

Hark the herald angels sing  
Jesus, the light of the world  
Glory to the newborn King  
Jesus, the light of the world

*Chorus:*

*We'll walk in the light, beautiful light  
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright  
Oh, shine all around us by day and by night  
Jesus, the light of the world*

Joyful, all ye nations rise  
Jesus, the light of the world  
Join the triumph of the skies  
Jesus, the light of the world

*Chorus*

Hail, the heaven born Prince of Peace  
Jesus, the light of the world  
Hail, the Sun of righteousness  
Jesus, the light of the world

*Chorus*

SCRIPTURE READING #2

Matthew 2:9 – 12

TIME WITH  
YOUNG DISCIPLES

Pastor Steve Nofel

MESSAGE

“GOD’S STAR”

Pastor Steve Nofel

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYER OF GENEROSITY

**God of promise, use our gifts as signs of what your coming means for us. Help us join with Jesus in working for justice as we commit ourselves to his quest for peace. Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to The Lord’s Table

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! They will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God. This is a foretaste of the Kingdom.

According to Luke, when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples on the Road to Emmaus, he took the bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him in the breaking of the bread.

This is the Lord's Table. Our Savior invites those who trust him, who need him this day to share the feast which he has prepared.

### The Great Thanksgiving

Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to God.**

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**It is a right, good, and a joyful thing, to give you thanks and praise.**

Holy God, we praise you. Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad. We bless you for creating the whole world, for your promises to your people Israel, and for Jesus Christ in whom your fullness dwells.

Born of Mary, he shares our life. Eating with sinners, he welcomes us. Guiding his children, he leads us. Visiting the sick, he heals us. Dying on the cross, he saves us. Risen from the dead, he gives new life. Living with you, he prays for us.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy One, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in your holy name.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

With thanksgiving we take this bread and this cup and proclaim the death and resurrection of our Lord. Receive our sacrifice of praise. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us that this meal may be a communion in the body and blood of our Lord as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Make us one with Christ and with all who share this feast. Unite us in faith, encourage us with hope, inspire us to love, that we may serve as your faithful disciples until we feast at your table in glory. We praise you, eternal God, through Christ your Word made flesh, in the holy and life-giving Spirit, now and forever.

And now help us to pray as Jesus taught us ...

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Words of Institution

The Breaking of Bread and Sharing of Cup

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took the bread. He gave God thanks and praise. He broke the bread and said to his disciples, "Take this all of you and eat it. This is my body broken for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you eat it, do this in memory of me."

Then he took the cup. Again, he gave God thanks and praise. He gave the cup to the disciples and said, "Take this all of you and drink it. This is the cup of my blood. The new and everlasting covenant given for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me."

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim his saving death and resurrection until he comes again.

Come, all is prepared. The gifts of God for the people of God.

COMMUNION HYMN

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

GTG #144

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:  
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there;  
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;  
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Good, good God, by your Spirit, may peace descend upon us that we may follow Jesus with grateful hearts. God of all nations, in the gracious name of Jesus Christ, your Son, by the power of your Holy Spirit, we pray forever and ever. Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

"Siyahamba"  
(We Are Marching)

TFWS #2235

*Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos*  
We are marching in the light of God

We are praying...

We are dancing...

We are singing...

BENEDICTION

**CALENDAR: SCHEDULED FOR WEEK OF JAN 5 - JAN 12**

**All meetings are via Zoom (unless otherwise noted).**

All meetings are open to the members and affiliates of SJU unless otherwise noted. Members are encouraged to connect to, engage, and invest in the life and leadership of this Body of Christ, the church! Contact [SJUColumbia@gmail.com](mailto:SJUColumbia@gmail.com) if you wish to receive meeting and contact information on anything below:

Sun, 1/5	8:30 am	CHRISTIAN APPLICATION
	10:30 am	WORSHIP SERVICE ( <i>in-person &amp; streaming</i> ) ( <i>Liturgist: Lisa Cooper Green</i> )
	7:00 pm	SUNDAYS AT SEVEN (PM!) FELLOWSHIP
Tue, 1/7	7:30 pm	PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Wed, 1/8	2:00 pm	CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE ( <i>Room 18</i> )
Sun, 1/12	8:30 am	CHRISTIAN APPLICATION
	10:30 am	WORSHIP SERVICE ( <i>in-person &amp; streaming</i> ) ( <i>Liturgist: TBA</i> )
	7:00 pm	SUNDAYS AT SEVEN (PM!) FELLOWSHIP

*Readings are NRSV unless otherwise noted. CEB=Common English Bible;  
CEV=Contemporary English Version; KJV=King James Version; MSG=The Message;  
NIV=New International Version; NLT=New Living Translation; TIB=The Inclusive Bible*



**Matthew 2:1 – 8**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> "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."

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> 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.'

**Matthew 2:9 – 12**

<sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.