



January 3, 2021

St. John's United Church of Christ

As believers in Jesus Christ, we strive with unconditional love and selflessness – using our God given gifts – to provide a nurturing shelter for those seeking a Christian home. We offer opportunities for spiritual growth through worship, education, fellowship, prayer and Christian action throughout our community and the world.

**Called by God
Sharing with the World**

January 3, 2021

Second Sunday after Christmas

Gathering

Meditation

When we rise from sleep let us rise for the joy of the true work we will be about this day, and considerately cheer one another on.

Life will always provide matters for concern. Each day, however, brings its reasons for joy.

Each day carries the potential to bring the experience of heaven; have the courage to expect good from it.

Be gentle with this life and use the light of life to live fully in your time.

John McQuiston

Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Sing We Now of Christmas - Arr. Christopher Phillips
Tracey Holler, flute

Opening Hymn

Once in Royal David's City
Christopher Holler, saxophone

Lifting up our Joys

Passing of the Peace

✠ Call to Worship: Isaiah 60: 17b-22a

(A promise to the People of God: hear these words of the Lord)

Leader: I will make peace your governor and well-being your ruler.

No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your

borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

People: The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

Leader: Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

People Then all your people will be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor.

All: The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation, I am the Lord;

✠ Opening Prayer

Dear Loving Father: we enter a New Year looking to you for guidance and support. We look to you to be the light in our darkness. We look to you. But we also know that we need to look to ourselves. In this season of resolutions, help us to resolve to be bearers of your gift. Like the magi that came to the stable to worship the Christ Child, help us to bring the spiritual gifts we possess to you through our work in this world. Help us to encourage others' gifts that we may all be made into a community of Christians doing Christ's work in the world. Help us to remember that you are always with us. May we always be with you.

Amen.

✠ Prayer of Confession *(unison)*

We confess to almighty God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and follow in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Silent pause for reflection

✠ Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends in Christ if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive Our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is God’s gift to us and the world so that we can know abundant life.

Bible Readings

Ephesians 3: 2-6 Matthew 2: 1-12 Chris Holler

Children’s Message and Blessing

Kay Jones

Today’s Message

Let Your Life Speak Kay Jones

✠ UCC Statement of Faith

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify: He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death. He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself. He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races. He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory. He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace,

his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Prayer of Our Savior (*unison*)

**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**

✠ Giving our Gifts to God

✠ Doxology

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

✠ Sending Forth and Final Blessing

Closing Hymn

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star
Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again

King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign
Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light
Myrrh is mine, it's bitter perfume
Breaths a life of gathering gloom
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding dying
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb
Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light

Glorious now behold him arise
King and Lord and sacrifice
Alleluia, alleluia
Sounds through the earth and skies

Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light

Worship Leader:

Kay Jones

Blessings to you from St. John's United Church of Christ in Orwigsburg.

Make Handwashing a Time of Prayer: Washing our hands for 20 seconds is one of the ways to reduce the spread of the COVID virus. How long is 20 seconds? That is sometimes hard to track. However, there is a way that combines adequate handwashing and praising God. The Doxology that we sing during worship, (it starts with "Praise God from whom all blessings flow...") takes approximately 20 seconds to sing. By choosing to sing the Doxology each time we wash our hands we mentally shift our focus from the challenge of living within a pandemic to thoughts of gratitude and the blessings God has bestowed. Focusing on these positives in the midst of our challenges improves our health and wellbeing. Thanks be to God.

The Bible Study for women: "Tis well: walking away from anxiety and into God's world" will now be done as an email study. We will post some readings and reflections once a week and people can respond to all on the email list for discussion. We have heard from a number of people who do not do zoom but who are interested. Please email Kay Jones at kjones8022@aol.com to participate. The day and time will be set by those who join.