



LA JOLLA
UNITED METHODIST

Protesting Fear: Choosing Another Road

Sunday, January 5, 2025

Epiphany Sunday

www.lajollaunitedmethodist.org

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Gathering Music

Noel

Arr. Mark Hayes
©2023 Thankyou Music

Call to Worship

One: Children of God, we enter the new year as we ended the last: gathered together for worship!

All: We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light.

One: The prophet Isaiah calls to us from deep in the past: "Arise, shine; for your light has come."

All: We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light.

One: The magi followed a star to find a small child who is the Light of the world.

All: We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light.

One: So, let us receive the call of Isaiah and follow the example of the magi as we begin this new year turning our faces to God whose glory shows up among us as a vulnerable child, a poor carpenter, and a foot-washing servant who is the salvation of the world.

All: We gather to seek, find, and follow the Light today and every day. Amen.

Welcome

† Opening Hymn

God Rest You Merry Gentlemen

W & S 3052

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
for Jesus Christ our Savior was born upon this day,
to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.

Refrain

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

2. In Bethlehem in Judah this blessed babe was born,
and laid within a manger upon this blessed morn:
for which his mother Mary did nothing take in scorn.

Refrain

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

3. From God our heavenly Father a blessed angel came,
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.

Refrain

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

4. The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,
and left their flocks afeeding in tempest, storm, and wind,
and went to Bethlehem straightway, the blessed babe to find.

Refrain

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

5. Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
this holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface.

Refrain

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Blessing for Young Hearts

Prayers of the People

*A Pastor will begin a time of prayer and name those for whom our congregation is praying.
Online Worshipers may type prayer requests in the Live Chat, taking care for privacy.*

Pastoral Prayer

WE HEAR THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12 (NRSVue)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi 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.

Scriptural Response

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God! Amen**

Special Music

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Arr. Matt Johnson

Joyce Theilacker, Solo

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Message

Protesting Fear: Choosing Another Road

Rev. Bob Rhodes

WE RESPOND TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Response to the Word

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Shchedryk

Arr. Phillip Kevern

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† Doxology

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer of Confession

One: Gracious God, we would like to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God's love into this world. We would like to be those who cared for God in infant vulnerability; who tickled and cuddled and comforted the growing child, that he might know love and safety. And yet, merciful God, we must recognize all the times we are more like Herod. Whenever we, in our actions or in our inactions, find our own need for control more compelling than the needs of others for health and safety. Whenever we cling to the security of comfort and advantage and favorable circumstance, rather than standing up for the rights of the oppressed and the forgotten. Whenever we are complicit in the harming of innocents for the sake of profit, or power, or because we fear to know, and to change, the injustices of this world.

All: Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another, and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives as true disciples in your name, without counting the cost. In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way, we pray. Amen.

One: God's light is present in this world. God's light is present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness. God's love is present in the star, in all that guides us to love.

All: God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it. God's grace is in the world, and our missteps will not overcome it. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Thanksgiving and Holy Communion Musical Setting W & S 3171
Online worshipers are invited to select elements including bread and juice (or similar) from their homes to participate in Holy Communion. Please wait until directed before receiving your elements.

The Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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.

Communion Song *The First Noel* UMH 245

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

Refrain

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

2. 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.

Refrain

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

3. And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.

Refrain

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

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.

Refrain

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

5. Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee,
and offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Refrain

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

Prayer After Communion

WE FOLLOW CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

† **Closing Hymn**

We Three Kings

UMH 254

1. 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 light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

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

Refrain

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

3. Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshipping God on high.

Refrain

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

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

Refrain

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

5. Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.

Refrain

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

† **Benediction**

Postlude

Flowers: in celebration of the Church Office Staff
Liturgist: Debbie Lynn
Organist: Robert Wuertz
Pianist: Rebecca Cosford
Ushers: Steve Gray, Peter McCreight, Don Rushing, Lon Showley
Communion Servers: Colin, Evan & Paul Crowder
Tech Team: AJ Prat, Cam Rhodes

LJUMC Ministry Team

Rev. Bob Rhodes, Lead Pastor; Bob Wuertz, Music Ministries Director;
Theresa Erb, Office Manager; Emilio Valente, Information Technology Director;
Erin Wyr, NS Executive Director