

Woodmont United Church of Christ
Sunday, January 4, 2026



Epiphany

Our Vision Statement

Woodmont United Church of Christ embodies God's unconditional love by ministering to the needs of people and the environment, striving to promote spiritual growth through scripture-driven, exuberant worship and advocating for peace and justice. We celebrate diversity and welcome all into a fellowship of acceptance, forgiveness, spiritual exploration, and discovery.

WOODMONT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MINISTERS: The Congregation

PASTOR: The Rev. Jill E. Olds

READER: Carol Topitzer

MUSIC: Emily Kropo

DIGITAL MINISTRY: Rosa Richardson

Sunday, Jan 4, 2026

The Epiphany

**Please rise in body or spirit*

***Indicates gender neutral wording*

SONGS OF PRAISE

GREETING AND WELCOME

INTROIT (*unison, sung twice*)

“Sanctuary”

“Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary for You.”

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

One: The star in the sky looks down where he lay...

Many: ...and as Jesus lies in the hay, so too do we hear the invitation lie down and rest, at the end of a full year.

One: The star in the sky beckons us also to rise, and to look forward.

Many: Looking forward feels right too, as 2026 calls us to journey onward, towards what God might have in mind for us.

One: We will need guidance on this journey, starlight to show us the way.

Many: May the stars guide us, and may love illumine our path.

One: Beloved children of God: come, and let us worship the God who created the stars, who created us, and who still continues to lead us in the ways of love and truth.

***HYMN #139 “The First Nowell”**

(Hymn on page 6 & 7)

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Gracious God, Christmas is fading fast on the horizon. And as that sun sets, we see a star: a bright sign of hope, leading us forward. May your strength carry us forward into this new year, this new journey, this new unknown. May we carry with us the hope, peace, joy, love, and light—and the gift of Emmanuel that you gave to us in Advent and Christmas—as we endeavor to carry those gifts to you, and to all the world. It is in Your Holy Name we pray, Amen.

THE GLORIA NCH #759 (unison) *

*Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (from the UCC Christmas Fund Resources)

Holy God, as the days start to lengthen, and as the calendar turns to a new year, we in the church also turn to you in this new season: a season of light, of clarity dawning, of new understandings and new endeavors. Help us to be mindful that others see things in their own way, while see things in ours. Forgive us when clarity feels overly bright and clear to us, threatening to blind us to other perspectives. May we remain humble, steadfast, and true to the true Epiphany, which is the presence of you in this world. It is in Your Name we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND COMPASSION

SCRIPTURE LESSON(S): Matthew 2:1-12

Pew bible page 783

One: May God bless the hearing and understanding of this holy Word.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON: “How Will We Shine?”

The Rev. Jill E. Olds

ANTHEM

THE GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

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DOXOLOGY #780 (unison) *

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ, all creatures here below.
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore,
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.*

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION (from the UCC Christmas Fund Resources)**

**Thank you, gracious God, for the gifts you have shared with us in this season.
Bless these gifts, from us to our siblings in this world, so that others may see the stars, and remember the Light which shines in whatever darkness they face. It is in Your Holy Name we pray, Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

COMMUNION PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: Let us pray.

All: We have followed the star to this point, stopping at the table on the way to the cradle. We have placed our hearts at your little baby feet, O Lord. As we give our lives to your light, strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth as your light-bearers into the world. May your light will shine, both this day and always. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***HYMN "We Three Kings of Orient Are"**

(Hymn on page 8 & 9)

***THE BENEDICTION**

THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

 *In Our Prayers...*

The family & friends of Joan Hedman; the family and friends of Jamie Rude, on his sudden passing; healing for Jandie; Esther Leiva, upon her mom's passing; Art Yost; Kathy Harrold's sister-in-law, Kathy, for healing; Bill Doherty (Judith's brother-in-law); The family and friends of Rev. Karl Duetzmann, upon his passing; Carol Topitzer, for healing; Dorothy Osanitsch, for healing; Packy Paules (Ginna's brother); the Camarro family; John Stanley (Tricia's husband); Eileen Doyle; Audrey, family, and friends of Don Moore, on his passing; the family and friends of Nancy Hall, on her passing; healing for Kim's niece, Kali; Deborah Jones (Hibbard), going through chemo and radiation; Cathy Markle recovering from a stroke; Alana Masciana and her family; Brittany Silveira (Maureen's daughter); Tricia Walker; Raymond Ianniello (Audrey's brother-in-law); Jecy (Ann Yost's godson); medical & emergency personnel; those impacted by natural disasters; those serving in the military; those suffering or recovering from addictions; the unemployed or under-employed; the homeless; those in prison; peacemakers; those suffering emotional illness; those suffering religious persecution; the staff and churches of the Southern New England Conference UCC; and our elected leaders.

NOTE: Please inform the church office or Rev. Jill if you would like to have someone's name added (please seek permission first), or removed. Please also note that you may be hearing from us every so often, so that we can keep the prayer list updated.

Please Submit your ANNUAL REPORTS!

Please email **ASAP** in Word, Excel, or pdf format to:

woodmontucc@gmail.com

Thank you!

Carol Topitzer, Office Administrator

Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-12

Traditional English carol; alt.

Descant

1 The first Now - ell, the an - gel did say,
 2 They looked a - bove and saw a star
 3 And by the light of that same star
 4 This star shone bright in the north - west,
 5 Then en - tered in those ma - gi three,

was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay;
 shin - ing in the east, be - yond them far,
 three sag - es came from coun - try far;
 o'er Beth - le - hem it seemed to rest,
 and bend - ing low up - on their knee,

In fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep,
 And to the earth it gave great light,
 To seek for a king was their in - tent,
 And there it did both stop and stay,
 They of - fered there, in great rev - erence,

on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
 and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.
 right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.
 their gold and myrrh and frank - in - cense.

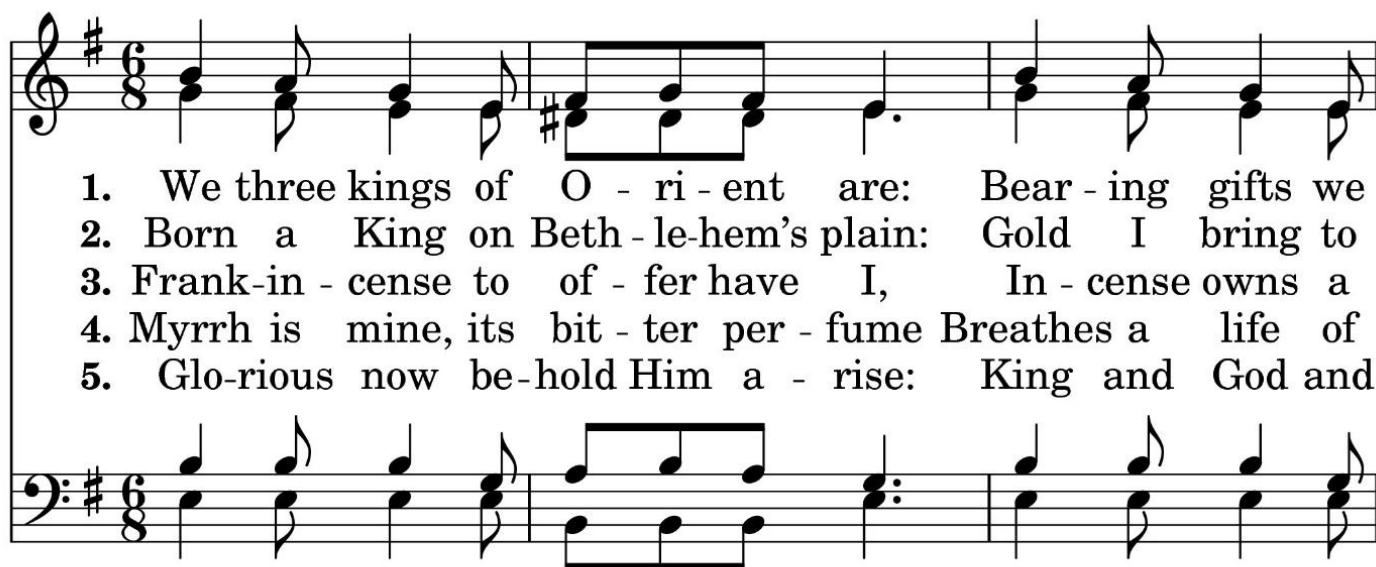
Refrain

Refrain

Now - ell, now - ell, now - ell, now -


ell, born in a man - ger, Em - man - u - el.

We Three Kings of Orient Are



1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are: Bear - ing gifts we
 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain: Gold I bring to
 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a
 4. Myrrh is mine, its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of
 5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise: King and God and

4



tra - verse a - far— Field and fountain, moor and mountain—
 crown Him a - gain, King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er,
 De - i - ty nigh; Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing,
 gath - er - ing gloom— Sor - r'wing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing,
 Sac - ri - fice; Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

7

Chorus

Fol - low - ing yon - der star.
O - ver us all to reign.
Wor - ship Him, God on high. Oh, star of won - der,
Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
Earth to heav'n re - plies.

10

star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright, West - ward lead - ing,

14

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

Notes of Thanks from Our Church Staff

From Rev. Jill:

I want to thank all of you for the very generous gift card you gave to me for Christmas. It was a lovely gesture and while not necessary, my family and I really appreciate it. It will be used well! Thank you all for your ongoing generosity!

From Emily:

Thank you so much for the generous gift, and for continuing to be such a welcoming and warm community to be a part of! My first year at Woodmont has been amazing, and I am lucky to be surrounded by wonderful folks every week. I'm excited to see what we do in the new year!

From Carol:

Thank you, my church family for your generous gift! It is so appreciated! I am ever so grateful to to serve the church and people that I love. Wishing a happy and healthy New Year to you all!

Church Office Hours

Rev. Jill's Office Hours:

Mon. & Thurs. 9:30 am-3:00 pm, Tues. afternoons by appointment

Carol's Office Hours: Tues., Wed. & Thurs. 11am – 3pm

Hours are somewhat flexible, so kindly call ahead, appointments preferred.

Also note: Rev. Jill's days off are Fridays & Saturdays.

She does not check emails during that time, and will only return phone messages on those days in the event of an emergency.

Woodmont United Church of Christ

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