

Welcome to

Woodridge Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

*An Open & Affirming Congregation and
A Caring & Welcoming Community*



Worship at 10:00 AM

Epiphany Sunday

January 7, 2024

woodridgechurchri.org

facebook.com/woodridgecongregational

As a caring and welcoming community, using the Bible as a resource and the teachings of Jesus as our guide, we joyfully welcome everyone into our Christian community, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, age, mental status, family structure, physical or mental ability, religious background or theological perspective, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. As Christian disciples, we invite all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, worship, sacraments, blessings and joys of our congregation.

Prelude

Oh Holy Night with Jesus, Messiah

arr. Carol Tornquist
Sandy Nolan, organist

What's happening at Woodridge? *(see announcements insert)*

Opening Prayer and 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Call to Worship *(responsive)*:

One: God's light has come to reveal The Way in this New Year.

All: Arise! Shine!

One: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

All: Arise! Shine!

One: God's light enters the darkness that does not overcome it.

All: Arise! Shine! For the Glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60: 1 - 6 (NRSV)

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ⁴Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Our communion table is open to all who wish to receive, regardless of church membership or affiliation. We welcome all ages to receive communion today and leave the decision to parents at what age their children should participate.

Prayer of Confession (*Responsive*):

One: The coming of Christ was not, and is not, always widely welcomed.

All: Lord, forgive us.

One: Wherever there is light there will also be darkness: the darkness of old superstitions and dogmas which refuse to fade away easily.

All: Lord, forgive us.

One: the darkness of pride and selfishness in the half truths that have misled us.

All: Lord, forgive us.

One: the darkness of hatred and jealousy.

All: Lord, forgive us.

One: the darkness of indifference and apathy to those around us.

All: Lord, forgive us.

Assurance of God's love and forgiveness

Words of Invitation

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution and Prayer of Consecration

Communion Hymn

Let Us Break Bread Together

Pilgrim Hymnal #288

Receiving of the elements

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving:

God of Light and Love, we cherish this table in this season when the nights are long and cold. Through this meal, the Christ, and our neighbors, our hearts have warmed. May the comfort in our souls sustain us through winter and nudge us to create welcoming spaces for our neighbors. With gratitude, we leave here energized to kindle your love in this world. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2: 1 - 12 (NRSV)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “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.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶“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.”” ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then 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.” ⁹When 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. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon “5 Kings and a Star” Rev. Scott Spencer

Hymn *We Three Kings of Orient Are* Pilgrim Hymnal #143

Prayer Concerns and Celebrations

Offering

Offertory Anthem *Christmas Lullaby* W. Stevens
Woodridge Choir

Doxology

Thomas Ken Old 100th
Genevan Psalter

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow: Praise God all creatures here be-low, Praise

5 God a-bove ye heav-'nly host, Cre - a - tor, Christ and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men

Hymn	<i>Joy to the World!</i>	Pilgrim Hymnal #130
Benediction		
Benediction response	<i>God Be with You</i>	New Century Hymnal #81
Postlude	selected Christmas hymns	
		Sandy Nolan, organist

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What's happening @ Woodridge?

Mark your calendars ... the annual meeting will be held on Jan 28 (Sunday) immediately after worship in the sanctuary. We hope everyone can stay for a relatively brief meeting that will cover any questions about team reports; vote on the 2024 church budget; and any other business to come before the meeting. Annual reports will be available in hard copy on Sunday, Jan 14 and via email.

Advent Giving Project: \$30 gift envelopes are available to support a student from a church-run school in the West African country of Sierra Leone. Each \$30 donation provides a student with a uniform; book bag; school supplies; and other necessary items as needed. **If you would like to support more than one student – you may use one envelope to support multiple children.**

Envelopes can be found on the “Giving Tree” in the lobby of the church sanctuary and the collection will continue until Epiphany Sunday on Jan 7. Checks should be made out to “Woodridge Congregational Church” and returned in the envelopes provided on Sunday morning or it may be dropped off or mailed to the church office. Cash donations are also welcome. Thank you for your generosity and support.

The **Grief Support Group** meets Thursday afternoons, 2:00 - 3:30 pm in the Conference Room. Contact for info: Rev.Burton.Bagby.Grose@gmail.com

Thank you for any donations of non-perishable food you may be able to make, to the Interfaith Food Ministry. Items may be placed in the sanctuary lobby basket on Sunday morning or in the Jackson Road box (next to the Parish House entry door) at any time. Please avoid items in glass containers, especially if they are subject to freezing.

If church services have to be cancelled due to snow and bad weather ... an email will go out on the same list as the weekly newsletter no later than between 7 and 8 am on Sunday morning (or earlier if a decision can be made). In addition, those with assigned roles, including the music ministry, will be notified via a separate email. Finally, feel free to contact pastor Scott with any additional questions at 508 - 838 - 6035. Thank you for your cooperation. As always, we urge people to use caution and please do not attend worship if you feel it is not safe to do so.

Worship Ministers for Sunday's Service

Liturgist: Rev. Tom Meyer

Ushers: Sharon Albert, Rebecca Rotondo, Carmen Steinbrecher, Les Steinbrecher

Stewards: Courtney Lombardi, Rebecca Rotondo, Carmen Steinbrecher, Les Steinbrecher

The flowers Sunday morning are given by Deb DiChiara,
as a birthday remembrance of her mother, Mary Read.

Prayer List

Prayers of joy and concern lifted up on Sunday morning or brought during the week are shared in a weekly email message every Tuesday: *Today's God Moment*

Keep in touch and stay informed . . .

In addition to prayer concerns, we send a Thursday email with general information. Please contact the office if you would like to be added to these mailing lists. Recorded Sunday services may also be found through our website.

Our Staff:

<i>Rev. Scott Spencer, Pastor</i>	revscottspencer@gmail.com
<i>Eric Van Dervort, Music Minister</i>	ewvandervort1@gmail.com
<i>Sandy Nolan, Organist</i>	sanolan00@gmail.com

Dan Blackford, Administrative Assistant

Office hours 9 am-1 pm M-F woodridgechurch@verizon.net

401 942 0662 or 942 0654