

**Peace UCC**  
**January 3, 2021**

**Prelude** "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!" Paul Manz  
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**Welcome**

**Opening Words** Worship Ways adapted

One: We gather in the Light  
that was before, is now, and ever will be,  
seeking the Light's wisdom

**Many: You have Come Emmanuel**

One: We gather in the Light  
that is God's continuing gift  
and live into the Light's new wisdom.

**Many: You have Come Emmanuel**

One: We gather in the Light  
that is our own, emerging anew each day,  
seeking to share this wisdom,  
nurtured in the Light from Bethlehem's cradle.

**Many: You have Come Emmanuel**

**Opening Response** "Jesus, Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child"

**Invocation** Worship Ways

**God of Light and Love,  
in this very moment the star still beckons.  
Gather us and let the star call us to new ways  
of healing and hope,  
restoration and renewal,  
as we discover again Christ's call to discipleship. Amen.**

**The Witness of Music** Darcy Swanson

"We Three Kings of Orient Are" John H. Hopkins/ arr. Faye Lopez  
Inspired by Mozart's Sonata in A minor, K 130: Allegro maestoso  
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**Reading**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, 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 wise men 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 at its rising, 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.

### **The Christmas Story by Robin Richstone**

We know by heart these stories  
of a cold world, unwelcoming inn,  
the murderous tyrant,  
Mary on a donkey, escape,  
how cruel, how long ago, how far  
from what we mean to sing,  
O Come, O Come,  
to the weary, the terrified,  
Mary's heart beating fast,  
her grip on the baby,  
the strains of it fill the shops,  
the streets, flow down rivers,  
cross seas, cross borders,  
the refugee mother kneels  
to change her infant in an open field,  
the shepherds gone, the angels quiet,  
her safety now  
completely up to us.

**For the wisdom contained in these words we give thanks. Amen.**

**Sermon** Rev. Wendy Bruner

**Hymn** "As With Gladness Those of Old" Tune: Dix

### **Joys and Concerns**

#### **Prayer**

Creator, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kin-dom come, your 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 yours is the kin-dom, and the power,  
and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Communion**

**Prayer:** Come, Holy Spirit, come.  
Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.  
Bless all of us in our eating and drinking  
that our eyes might be opened,  
that we might recognize the risen Christ  
in our midst, indeed, in one another.  
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

**Pray of Thanksgiving**

Gracious God, you have once again shown us your love  
by bringing us to this meal.  
We go from here renewed in faith,  
renewed in courage,  
and strengthened by your presence.  
Thank you for loving us so tenderly.  
Thank you for challenging us  
to know you better and to receive you more fully. Amen

**How Shall We Join God's Work in the World**

Gracious God, we give thanks.  
We ask your blessings on these gifts of time,  
talent, and treasure as we use them to join  
Your work in the world. Amen

**Closing**

**Postlude** "The Angel's Trumpet" Dennis Eliot  
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