

THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE
A United Church of Christ

THE CELEBRATION OF EPIPHANY
(as in “fantasy,” “fantastic,” “phantasmagorical”)

January 5, 2025
10:00 A.M.

God’s Creation, Never Done!

Today we celebrate “Epiphany,” a celebration of light and revelation. The name comes from a Greek word (“phos”) that means “light.” To have an “epiphany” is to have the light come on, to see things in a new light. For Christians, the first Epiphany was when the Wise Ones finally found their way to Bethlehem and saw the Light of the World in the dust of the stable. Today the children (and a few adults) lead us on that journey to Bethlehem—and beyond—telling the story through the eyes and voices of all creation.

The service reflects United’s ongoing commitment to learn from and care for God’s creation. We invite you to open your hearts and souls so that, like the birds, camels, cats, sheep, dogs, and all the rest of creation that first Christmas, we too might “see the light”—and God’s Light in a new way. May we join with creation to sing God’s praise for the birth of Christ and treasure the gift of Life and Light God gave us at Christmas and gives us every day.

WE GATHER

Gathering Music

Winter Morning in Istanbul
We Three Kings of Orient Are

Fazil Say
John H. Hopkins, Jr./arr. Phillip Keveren

*Introit

Vamos todos a Belén
(*Please rise in body or spirit.)

Trad. Mexican American Folk Song

Vamos todos a Belén, con amor y gozo;
adoremos al Señor nuestro redentor. (2x)

(Let us all go to Bethlehem, with love and joy,
we will adore our Redeemer Lord.)

Welcome and Sharing Our Life and Ministry

Breathing in God’s Gifts

*Sharing Those Gifts and Regathering

Vamos todos a Belén, con amor y gozo;
adoremos al Señor nuestro redentor. (2x)

Welcoming of Visitors and Breathing in God’s Gifts Again

Musical Call to Worship

The Call to Worship (congregation in bold)

Come, Shepherds, what do you seek?

Light in the shadows, love in this world. *Luz en las sombras, amor en el mundo.*

Come, Rulers, what do you see?

Luz en las sombras, amor en el mundo.

Come, everyone, what will you find?

Luz en las sombras, amor en el mundo.

Come, people, rejoice in the light and sing of God’s love!

*Hymn

132

Joy to the World! (1-2)

Isaac Watts/Antioch

WE PREPARE

*In a Prayer for Epiphany from the Greek Orthodox Tradition

What shall we offer thee, O Christ,

Who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as human?

Every creature made by thee offers thee thanks.

The angels offer thee a hymn;

The heavens a star; The magi, gifts;

The shepherds, their wonder;

The earth, its cave;

The wilderness, the manger:

And we offer thee our hearts and our souls, our spirits and our flesh.

O God from everlasting, have mercy upon us.

Receive our lives, our songs, and our prayers this day. Amen.

*In a Time of Silent Prayer

*In our Song of Praise

132

Joy the World! (st. 3)

Isaac Watts/Antioch

(Preschoolers are invited to the Nurture Center. They may also stay with their parents for the Readers' Theater.)

WE EXPERIENCE

God's Creation, Never Done!

(Written by Talitha Arnold, based on a play by Art Garfunkel and edited into a Readers' Theater by Karen Wilbanks.)

A Word of Introduction

Carol

126

Angels, from the Realms of Glory (1-3)

Regent Square

Another Way to Sing the Story

Carol

151

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (1-3)

Huron Carol

In Bethlehem

The Innkeeper's Cats (and the Christmas Donkey, Ox, Dog, and Birds)

Carol

The First Noel

Traditional English

***The first Noel, the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay,
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.***

Noel, noel, noel, noel, born is the King of Israel.

***They looked up and saw a star, shining in the East beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light and so it continued both day and night.***

Noel, noel, noel, noel, born is the King of Israel.

In the East

The Poem of the Camels

Carol

We Three Kings

Orient

***We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.***

***Glorious now behold him arise, Christ and God and Sacrifice;
Alleluia, alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies!***

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

Back in Bethlehem

Carol

A Candle Is Burning

(tune: Away in a Manger, text: Sandra Dean, 1986)

*A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in a winter's dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heav'n's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.*

*A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
candle to signal that conflict must cease:
for Jesus has come to show us the way;
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.*

In Jerusalem

Herod and the Dust Angels

In the Safety of Egypt

Storyteller: So across the broad desert the family walked on,
Until safely in Egypt they found a new home.

Congregation: **And in that new land, as happened before,
All creation showed kindness and more.
A cat kept him warm and a dog kept him safe,
Birds sang him to sleep and a cow gave him milk,
And the child dreamed in the night of a donkey that snored.**

Storyteller: The stars lit the heavens, the rains blessed the earth,
The wind sang through the trees and the fire warmed the hearth.

Congregation: **All creatures, all elements had rejoiced at his birth,
And they continued to bless all his days on this earth!**

Storyteller: Just as Jesus needed all creatures, both great ones and small,
So we need this world and its animals all;

Storyteller: Water and wind, fire and earth,
All played a part in our Savior's birth.

Congregation: **So let us care for this world as God cares for it, too.**

Children: For Jesus loved this whole world and we love it, too!

*Carol

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Regent Square

*Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly, your prayers attending, Christ beside you shall appear.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, give thanks and sing.*

*All the world now join in praising, God's Creation, never done.
Evermore your voices raising, to the eternal Three-in-One.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, give thanks and sing!*

WE RESPOND

Through a Prayer for Epiphany and the Lord's Prayer

As the Wise Ones of old followed the star:

Help us, O God, to follow the leading of your Spirit.

As they were led to the Savior:

Lead us, O God, to your Way, your Truth, and your Life.

As all creation offered your love,

Empower us, O God, to offer that love to others.

As Herod was kept from doing him harm:

Keep us, O God, from doing violence to your people or your creation.

As your Love shines forever as the Light of the world:

Shine forth in us, O God, that we may be light of our world in this time.

Come, O Holy One,

Fill us now and always with your light.

Gracious One, you who hear the prayers of every human heart and mind, hear now our silent prayers of praise, thanksgiving, healing, and blessing.

(A time of silent prayer.)

As you are the One who listens and who hears, help us also to be a people who listen and who hear. In this New Year, may we listen to one another as kindred and neighbors in this church community, throughout the human family, and in all creation. Most of all, help us to hear your word in our lives, a word of life and transforming love. This we ask in your name and pray together the prayer that Jesus Christ, the Child of Bethlehem, taught us to pray saying:

(Please pray a version of the Lord's Prayer familiar to you.)

Presenting Our Gifts

All Things Bright and Beautiful

John Rutter

Prayer of Dedication

Amazing God, in joy, wonder, and gratitude, we bring before you the gifts of what we have and what we are. Transform these gifts and our lives so that the light of your love shines through. Go with us into the New Year ahead to our schools, our homes, our places of work and play. Whomever we meet, open our eyes to see you in them as the Wise Ones saw you as a child in a manger. As they opened and shared their gifts, open our hearts and our hands to share your love with your people. As all creation sang your praises, may our lives reflect your glory and your love. Amen.

WE GO IN PEACE

*Hymn 154

Go Tell It on the Mountain

African American

*Benediction

*Musical Benediction

Go Tell It on the Mountain (refrain)

African American

WELCOME TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE!

We are glad you have joined us for this Epiphany Sunday. Please join us also for the Fellowship Time. Children are invited to share with the adults and youth in the whole worship service. (The full Children's Ministry program begins next Sunday.) Childcare for preschoolers is in the Nurture Center. Again, welcome!

Sharing leadership are Rev. Talitha Arnold; Children's Ministry Chair Karen Wilbanks; Director of Music Bradley Ellingboe; Michelle Schumann, Pianist; the "Drop-in Choir;" and Readers' Theater Storytellers Jennifer Graves, Craig Hay, and Weston Puglisi. A number of United's children and youth provided sound effects with assistance from Gail Ansheles. Livestreamed by Media Coordinator Elijah Marquez with volunteer Frank Wilbanks. You were greeted by Rosemary Thompson, Louise Cavatta, Diane Darby, Pam Hyde, and Sunday Aide Luis Zapata.

Stay after worship today and help **assemble Church World Service Refugee Kits** in the Kitchen Room for children and families in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan.

Next Sunday: "Baptism and Communion, Renewal and Healing"

The traditional story for the First Sunday of Epiphany is Jesus' baptism at the River Jordan. Next Sunday, Jan. 12, we'll share that story in both services and as a congregation renew our own vows of baptism to let our lives be shaped in the new year by God's grace and courage. Both services will also include Communion. At the close of the 10:00 service (after the Benediction), there will be an opportunity—for those who choose—to come forward for prayers for healing with the anointing and laying on of hands. All welcome!

Sing with the Choir this Winter!

January is a great time to start with the Sanctuary Choir. Contact Director of Music Bradley Ellingboe for more info. (unitedchurch.brad@gmail.com)

Reading Bonhoeffer in America 2025

Sunday, Jan. 12 (11:15 am)

The Forum series starts next Sunday with a documentary about Bonhoeffer's life and work, followed by a light lunch and discussion. Subsequent forums will focus on the essay. To help us plan, please sign up in the Community Room.

Pretty Good Guys Explore "The Greatest Prayer" Wednesday, Jan. 8 (10:30 am)

Join with other United men to engage a challenging book by John Dominic Crossan about the central prayer of the Christian faith. All welcome! (Talitha Arnold, 505-988-3295)

Resiliency & Hope: Good News from The Gospel of Mark Thursdays 8:00 am (MT) on Zoom

As we start a new year, what does a Gospel that's 2,000+ years old have to offer us in our time? Quite a lot actually! Join this weekly Zoom study to deepen your faith and share the journey. People tune in from all around the country.