



WELCOME TO WORSHIP

January 5, 2025

We welcome all who are visiting with us today.

It is good to have you in worship with us. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Phil this morning and let us know if there is any way we might be of service to you or your family.

Silent Reflection: "Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body." ~ Peter Chrysologus

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELLS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We gather wondering, "Where will we find the Babe born in Bethlehem?"

ALL: We will find the Babe in the laughter of children, in the wisdom of grandparents.

ONE: We gather asking, "Where will we find the Child of Christmas?"

ALL: We will find the Child where the needy are gifted with hope, where the oppressed are set free.

ONE: We gather wanting to know, "Where will we find the Christ who has come for us?"

ALL: We will find our Hope where fear is overwhelmed by grace, where hatred is overwhelmed by love, where all people are overwhelmed by joy.

Bulletin Cover Attribution:

JESUS MAFA. Visit of the Three Wise Men, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-image/act-image-link.pl?RC=48292>. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*unison*)

We search for your light, O God, but too often end up settling for the dimness of temptation. Our motives for seeking to find Christ are not always pure, for we expect him to fulfill our desires, rather than your hopes for us. We want gifts of wealth, health, success, and fulfillment rather than those of servanthood, of compassion, of peace. Forgive us for being so foolish as to put our wants ahead of your grace. Help us like those wise people so long ago, who found hope, grace, and salvation in finding Christ.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

GLORIA PATRI

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

Prayer for the children (*unison*):

We send blessings upon our children for all God's love,
all Christ's friendship and all the caring of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Song Response

Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us power,
send us grace.

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

HYMN *What Star is This, with Beams so Bright* Insert

SERMON

INVITATION TO OFFERING

GIVE THANKS:

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ his Son. And now let the weak say "I am strong," Let the poor say "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*unison*)

For the joy of giving, we offer the products of our labor for the ministry of this church, in outreach to the world. With concern for those who are poor, oppressed, and needy, we rededicate ourselves as helpers and advocates. Out of devotion to Christ, we commit our best, that the church may bear witness among the principalities and powers of this world. Help us all, O God, to be faithful stewards. Amen.

HYMN *We Three Kings of Orient Are* 233

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION – *Insert*

PRAYERS OF OUR CHURCH/SILENT PRAYERS/LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE Into My Heart 485

*Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.
Come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.*

* HYMN *The First Noel* 229

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

SERVING YOU TODAY

Council Person	Patti Woods
Liturgist	Audrey Yann
Accompanist	Melody Hollis

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

St. John's: Sherry Christ, Don Koenig, Christy Lanning, Fred Lanning, and Sean and Dustin, sons of Margie & Wally Foxworthy

St. Jacob: Carol Casperson, Marvin Docter, Lori Foley, Norma Logsdon, Jackie Miller, Kathleen Ritter, and the family of Ed Leder

IL South Conference: Each week the churches of the Illinois South Conference are asked to pray for congregations and their pastors and other ministries of the UCC. This week we are asked to pray for:

Church & Pastors

- Carlyle Immanuel UCC - Pastor Ken (Barbara) Shafer
- Central City Zion UCC - Rev. Nancy Peebles

Retired Pastor

- Retired Pastor - Rev. Hugh (Bo) Fitz

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS

Lauren Hill, Jan. 8
Brian Meyer, Jan. 9

CHURCH ATTENDANCE, December 29, 2024

St. John's – 15 St. Jacob – 16

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor's office hours: Tuesday through Thursday: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Secretary's office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

St. Jacob Phone: 618-644-2142 / St. Jacob E-mail: stjucc@hometel.com

Website: stjacobucc.org

Pastor Phil Barbier: Phone: 314-312-2347 / E-mail: pastor@hometel.com

BLESSING BOX LOCATED AT ST. JACOB UCC

The "Blessing Box" (located on the east side of St. Jacob UCC) can use donations of non-perishable food, hygiene products, and other items for those in need. Anyone can donate -- items are anonymously given and received. Please consider blessing our neighbors in need, and if you are in need, please feel free to stop by.

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

With the inflation these past few months, use of local food pantries has been high, and donations have been low. To help our communities we have a donation tub/box for food pantry donations in the sanctuary at St. John's and St. Jacob.

Items for St. John's (For Lebanon Matthew 25:40 Ministries): Canned goods including: green beans, corns, carrots, mixed vegetables, stew, chili, soup, fruit, spaghetti sauce, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, potatoes (boxed/bags), Rice a Roni, macaroni and cheese, pasta, Ramen noodles, Jello, pudding, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, oatmeal, powdered sugar, brown sugar, oil, Crisco, dish soap, laundry detergent (quart bottles/sheets/pods), dryer sheets, paper towels, toilet paper, baggies (sandwich/qt./gal.) plastic wrap, toilet bowl cleaner, and cleaning solution

Items for St. Jacob (Ministries Unlimited): Pop-tarts, oatmeal, cheese cracker sandwiches, beef jerky, fruit cups, Vienna sausages, ketchup, mustard, broth, cooked ham, pasta sauce, jelly, pancake mix, & syrup

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CALENDAR/ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDNESDAY: ELFs Meeting, 10 a.m.

RETURN OF SUNDAY SCHOOL AT ST. JACOB

After a hiatus, Sunday School will return in January and is open to all children kindergarten through 6th grade. Classes will be held before worship (9-10 a.m.) the 2nd & 4th Sundays from January through May. For more details and registration information visit the St. Jacob UCC Facebook page (facebook.com/stjacobucc).

ADULT BIBLE STUDY AT ST. JACOB

A short, four-week adult Bible Study on the 10 Commandments will be offered every other Wednesday (Jan. 15 & 29, and Feb. 5 & 19). Each session will offer two options to attend, beginning at either 10 a.m. or 7 p.m. For more information call the office at 618-644-2142.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

This year's Lenten Bible Study will be held each Wednesday, March 5 - April 9 at 7 p.m., and we'll be using the book *Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion through Ten Objects* by Jill Duffield. If you are interested in joining us for the study, let Pastor Phil know by Jan. 18th so we can order enough books, or add your name to the sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex.

ST. JACOB 2025 ENVELOPE BOOKLETS AVAILABLE

The St. Jacob 2025 envelope booklets are available for you to pick up on the table in the Narthex.

INCLEMENT WEATHER NOTIFICATION

In case of inclement weather, we have implemented the following procedure: No later than 8 a.m., Sunday morning there will be a message on the church answering machine (618-644-2142) stating whether church will be cancelled. Also, the cancellation of service will be posted on our Facebook page and Channel 5.

SNOW SHOVELING

Winter weather is here. Please volunteer to shovel the church sidewalks. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex. Thank you!

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the Lord's glory has shone upon you.

Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations,

the Lord will shine upon you; God's glory will appear over you.

Nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning radiance.

Lift up your eyes and look all around: they are all gathered; they have come to you.

Your sons will come from far away, and your daughters on caregivers' hips.

Then you will see and be radiant; your heart will tremble and open wide,

because the sea's abundance will be turned over to you; the nations' wealth will come to you.

Countless camels will cover your land, young camels from Midian and Ephah.

They will all come from Sheba, carrying gold and incense, proclaiming the Lord's praises.

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 3:1-12

This is why I, Paul, am a prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles.

You've heard, of course, about the responsibility to distribute God's grace, which God gave to me for you, right? God showed me his secret plan in a revelation, as I mentioned briefly before (when you read this, you'll understand my insight into the secret plan about Christ). Earlier generations didn't know this hidden plan that God has now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit. This plan is that the Gentiles would be coheirs and parts of the same body, and that they would share with the Jews in the promises of God in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I became a servant of the gospel because of the grace that God showed me through the exercise of his power.

God gave his grace to me, the least of all God's people, to preach the good news about the immeasurable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. God sent me to reveal the secret plan that had been hidden since the beginning of time by God, who created everything. God's purpose is now to show the rulers and powers in the heavens the many different varieties of his wisdom through the church. This was consistent with the plan he had from the beginning of time that he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord. In Christ we have bold and confident access to God through faith in him.

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

*You, Bethlehem, land of Judah, by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs, who will shepherd my people Israel."*

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him." When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

ONE: Jesus said: I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger; you who believe in me shall never thirst.

ALL: In company with all who hunger for spiritual food, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the sharing of this life-giving bread.

COMMUNION PRAYER

ONE: God be with you

ALL: And also with you

ONE: Lift up your hearts

ALL: We lift them to God.

ONE: Let us give thanks to the God Most High.

ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

ONE: God of shining glory, you poured your light upon us that the whole world might come to you and live in joy. Yet we choose the shadows, hiding your Good News and hoarding it. With the rising of Christ's star you call us, like the Magi, to see you anew and worship you.

And so we join the company of heaven and earth singing:

ALL: Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Glory be to you, O God most high!

ONE: Holy are you and blessed is your Child, Jesus Christ.

In Jesus you took human form, and today we celebrate the revealing of your Incarnation: to visitors from afar, seeking a king; to those beyond the community of Israel, even to the whole world; and to your church, down through the ages.

Throughout his life on earth, Jesus continued to reveal your presence. The glory of our presence and its power to trans-form our lives was given form and substance in the meal that Jesus shared with the disciples and gave us.

When his arrest seemed near, Jesus sat at table in an upper room, with his closest friends and disciples. As he had done so many times before, he took the bread and after giving thanks to you he shared it among the disciples. He said, "I will not eat this again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after the meal, he took the cup and after giving thanks he gave it to them saying, "Truly I tell you, I will never drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in the kingdom of God." Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For your love, which is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, we give you thanks, and offer ourselves to you as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

ALL: Christ was promised. Christ is born. Christ will dwell among us.

ONE: Holy one, pour out your blessings on this food we have gathered for your people. May it be multiplied like the loaves and fishes at Galilee and feed and bless them and bring them closer to you.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and cup, and on us, your children. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other, and in all for whom Christ died.

ALL: Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright

D Bm A D G D A D G D

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more love - ly
 2 'Tis now ful - filled what God de - creed, "From Ja - cob
 3 While out - ward signs the star dis - plays, an in - ward
 4 O Je - sus, while the star of grace im - pels us

6 A D G D A Bm E⁷ A D

than the noon - day light? 'Tis sent to an - nounce a
 shall a star pro - ceed;" and lo! the east - ern
 light the Lord con - veys and urg - es them, with
 on to seek your face, let not our sloth - ful

11 G D Em A D A D G A D

new-born king, glad ti - dings of our God to bring.
 sa - ges stand to read in heaven the Lord's com - mand.
 ten - der might, to seek the giv - er of the light.
 hearts re - fuse the guid - ance of your light to use.

(alternate harmonization, 254)

Glory to God 162

TEXT: Charles Coffin, 1736; trans. John Chandler, 1887, alt.

MUSIC (PUER NOBIS NASCITUR, LM): Trier ms., 15th cent.; adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1609; harm. George Batchliffe Woodward, 1910

