



CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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IOWA CITY, IA 52245  
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WORSHIP FOR JANUARY 3, 2021  
EPIPHANY SUNDAY

“Always we begin again.”  
St. Benedict

PRELUDE “As with Gladness Those of Old” Gerhard Krapf

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We enter into the New Year still on a journey day by day.

**With all who search we say: “To discover how to be human now  
is the reason we follow this star.”**

Let us worship God.

HYMN            “On This Day, Earth Shall Ring”

**On this day earth shall ring  
with the song children sing  
to the Lord, Christ our King,  
born on earth to save us;  
him the Father gave us.**

*Refrain:*

**\*Id-e-o-o-o, id-e-o-o-o,  
Id-e-o gloria in excelsis Deo!**  
*\*Therefore, glory to God in the highest.*

**God's bright star, o'er his head,  
Wise Men three to him led;  
kneeling low by his bed,  
lay their gifts before him,  
praise him and adore him. *Refrain***

**On this day angels sing;  
with their song earth shall ring,  
praising Christ, heaven's King,  
born on earth to save us;  
peace and love he gave us. *Refrain***

OPENING PRAYER

**We live our lives within your time, O God, but we mark the year and with it we ask to pause and find respite. Grant us this moment to collect ourselves before we must go on. Let us leave behind what we cannot carry into this new year—our regrets, our grudges, our dashed hopes. Help us to bring along what is essential—the goodness we have witnessed in those we have known, the grace we have seen in the ordinary tasks of caring for one another and the purpose you have given us in a world that wants to be restored.**

**Give us wisdom to gather those things along the way which will give us the strength to cover the distance from where we are now to our uncertain destination. Be with us as we set off again.**

**Let your bright star light our way through the coming days. Amen.**

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE LESSON            Jeremiah 31:7-14

PSALM 147:12-20

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

**For God strengthens the bars of your gates,  
and blesses your children within the gates.**

God grants peace within your borders,  
and fills you with the finest of wheat.

**God sends out commands to the earth;  
God's word runs swiftly.**

God's gives snow like wool  
and scatters frost like ashes.

**God hurls down hail like crumbs—  
who can stand before this cold?**

God sends out God's word, and melts them;  
God makes the wind blow, and the waters flow.

**God declares God's word to Jacob, statutes and ordinances to Israel.  
God has not dealt thus with any other nation;  
they do not know God's ordinances.  
Praise the Lord!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON      Matthew 2:1-12

SERMON      "Difficult Beginnings"

TIME OF GRATITUDE

DUET      "Star in the East"  
            Kristin and Josh Ramseyer

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN      "Ring Out, Wild Bells"

(Here is a link to the music if you would like it: <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/96289>. You can also find this in the old *Pilgrim Hymnal* if you have a copy.)

**Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let it die.**

**Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let it go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.**

**Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.**

**Ring in the valiant and the free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the dimness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “What Star Is This with Beams So Bright” David Cherwien

The Call to Worship includes a quote from *The Time Being* by W.H. Auden.

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The Staff of Congregational UCC wishes everyone a Happy New Year. We thank you for your support over the past year.

**THIS MORNING we celebrate Epiphany** (the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles, the coming of the Magi) **and the beginning of the New Year.** We bring our observance of Christmas to a conclusion, hearing the story of the Magi from the Gospel of Matthew. Our traditional Epiphany festivities are on hold this year. Last year’s Epiphany Queen will reign for a second year. **NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, WILL BE A COMMUNION SUNDAY.**

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC OF IOWA CITY** will be held by Zoom on Sunday, January 31, 2021. We will receive reports of Boards and Committees, vote on the budget for 2021, vote on proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws of the congregation, and transact any other business that is fitting and necessary.

**RECORDINGS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICES** are posted by early Sunday morning each week at <https://vimeo.com/channels/1547852>. The recordings remain up permanently, so you can watch past worship services at your convenience or recommend them to a friend.

**DO YOU HAVE A HYMN THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SING IN THE COMING MONTHS?** Let Bill Lovin know. This is no guarantee that we will sing it, as the hymn will need to be covered by our reprint license, fit with the rest of the worship service and work for the person who will be leading the singing—but we’d like to hear from you and sing a new song.

**WE WANT TO SEE YOU!** We would like to have members and friends be a part of the greeting time during our online worship. Please send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying “Hi,” singing, or whatever you would like. Or send a photo. We’ll start including a few of these in the worship service each week as a way to strengthen our connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG\\_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing)