
AN ORDER OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

January 3, 2021 | Epiphany Sunday

First United Methodist Church

601 North Cedar, Abilene, Kansas 67410 | 785-263-2623 | www.AbileneFirstUMC.org

A Church of Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.

GATHERING

Gathering of the Congregation

Greeting and Announcements

Prelude — *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Arise, shine; for our light has come.

Behold the glory of the Lord. Alleluia!

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Opening Prayer

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture Reading — Psalm 72:1-14 (NRSV)

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
- ² May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
- ³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.
- ⁵ May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- ⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,

like showers that water the earth.

⁷In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

⁸May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

⁹May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.

¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

¹¹May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.

¹²For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.

¹³He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.

¹⁴From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.

HYMN* — *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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

— Words: Traditional English Carol

Children's Message

Special Music — *What Child Is This*

Scripture Reading — Matthew 2:1-12 (CEB)

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ²They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

³When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶'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.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸He 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." ⁹When 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. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹They 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. ¹²Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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

—Words: John H. Hopkins, Jr. 1857

Scripture Reading — Luke 2:21-38 (CEB)

²¹When eight days had passed, Jesus' parents circumcised him and gave him the name Jesus. This was the name given to him by the angel before he was conceived. ²²When the time came for their ritual cleansing, in accordance with the Law from Moses, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (²³It's written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord.") ²⁴They offered a sacrifice in keeping with what's stated in the Law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple area. Meanwhile, Jesus' parents brought the child to the temple so that they could do what was customary under the Law. ²⁸ Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

²⁹ "Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word,

³⁰ because my eyes have seen your salvation.

³¹ You prepared this salvation in the presence of all peoples.

³² It's a light for revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for your people Israel."

³³ His father and mother were amazed by what was said about him. ³⁴ Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "This boy is assigned to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that generates opposition ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your innermost being too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, who belonged to the tribe of Asher. She was very old. After she married, she lived with her husband for seven years. ³⁷ She was now an 84-year-old widow. She never left the temple area but worshipped God with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ She approached at that very moment and began to praise God and to speak about Jesus to everyone who was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Mary and Joseph had completed everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown, Nazareth in Galilee. ⁴⁰ The child grew up and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

Sermon

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I commit myself to God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I set my heart upon Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I place my trust in the Holy Spirit,
the holy church universal,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.

RESPONSE* — *Glory Be To The Father, 71*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

— Lesser Doxology, 3rd-4th cent.

Call to Confession

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, Light of the world,
we confess that we have not resisted the darkness of sin.
You deliver the poor and the helpless,
but we have ignored their cry.
You take pity on the weak and the destitute,
but our hearts are hard in the face of their need.
You heal the wounded and save the oppressed,
but we walk unheeding on our way.
Forgive us, we pray.
Awaken in us sincere repentance
that we may shine with the light of your saving grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(A time of silent prayers of confession.)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Beloved of God, thrill and rejoice in God's goodness.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

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Invitation to the Offering

Offertory — *The First Noel*

RESPONSE — *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow, 95*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

— Thomas Ken, 1674

THANKSGIVING

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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, [Meaning: save us from the time of trial.]
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

GOING FORTH

HYMN* — *What Child is This*, UMH-219

1. What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.
2. Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.
3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

— Words: William C. Dix, 1865

Blessing

Postlude — *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Please note that **bold type** indicates congregational participation. “H” stands for *The United Methodist Hymnal* (blue book); “F” stands for *The Faith We Sing* (black book); and “W” stands for *Worship and Song* (green book).

CLOSING CREDITS

Velda Becker and Jensen Woodworth, Liturgists
Braden Adams (cajon) and Carson Woodworth and Adam Weishaar (guitar), Special Music
Joy Clemence and the Woodworth Family, Sound
Cecelia Clemence, and the Woodworth Family, Slides
Braden Adams, Video
Anna Gugler and Amanda Cormack, Piano
Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries

The Newsletter

January 3, 2021

First United Methodist Church, Abilene, Kansas

The mission of First United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ as we work together toward our vision of a church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please note: prayer concerns will be listed in the bulletin for four (4) weeks unless the church office is notified otherwise.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: Mike Engle [12/27], Lillian Hoffman [12/20], Betty Cox [12/20], Bob Murnahan [12/20], Steve Crump [12/20], and those grieving the loss of Judy Hilton [12/20].

COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS: Ron Rutz (friend of Marla Rutz) [1/3], Kim Goodman [7/15/2018], doctors, nurses and other health care workers; students, teachers, administrators, school nurses, and other employees of local schools; restaurant and retail employees, postal workers and other delivery personnel; and all others working in essential industries, employees and owners of small businesses [12/20]

THOSE WORSHIPING FROM HOME: Gary Donley, Evelyn York, Velma Becker, Joe Clemence, Steve Crump, Walt Hartman, Ray Power, Marla Rutz, Bob Murnahan, Donna Smith, Martha Zutavern, Donna Richards, Dorothy Veach, Darlene Sexton, Melvin Leckron, Dorothy Snider, Linda Chase, Barb Hawk, Verl Eckman and many of us!

THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES: Greg Austin, Tim Barns, Kayla Berven, Billy Brockman, Matthew Brinker, Ross Covington, Jessica and James Green, Christopher Griffith, Gavin Hanna, Cameron Hoskins, David Hoskins, Ryan Kriesch, Colby Miller, Samuel Miller, and James L. Wise, Jr.

THOSE IN AUTHORITY: The President, the Governor, the Mayor, the County Health Officer, County Commissioners, the County Attorney, and other elected officials and the judiciary (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR: Today we pray for the Hunter Grace United Methodist Church and their pastor, Jeff Metzler.

GENERAL NEWS

ON SALVATION — Reading for my sermon, I found an excellent summary of the biblical understanding of salvation by Justo L. González. Here it is:

The meaning of the word “salvation,” both in the New Testament and in the common usage of the time, is much fuller than we often imagine. Salvation means healing, liberation, freedom from the bondage of sin, promise of eternal life, and several nuances of each of these themes. Thus to say that Jesus is “Savior” means that he frees the people from all evil, including sin, eternal death, disease, oppression, and exploitation. If we do not see all of this as yet, it is because the work of Jesus has not been completed—the reign of God has not yet come to its full fruition.

— Justo L. González, *Luke*, *Belief: a Theological Commentary on the Bible*

That last sentence is important. It names where we are in the story.

— Posted by John Collins 1/3/21

THANK YOU — Thank you to the Youth for remembering us with the fruit basket.

— Verle and Betty Eckman, 1/3/21

HAPPY 2021!

Happy New Year! I pray 2021 will be an improvement over 2020. But I know that while God sometimes acts alone, more often than not, God sticks to the original plan and chooses to work through or with us, the human beings made in God’s image. I think whether or not 2021 is better than 2020 will depend on what use we make of God’s grace. As Augustine of Hippo reportedly said, “He that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.” We can’t do it by ourselves, but it is unlikely that God will do it without us. Let’s get to work.

— Posted by John Collins 1/3/21

CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS IN ONLINE WORSHIP — We continue to improve the quality of our online and radio worship services. The quilts on the pews have cut down on the echos in a mostly empty sanctuary. This week (thanks to a special donation) we’re adding an additional Mevo video camera to allow those watching online a better view of the liturgist. Stick with us, it’s going to keep getting better.

— John Collins, 11/29/20

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO WORSHIP FROM HOME — I urge everyone who can watch online or listen on the radio instead of coming in-person to do so. I know that worship is important to many of you—it’s really important to me too. I understand that the experience of in-person worship is far superior to “virtual” worship. But, because of the increasing spread of COVID-19, Dr. Holmes, Bishop Saenz, and I all urge you to refrain from in-person worship for now. That said, we will have services at 10:30 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, we have plenty of extra masks, and I do not intend to turn anyone away.* In our present situation, you are the person best able to weigh your spiritual needs against the risks of in-person attendance. All I know is that the potential danger of attending in-person is both real and dire.

* To comply with #DK11-01, I will reluctantly turn people away in the unlikely event that we have more than 30 people show up.

— John Collins, 12/18/20

WORSHIP ON AUDIO CD — Are you having trouble streaming online or listening on the radio? We're delivering audio CDs with the same service that is broadcast on the radio. Contact John Collins or call the church office if you would like one. — Staff

WEDNESDAY EVENING COMMUNION — We have a Zoom meeting scheduled for the Wednesday Evening Communion Service at 6:00 p.m. Here are the details:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bit.ly/38bf9qZ>

Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388

Password: 67410

Manually Dial In With a Touch-Tone Phone

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388

Password: 67410

— Staff

EMAIL UPDATES — John uses a service called TinyLetter to send out blog posts by email every day or so. This way, you can keep up with their blog at revcollins.com by simply checking your email inbox. You can also reply with an email of your own and let us know what you think. You can sign up at tinyletter.com/jcollins11 — Staff

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

MONDAY, JANUARY 4

7:00 p.m. Staff Parish Meeting Via Zoom

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

6:30 p.m. Outreach Committee Meeting

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

3:30 p.m. Power & Light

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Youth Group

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil begins @ Homes

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8

12:00 p.m. Offices Close

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9

10:30 a.m. Recording the Online Service/In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

MONDAY, JANUARY 11

6:00 p.m. Board of Trustees Via Zoom

7:00 p.m. Worship Design

7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts - Peatling

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

3:30 p.m. Power & Light

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Youth Group

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

5:00 a.m. Prayer Vigil begins @ Homes

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise - Narthex

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

9:30 a.m. Hospice Quilt Sewing for Service

12:00 p.m. Offices Close

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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