



**Sunday, January 2, 2022**

**St. Mark's/St. James United Church of Christ**

Supply Pastor: Rev. Dr. Julie Mavity Maddalena

Organist: Kathy Jurk/Randy Sohn      Readers: Sandy Perronne/Deb LaDuke

Meditative Music

Bells Ring Prelude

Gathering for Worship:      St. Mark's: *When the Stars Are in the Heavens Bright*  
St. James: *Star in the East*

**Call to Worship: (responsively)**

Leader: The magi came from distant places, following a star.

**People: We come to worship, and the star sheds light on our lives.**

Leader: The magi brought gifts to offer the Child.

**People: We too bring gifts: ourselves, our hopes, our dreams.**

Leader: Shepherds and magi—the poor and the powerful—all were welcome in Bethlehem.

**People: We too have come to Bethlehem and will return to our homes rejoicing.**

**Opening Prayer: (all together)**

**Wondrous Star that shines so bright! Shine in the bleakness and misery. Shine in the shadows and gloom. Shine in our hearts when our hopes are failing. Shine in our lives when we feel out of place and lost. Shine in our world when the systems and structures of the world oppress and condemn. Shine in us, so that we may shine Your light and life to the world. Bright Morning Star, shine our way. Amen.**

**Affirmation of our Faith: The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:

The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

I believe in the Holy Spirit: The One Holy Universal Christian Church: the communion of saints: The forgiveness of sins: The resurrection of the body: And the life everlasting. *Amen.*

**Hymn of Praise: (# 121 Hymnal)**

*Brightest & Best*

**Young At Heart:**



**Prayer of Confession:**

God of All Beginnings, we confess our own despair and distrust. Our expectations have been tempered, our hopes subdued. We are afraid of being let down again by the world. Remind us that our hope is not in the things of this world, in our leaders or our systems, but our hope is in You, Creator of heaven and earth. Shape our hearts to love more deeply. Open our minds to accept what we cannot change but to transform our own lives to Your ways. Mold our lives to live as You lived, in compassion and loving-kindness, in gratitude and peace. Lift up our hearts, so we may enter this new year with Your living hope. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen

**Words of Assurance: (all together)**

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. May we enter this new year with expectation that the world will change. Emmanuel, God is with us, now and always, and we can never be the same. The worst thing in the world is not the last thing that will happen to us. Goodness, love, and mercy will always prevail. May we trust these words in our hearts, may we trust the promises of God, and may we know that we are forgiven, loved and restored. Amen.

**Hymn of Assurance: (# 114 Hymnal, vs.1,3,5,6)**

*From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*

**Scripture Reading:**

Matthew 2:1-12

**Message:**

*Advice from the Magi*

Rev. Dr. Julie Mavity Maddalena

**Hymn of Faith: (Insert)**

*We Three Kings*

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

**Offering**

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website ([stmstjucc.org](http://stmstjucc.org)).

**Offertory Music:**

St. Mark's: *Star of the East*

St. James: *Follow the Brightest Star*

*~ The offering is brought to the altar ~*

**Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving: (all together)**

We walk by faith, we live by faith, we give by faith. God of great gifts, you have given us so much, accept these gifts from our hands, our faithful response to your abundant grace. Amen.

**Hymn of Sending:** (Insert)

*Arise, Your Light is Come!*

**Benediction:**

Now, God send us out by a different road.  
So we may find those who have been left by the side of the road.  
Now, Jesus walk with us down a different road.  
So we may serve those who are lonely and frightened.  
Now, Spirit illumine a different road.  
So we may take our family in faith by the hand  
to walk in wonder and grace. Amen.

**Postlude:**

St. Mark's: *Gloria*

St. James: *March of the Kings*

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**Matthew 2:1-12**

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:*

*"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel."*

*Then Herod summoned the magi secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.*