

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Pastor
Louis Allison, Tech Director
Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

January 4, 2026

9:45 AM

Epiphany & Star Word Sunday
In the Dark Streets Shineth: The Light Revealed

Thank you for worshiping with us today. If you are a guest, we invite you to take a moment to complete a visitor's card located in the back of the pew in front of you and place it in the offering plate when it is passed. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary.

We welcome infants and children and all their wiggles & voices in our worship! For your comfort, we also have a children's corner in the back narthex where your child can relax and play and you can still participate in the worship experience. We have children's books and activity bags for them to enjoy! Additionally, after the children's message, children from 3 years old—6th grade are invited to participate in Sunday school in our classroom downstairs. They can choose to attend Sunday school or return to their seats to sit with their parents. Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS
JOYS & CONCERNS

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

PRELUDE *We Three Kings with Fur Elise* Traditional

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Arise, people of God—your light has come!

C: We gather in the glow of a light that reaches farther than we can see.

L: In the darkest streets, God's radiance breaks open the night.

C: The Light is revealed—guiding all who seek, welcoming all who wander.

L: Like travelers from distant lands, we follow the glimmers of grace before us.

C: We come with open hearts, ready for the unexpected ways God will shine.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

L: May this morning awaken us to wonder, to discovery, to revelation.

C: And may the light of Christ lead us beyond boundaries—toward hope, toward joy, toward the Holy Child.

L: Come, let us worship the One who still shines in our darkest streets.

C: We come to worship, to listen, and to follow the Light.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Holy God of revelation,

C: You meet us in the dim places and call us to lift our eyes to Your light. As You guided wise travelers by a star, guide us this morning by Your Spirit. Open our hearts to the unexpected, stretch our imaginations beyond the boundaries we build, and shine Your truth on the paths we cannot yet see. In this time of worship, reveal Your presence, renew our seeking, and lead us ever closer to Christ, the Light who shines in every dark street. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN NO. 254 UM HYMNAL** (see next page)

We Three Kings



*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

We Three Kings

John Hopkins, Jr. 1857

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing gifts we
 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I bring to
 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense owns a
 4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume, breathes a life of
 5. Glorious now be - hold him a - rise; King and God and

7
 tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain,
 crown him a - gain, King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er,
 De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing, voic - es rais - ing,
 gath - er - ing gloom sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing,
 sac - ri - fice: Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

13 *Refrain*
 fol - low - ing yon - der star. O star of won - der, star of light,
 o - ver us all to reign.
 wor - ship - ing God on high.
 sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 sound through the earth and skies.

23
 star with roy - al beau - ty bright, westward leading, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us

32
 to thy perfect light.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

***TIME OF CONFESSION**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

TIME OF CONFESSION

P: Holy God of light and shadow,

C: we confess that we do not always follow the glimmers You place before us. Sometimes we shrink back into familiar darkness, afraid of what Your light might reveal. Sometimes we cling to our own plans and expectations, like Herod grasping for control, rather than trusting the way You lead. When Your light stretches beyond our boundaries, we confess how quickly we draw lines. When You call us to wonder and discovery, we confess how often we choose certainty instead. Shine on the hidden corners of our hearts, O God. Reveal what needs healing. Lift what is heavy. Guide us, once again, by the star of Your mercy.

REMINDER OF GRACE

P: Hear the good news: The same God who guided travelers by starlight now guides us by grace. No darkness is too deep, no fear too strong, no distance too great for the Light of Christ to reach you. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, renewed, and freed to follow the light that reveals life.

C: Thanks be to God. The light shines, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Amen.

ACT OF PRAISE NO. 164 (black hymnal, vs. 1 & 4) *Arise, Your Light is Come*

ALL SING: 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! The mountains burst in song! Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Travis Pinci

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

STAR WORDS

INTRODUCTION TO STAR WORDS

LITANY TO RECEIVE STAR WORDS

P: People of God, lift your hearts to the Light of Christ.

C: We open ourselves to God's leading.

P: May these words—simple and yet full of possibility—become companions on your journey, guiding you toward wonder, compassion, courage, and the holy surprises God has in store.

C: May we receive our words with open hands and open hearts.

P: As you draw and receive your star, listen for the quiet nudges of the Spirit. Carry your word into this new year. Let it rest where you can see it. Let it shine where you most need light.

C: God of revelation, bless these words and bless our seeking. Guide us by Your light, now and in all our days. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 60:1-6 (CEB)

SERMON

Sister Marianne Brock

HYMN OF THE DAY NCH NO. 159 (black hymnal, see below)

As With Gladness Those of Old

As With Gladness Those of Old


William C. Dix, 1861

Conrad Kocher, 1838

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano



1. As with glad-ness those of old did the guid-ing star be-hold;
2. As with joy - ful steps they sped to that low - ly man-ger bed,
3. As they of-fered gifts most rare at that man-ger plain and bare,
4. Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - ery day keep us in the nar-row way;

5

As with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam-ing bright;
There to bend the knee be-fore One whom heaven and earth a - dore;
So may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,
And when mor-tal things are past, bring our ran-somed souls at last

9

So, true Morn-ing Star, may we ev - er-more your splen-dor see.
So may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek your mer - cy seat.
All our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glo - ry hide.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Let us gather our hearts now in prayer Holy God, You shine Your light into our darkest streets, revealing hope where we thought hope had ended, guiding us toward places we never expected to go. On this Epiphany morning, we lift our prayers to You—trusting that Your light is stronger than any shadow.

P: We pray for our children and youth—for all who are growing, learning, questioning, and discovering what it means to follow Your light. Guide them with curiosity and courage. Let Your hope be born again in their hearts.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

P: We pray for all who, like the Wise Men, are searching for direction—those facing big decisions, those beginning new chapters, those longing for purpose or clarity in the year ahead. Let Your light fall gently before them—one step at a time, enough for the moment, enough to follow.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

P: And we pray for ourselves—that the Star Word resting in our hands or pockets would become a holy companion this year. Help us notice its invitations, listen without fear, and trust that Your Spirit will reveal its meaning in Your perfect time.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

P: Holy God, Your light breaks into our lives not only with healing but with joy. We give thanks for celebrations, milestones, answered prayers, new beginnings, and the quiet blessings that carry us through our days. We lift now the joys of our community...

(Pause for the congregation to lift joys aloud.)

P: Thank you for the light these joys bring.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

P: We pray for Your church throughout the world—for every community seeking to follow Your star of justice, every congregation listening for Your guidance, and especially for this beloved community at Mt. Zion. Where we are weary, strengthen us. Where we are uncertain, guide us. Where we are divided, unite us in Your love.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

P: We pray for our world—a world still caught between fear and wonder, between grasping for control and longing for peace. Shine Your light on leaders and nations, on places torn by violence or war, on communities hungry for safety, stability, and dignity. Lead us toward paths where justice and mercy meet.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

P: We pray for those who journey through shadows—those who are ill, recovering, grieving, or overwhelmed; those living with depression or anxiety; those whose bodies or spirits are in need of healing. And we pray for all whose hearts are heavy today—for burdens we carry quietly, for worries spoken and unspoken, for those situations that feel too big for us but never too big for You. We lift now the concerns of our community...

(Pause for spoken concerns.)

P: Give us light when we feel discouraged and filled with grief.

C: God of revelation, shine Your light on us.

P: God of Hope, gather all our prayers—spoken and silent—and kindle them into light. Help us to trust that even now, your dawn is breaking. Through Christ, the Light of the World, we pray, so together we join in the prayer Christ has taught us..

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

TIME FOR SHARING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

arr. Fettke

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

L: Generous God,

C: as the Wise Men laid their gifts before You, we lay ours before You now.

Bless what we bring, multiply it for the sake of Your kingdom, and let Your light shine through every act of generosity. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN NO. 160 NCH** (black hymnal, see next page)

Jesus, the Light of the World

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

Jesus, the Light of the World

Evelyn Simpson-Curenton

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. Hark! the her-ald an-gels sing, Jesus, the light of the world;
 2. Joy-ful, all you saints a - rise, Jesus, the light of the world;
 3. Christ, by highest heaven a - dored, Jesus, the light of the world;
 4. Hail the Bear-er of God's peace! Jesus, the light of the world;

8

Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring, Jesus, the light of the world.
 Join the triumph of the skies, Jesus, the light of the world.
 Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Word, Jesus, the light of the world.
 Hail the Sun of righ-teous - ness! Jesus, the light of the world.

16 *Refrain*

We will follow the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mercy are

24

bright, Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Jesus the light of the world.

32

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

***BENEDICTION¹**

P: As you go from this place, may the Light that reaches beyond all boundaries shine before you and within you. May your Star Word become a companion on the journey—a reminder to look for God in the small glimmers as well as the bright revelations.

L: And just as God called the Wise Men by a star, may God call you by name and send you in peace. May Christ, the Light of the World, illuminate your path and dwell within your heart. May the Holy Spirit guide your seeking and reveal holy surprises along the way.

P: Go now in the light and love of God, with courage, curiosity, and hope.

C: Amen.

POSTLUDE

Rise Up and Serve the Lord

by Harris

Special Thanks to our Advent Team!!!

Elaine Bevivino

Lana Fritz

Deb Herlocker

Cindy Hogentogler

Melody Stine

Thank you to Sister Marianne Brock for presiding over worship today.

Thank you to Lee & Patsy Brown for providing our Christmas tree and the wreaths on our front door!

Welcome Team Members—Vanessa Bicher

Liturgist—Deb Herlocker

Tech Team—Jack Herlocker, John Kollasch

*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.



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