

# Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR  
**Sunday,**  
**January 5, 2025**  
**10:00 AM**

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**The Second  
Sunday after  
Christmas**





# Welcome to Worship!

**SUNDAYS @ 10:00AM**

**In-person Worship.** Masks and distance recommended, not required

**Livestream on YouTube.** Live at 10am then available on our channel after



## Ways to Give

**Send a Check.** Mail to the address below ... this way still works fine!

**Use PayPal.** <https://www.paypal.me/stpeteruccskokie>

**Set up Vanco.** <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZCME/home>

Set up your account or log in to give



## Open Communion

**All Christians** and seekers after God are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper with us the **first Sunday of every month** and special Holy Days (Christmas, Maundy Thursday, and Easter). **At-home Communion** participants are invited to provide their own elements and join when Pastor bids you, "take, eat, and drink."



## About St. Peter's UCC

We've been in the heart of downtown Skokie since 1867. We are a part of the United Church of Christ, which means we are passionate about our faith and open in our thinking. We believe in a Triune God who **loves everyone**, regardless of gender identity, orientation, race, status, or physical or mental ability, and we **joyously welcome all people** to share worship, membership, marriage, baptism, funeral, and fellowship with us.



## Contact, Follow, or Talk to Us

**Laura Olson (Office Manager):** [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org)

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

**Ben Westphal (Music Director):** [bcwestphal@gmail.com](mailto:bcwestphal@gmail.com)

**Facebook/Instagram/YouTube:** @stpeteruccskokie

**Website:** [www.stpeteruccskokie.org](http://www.stpeteruccskokie.org)

*Like, follow, or join our email list for up-to-date info about events and activities!*



**8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077 | 847-673-8166**

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie  
Order of Worship for  
Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 10:00am  
First Sunday after Epiphany  
Baptism of Christ**

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*Welcome to worship. The music before the service is intended as a time of silent prayer and preparation.*

**PRELUDE** Selected

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** Peggy Reins

*Will those who are able please stand up*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**P:** As the stars shine brightly in the night sky, guiding seekers on their journey, we gather today in the spirit of discovery and hope.

**C:** **We come, eager to encounter the light of Christ in our lives and in our world.**

**P:** Like the Magi who traveled from afar, we bring our gifts—of love, justice, and compassion—to share with one another.

**C:** **We come, ready to open our hearts and minds to the wisdom of the ages.**

P: In this sacred space, let us celebrate the revelations that break forth in the ordinary and the extraordinary.

**C: We come, seeking to embody the love of God and to let it shine through our actions.**

P: So, let us worship together, embracing the light that leads us on our journey.

**All: We gather in gratitude, ready to be transformed by the presence of the Divine among us. Amen.**

**OPENING RESPONSE “O Come, Let Us Adore Him” (v.1)**

1. O come, let us a - dore Him; O come, let us a -  
 2. For He a - lone is wor - thy; For He a - lone is  
 3. For Je - sus is our Sav - ior; For Je - sus is our  
 4. And Je - sus is our broth - er; And Je - sus is our  
 5. We kneel in ad - o - ra - tion; We kneel in ad - o -  
 6. O praise Him, al - le - lu - ia! O praise Him, al - le -

G D G D7 G D A7 D7 G C G D D7 G

dore Him; O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord.  
 wor - thy; For He a - lone is wor - thy, Christ the Lord.  
 Sav - ior; For Je - sus is our Sav - ior, Christ the Lord.  
 broth - er; And Je - sus is our broth - er, Christ the Lord.  
 ra - tion; We kneel in ad - o - ra - tion. Christ the Lord.  
 lu - ia! O praise Him, al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Lord.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**P:** In humility and honesty, let us bring our hearts before God, acknowledging our shortcomings and the times we have turned away from love. Please pray with me:

**All:** Gracious God, we confess that we have not always followed the way of Christ. We have allowed fear to overshadow our faith, and we have failed to reach out to those in need. We often seek our own comfort rather than the well-being of others. Forgive us for our complacency and open our hearts to the light of

**your love. In a world filled with darkness, we ask you to cleanse us from our doubts and despair. Help us to be bearers of your light, ambassadors of peace, and instruments of your grace.**

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**P:** Hear the good news! God's love is greater than our failures. In Christ, we are offered forgiveness, renewal, and hope.

**C:** **We receive this gift of grace with open hearts, choosing to walk in the light of God's love and to share that love with the world.**

**P:** Go forth, beloved community, knowing that you are forgiven and called to a new life.

**All: Amen.**

## HYMN

## "We Three Kings"

## SSB #37

*In unison*

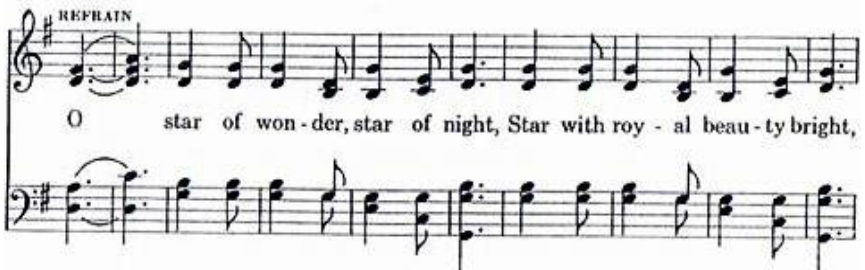


1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far  
 2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, Gold I bring to crown him a - gain,  
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;  
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom;  
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;

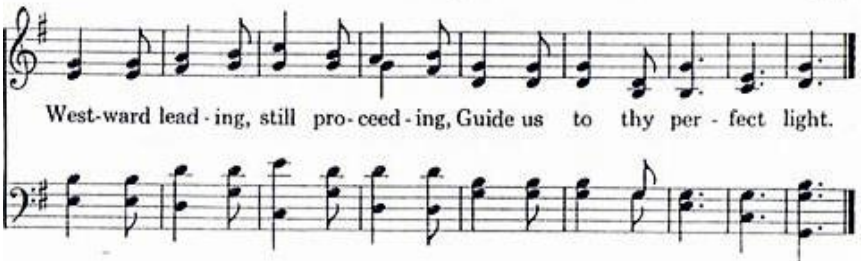


Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship him, God on high.  
 Sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies.

**REFRAIN**



O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.

*The congregation may be seated*

## **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND SCRIPTURE READING**

Rich Schneider

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 60:1-9

Epistle Lesson

Ephesians 3:1-12

**CHORAL ANTHEM**     “Arise and Shine Forth”

by Sally DeFord

**GOSPEL**

Matthew 2: 1-12

## **PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS**

## **CALL TO OFFERING**

## **OFFERTORY**

*If you donate electronically, feel free to place an “Electronic Giving” card into the plate as it comes around so you can enjoy participating in the physical act of giving.*



*Will those who are able please stand up*

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE "We Are an Offering" SSB #11**

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The vocal line is on a treble clef staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering; Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are Yours, we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be we give to You, we give to You. We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering, we are an offering."

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**A:** God of light and revelation, on this Epiphany Sunday, we remember how the Magi brought their gifts to honor the Christ child. In their footsteps, we offer these gifts as signs of our gratitude and devotion to You. Bless what we bring today—our resources, our time, and our hearts. May these offerings be used to reveal Your love and justice in the world, bringing hope to the weary, light to those in darkness, and peace to all who seek You. Guide us, O God, as the star guided the Magi, so that all we give and all we do may point others to the glory of Christ, our Savior and King. In His holy name, we pray. Amen.

*The congregation may be seated*

**HOMILY**                      “Mystery Revealed”

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

**Exhortation and Invitation**

**Sursum Corda:**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: *And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts!

**C: *We lift them up to the Lord!***

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: *It is right to give God thanks and praise.***

## Prayer of Thanksgiving Prayer of Consecration

**RESPOND**  
**153**      **Eat of This Bread**

The musical score is written in G major, 4/4 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 65. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: "Eat of this bread, drink of this wine; come and be fed, come now and dine. Eat of this bread, drink of this wine; here all are fed, here all may dine." The chords are: F#m, Ab, Ddim, Gm, Cm, Fm, Fm7, D#sus, Bb, Eb, and E♭.

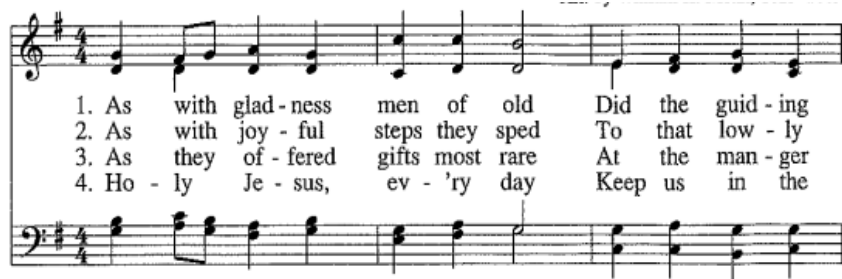
## The Words of Institution Participation

### CLOSING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**A: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil;  
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen**

*Will those who are able please stand up*

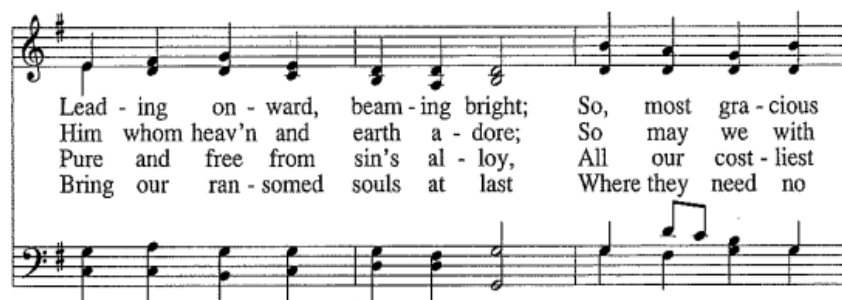
## HYMN "As with Gladness Men of Old"



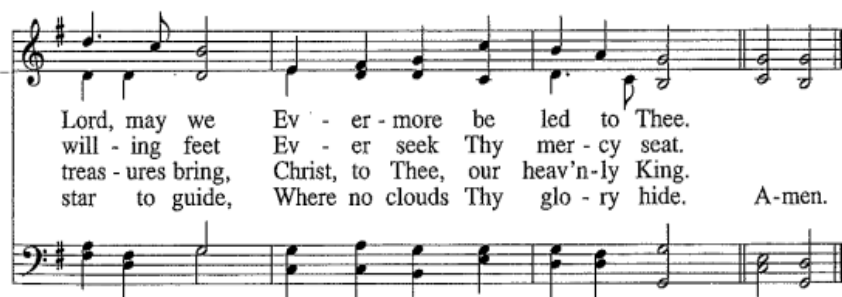
1. As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing  
 2. As with joy-ful steps they sped To that low-ly  
 3. As they of-fered gifts most rare At the man-ger  
 4. Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-'ry day Keep us in the



star be-hold; As with joy they hailed its light,  
 man-ger-bed, There to bend the knee be-fore  
 rude and bare, So may we with ho-ly joy,  
 nar-row way; And, when earth-ly things are past,



Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright; So, most gra-cious  
 Him whom heav'n and earth a-dore; So may we with  
 Pure and free from sin's al-loy, All our cost-liest  
 Bring our ran-somed souls at last Where they need no



Lord, may we Ev-er-more be led to Thee.  
 will-ing feet Ev-er seek Thy mer-cy seat.  
 treas-ures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'n-ly King.  
 star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide. A-men.

**CHARGE** "The Work of Christmas"

by Howard Thurman

P: When the song of the angels is stilled,  
 When the star in the sky is gone,  
 When the kings and princes are home,  
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
 The work of Christmas begins:  
 To find the lost,  
 To heal the broken,  
 To feed the hungry,  
 To release the prisoner,  
 To rebuild the nations,  
 To bring peace among others,  
 To make music in the heart.

**BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE** "We Three Kings of Orient Are"

*The music after the service is intended as a time of reflection. Pastor will be pleased to greet you at the Sanctuary doors as soon as the postlude has concluded, and our livestream has stopped.*

**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

MINISTER	Rev. Wayne MacPherson
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Jenn Schneider
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Peter Svenson
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Mike Ryan

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




# News in the Pews

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**The Magi followed a star to worship Jesus and present him gifts. We too have been guided here by God's light, to worship Jesus and offer him our gifts of love. Welcome.**

**Welcome Rev. Wayne MacPherson** - Pastor Wayne is has served four congregations in the Chicago Metropolitan Association, two as Pastor and two as Interim Pastor. In addition, he worked nine years as a member of the staff of the Chicago Metropolitan Association and the Illinois Conference.

**About Communion** - We invite all believers, regardless of denominational background, to join in the Lord's Supper. The servers will bring the elements to you in the pews. Please hold the elements until all are served. We will then partake together at the Pastor's prompting as a sign of Christian unity.

**Softgoods Clothing Drive begins today!** Start cleaning out those closets & storage spaces, we're looking for soft goods. Items such as  clothing,  bedding, linens, towels,  shoes,  hats, belts,  purses,  stuffed toys- we'll take them all as Savers pays by the pound. Start the new year off right and help us raise funds. Thanks so much for your consideration!

**St. Peter's Annual Meeting is on January 26th.** If you are responsible for submitting a report, please turn your report into the office no later than *Friday, January 10th, 2025.*

**Sign up for  Coffee Hour!** We are getting back to regular coffee hours on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month but need folks to sign-up to host. Hosting is basically bringing some coffee cake, etc. to share, making coffee and light clean-up. We are also

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working on new ways to sign-up (including online) soon; contact the office in the meantime if you'd be willing to host or cohost and we'll find you someone to assist if needed.

**Thank you to everyone who participated in our Baby Shower for Jesus!** We will have totals soon. All proceeds were donated to the Niles Township Food Pantry.

**Update on our Pastoral Search** - Our church is in an active search for an interim minister. St. Peter's Local Church Profile for an Interim Search is now posted on the UCC's Ministry Opportunities web site. That means ministers searching for a new call can now find us. We are looking for an Intentional Interim Minister, a pastor who is trained to lead a congregation through a transitional period, preparing the way for a settled pastor. The Church Council is leading the search process and will keep St. Peter's members, friends, and staff up to date on progress.

**Laura Olson our Office Manager is on vacation** and will return Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> 2025.

**2025  Calendars are still available to take home.** You can find copies in the Narthex, Lanford Fellowship Hall, or outside the offices and lobby area.

**The Livestream Team Needs Your Help!** The livestream setup is very easy to run, and scheduling is very flexible but we are really in need. Please contact Jen S. directly if you can join— we hear all the time that people ARE watching our livestream, and we want to be sure it's available every Sunday for those folks.

**Please join us next Sunday** as we welcome back Minister Renita Ward to the pulpit!

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# Our People

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**Please keep St. Peter's extended family in your thoughts and prayers. Other folks that need your prayers include:**

- Parents of Anna Riley, prayers for healing and strength.
- Ricky Riley's heart surgery has been scheduled for February 7th, 2025.
- Ann Herren's two daughters; Betsy Herren is doing well having finished her radiation treatment. Jennifer will be having surgery for breast cancer, date TBD.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter Donna is doing very well after having surgery but continues her battle with Lymphoma, which can be controlled but not cured.
- 15-year-old family friend of Denise Hopp is suffering from self-harm.
- Cancer has returned for Susan Garcia's Aunt Janice, whom we've prayed for previously.
- Jane Abramchik continues to recover at home aided by a team of home caregivers and her husband Paul.
- Paul Brzozowski's recent MRI was encouraging but his treatment for brain cancer is continuing.
- Annie has asked for continuing prayers for the many people struggling with cancer.
- Those affected by the devastation of Hurricane Helene and Milton and other disaster victims.

Others in our church family to keep close in our hearts include Larry Baumhardt, Ursula Dworak, Lois Jarmuth and Bob Seitman.

***If you are aware of others to include in our shared prayers, please let a church officer, an Elder, or the office know!***

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**This week we wish a Happy birthday to** Alec Ryan, Jennifer Mau Gemignani, Usha Rajbhandari and Jenn Schneider.

**According to the schedule** and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector will be Annie Noorts, and our Nursery Attendant will be Kathy Zipperer.

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### **CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

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PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

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### *Regular Reminders!*

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**Let us know you were here!** Please sign the attendance sheet in the black pew pads and when you think your pew is ready, please pass the pad towards the center aisle of the church.

**We are always grateful for all offerings to the church.** So many thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside the bulletin's front cover for details on how to donate.

**Our mini-food pantry is a daily mission this church does for the community of Skokie.** If you are able, please bring food to help us keep it going. Food can be left on the shelves by the office doors, or in the narthex. Thank you so much!

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UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

## MISSION MOMENTS

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### **LIVING PSALM BOOK: Psalms Reinterpreted in Poetry and Art Psalm 71:1-6 — Epiphany 4C**

I am exasperated and overwhelmed. Nothing seems to be going as planned. I plead during this time of difficulties — do not let me be humiliated. Take away my shame.

I see no hope other than your loving grace, wrap your love around me. Listen to the sincerity of my soul and rescue me from life as it seeks to devour my faith and understanding.

I need an anchor. A rock that will surely suffice to keep me warm, safe, and out of harm's way. While circumstances try to make me surrender, I cling to you. You are truly the butterfly that makes me smile experiencing the transformational power of God, as well as my rock and my fortress.

Liberate me from the hands of everything that would cause disruption and destruction. Cruelty and injustice cannot destroy the shimmering but powerful wings that cover and protect me.

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It is and has been only you that carried me through my difficult cocooning process. You took the uncomfortableness and what I often thought was defeat within that reality—shined a light on what was to be. I trust in you from the beginning of the uncertain to the majesty of what is.

Centering myself in you from the origin of my life, it was you always protecting me. It is you that I continue to praise and experience as you flutter before me affirming that you always have been there.

*Living Psalm for Epiphany 4C: Psalm 71:1-6 was written by Rev. Justo González.*

*Living Psalms Book is created by UCC Witness & Worship Artists' Group, a Network of UCC connected artists, activists and ministers bridging the worship and liturgy of the local church with witness and action in the community. Maren Tirabassi, editor*

*Logo is detail from Living Psalm 80 by Sophia Beardemphl, Redwoods, CA. Recovering from significant bullying, Sophia, age nine, read Psalm 80 and thought of brokenness that needs mending. She drew this broken and mended bowl.*

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Scriptures for Sunday, January 5, 2025

**Please join me in spirit of prayer as we offer up our Prayer of Illumination.**

*Holy Spirit of Wisdom, open our hearts and minds to your truth. Help us to see with compassion, to listen with humility, and to grow in love and understanding. May these sacred words challenge and inspire us, leading us ever closer to mercy, justice, and peace. Amen.*

**Our first scripture reading this morning is Isaiah 60:1-9.**

Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

<sup>2</sup> For darkness shall cover the earth  
and thick darkness the peoples,  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.

<sup>3</sup> Nations shall come to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup> Lift 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 in their nurses' arms.

<sup>5</sup> Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,<sup>[a]</sup>  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

<sup>6</sup> A 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.

<sup>7</sup> All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you;  
the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;  
they shall be acceptable on my altar,<sup>[b]</sup>  
and I will glorify my glorious house.

<sup>8</sup> Who are these that fly like a cloud  
and like doves to their windows?

<sup>9</sup> For the coastlands shall wait for me,  
the ships of Tarshish first,  
to bring your children from far away,  
their silver and gold with them,  
for the name of the LORD your God  
and for the Holy One of Israel,  
because he has glorified you.

**This ends our first reading. Our Epistle Lesson is Ephesians 3:1-12.**

**3** This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for<sup>[a]</sup> Christ Jesus<sup>[b]</sup> for the sake of you gentiles, **2** for surely<sup>[c]</sup> you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you **3** and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,<sup>[d]</sup> **4** a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. **5** In former generations this mystery<sup>[e]</sup> was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: **6** that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**7** Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. **8** Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ **9** and to make everyone see<sup>[f]</sup> what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in<sup>[g]</sup> God, who created all things, **10** so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.<sup>[h]</sup> **11** This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him

**This ends our reading from Ephesians. Our worship continues with an Anthem sung by our choir.**

**Thank you, choir. Please rise for the reading of the Gospel. Our Gospel lesson is Matthew 2:1-12.**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem, **2** asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east<sup>[b]</sup> and have come to pay him homage." **3** When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, **4** and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah<sup>[c]</sup> was to be born. **5** They 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<sup>[d]</sup> my people Israel.' "

**7** Then Herod secretly called for the magi<sup>[e]</sup> and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. **8** 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." **9** When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east,<sup>[f]</sup> until it stopped over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw that the star had stopped,<sup>[g]</sup> they were overwhelmed with joy. **11** 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. **12** And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**This ends our scripture readings the for this morning's service. May God grant us a wise and generous understanding of this God's holy word. You may be seated.**