



# **Welcome to Worship!**

**Sunday, January 4, 2026**  
**Epiphany Sunday and Communion Sunday**  
Worship Theme: Building Community

**\*Please stand as you are able.**

## **PRELUDE**

*How Brightly Beams the Morning Star* by Phillip Nicolai

## **WELCOME**

Pastor Karen Evenson

## **\*HYMN**

*There's a Song in the Air* (UMH 249, 1, 3, 4)

## **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: How did you get here?

**Response 1: I walked, eyes looking up, following the star.**

**Response 2: I ran, lunging for a love that is bigger than me.**

**Response 3: I stumbled and fell, tender step after tender step.**

**Response 4: I ambled like a river, caught up in God's flow.**

**Response 5: I crawled, kissing the earth below me.**

Leader: Tell me, all. How did you get here?

**All: I am here by God's grace and love's pull.**

Leader: Welcome home. This is God's house. There is room for you here.

**All: We have come to worship our gracious God! Now is the time to worship.**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord of living light, no matter the roads we've taken, the steps we've made, or the paths we've traveled, there is nowhere we could go that would land us outside of your love. Today, we will work to hear and believe the good news of the Gospel. Regardless of the paths we travel, how lost we may get, or the twists and turns, we do not go alone and pray that your light will shine brightly in us and through us along the way. Help us to bring our best gifts--ones that will help us plant the seeds of your love in the world and help love to grow. We pray you will be with us, as we begin again. Amen.

## HYMN

*We Three Kings* (UMH 254, v 1 & 2)

## KIDS MESSAGE

*(Kids of all ages are invited to join the pastor up front)*

## PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

## SPECIAL MUSIC

*Holy Forever* by CeCe Winans and Jenn Johnson  
Kelvin Paye and Steve Moen, UMCA Praise Team

## A MOMENT TO SHARE THE STORY

## SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-15 (NRSVUE)

## MESSAGE

***“Courageous Defiance”***  
Pastor Karen Evenson

## \*COMMUNION HYMN

*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* (UMH 206 v 1)

## HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to our Creator. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give you our thanks and praise, O God, creator of heaven and earth.

## BLESSING OF THE BREAD & CUP

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD & SHARING OF THE CUP

## OFFERING DURING COMMUNION

*10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)*  
by Matt Redman and Steve Angrisano  
Kelvin Paye and Steve Moen, UMCA Praise Team

## PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, following your light, giving ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## THE LORD’S PRAYER

## \*HYMN

*Morning Has Broken* (UMH 145)

## \*STAR WORDS TO GUIDE US

*Let us pray: Holy One, as the star once guided the magi and many others, so may these words guide our hearts and steps. Let each word shine with your light, becoming intention and prayer for the year ahead. Amen.*

## **\*BENEDICTION**

*Go out into the world, embracing the will to dream, knowing that God will not hide from you. Go out into the world, knowing that God guides by light and leads in love, helping us to trust in courageous actions that will bring with them a new day and a new way.*

## **POSTLUDE**

*Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* setting by David Lasky

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**January 11, 2026**  
**First Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**Baptism of Jesus and Joining of New Members**  
**Matthew 3:13-17**  
***"Let It Be So"***  
Message by Pastor Karen Evenson

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### **Worship Hospitality Team**

Building Opener and Closer ~ Adam Breiner and Dave Panter  
Choral Conductor ~ George Chu  
Coffee/Donut Steward ~ Candy and Dave Gislason  
Communion Servers ~ Bill and Margaret Ekstrum, Chrisana Tripodi, and Dave Panter  
Communion Steward ~ Jim January  
Deaconess ~ Kim Harris  
Congregational Care Coordinator ~ Sue Buckland  
Greeters ~ Bill and Margaret Ekstrum  
Liturgist ~ Candy Gislason  
Music Ensembles ~ *To be prayerfully determined*  
Nursery Coordinator and Volunteer ~ Amanda Harris and Sarah Dhein  
Organist ~ Marilyn Tice  
Pastor ~ Rev. Karen Evenson  
Praise Team Coordinator ~ Kelvin Paye  
Scripture Reader ~ Dave Gislason  
Snow Removal and Salting ~ Jim Prody and Scott Evenson  
Sunday School Teacher and Assistant ~ Adam Breiner and Bridgett Ansong  
Ushers ~ David Blincow, Gail Sanstad, Ian Wallin,  
Joyce Buffington, Roxy Crane, and Mark Worst  
Welcome Center ~ Sheila Benson  
Worship Tech ~ Dallas Berry



## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

UMCA Office Hours: 9:00am - 3:00pm ~ Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Or by appointment, please contact us at:

Phone: 763-421-2378 | Email: [umcanoka@gmail.com](mailto:umcanoka@gmail.com)

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

10:00am Knitters Gathering

1:00pm Card Games in the Community Room

6:30pm BUILD - Adult Study

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

9:00am Sewing and Quilting Group

10:00am Men's Breakfast at Burger King

10:30am New Testament Study - Rev. Stephen Perry

6:00pm Youth Group

7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 8, 2026

8:00am Thursday Book Group at Bakers Square

9:30am Bring Your Bible ~ In-Person & Zoom

Sunday, January 11, 2026

### **SUNDAY SERVICE**

9:30am Worship (In-Person & Online)

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am-1:00pm Potluck, Community Event, and Puzzle-Palooza

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## **JANUARY** Ministry Highlight:



These funds are used for Emergency Relief  
to our local community by providing rental  
assistance, gas cards, food donations, etc...



**Scripture:** *Matthew 2:1–15 & Exodus 1:8–2:10*

**Character Spotlight:** *Joseph*

## THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Epiphany unveils divine presence in unexpected places and people, revealing that true revelation demands resistance. In Matthew's telling, revelation is not peaceful or benign but dangerous and urgent. The visit of the magi—foreign astrologers seeking a new king—marks the beginning of public recognition of Jesus' identity. But their arrival also alerts King Herod, whose power is threatened by the very idea of another kind of ruler. The magi's decision to listen to divine warnings and resist Herod's manipulation places them among the first resisters of empire in Jesus' story.

Joseph listens, too. Throughout the first two chapters of Matthew's gospel, Joseph is a model of faithful responsiveness to divine guidance. He listens to messages given in dreams and acts without hesitation to protect what is vulnerable. He leads his family on a journey of forced migration, fleeing to Egypt under the cover of night. His faithfulness is not abstract; it is embodied through action, disruption, and care. By attending to Joseph's resistance and the magi's defiance, Epiphany becomes a story not just of recognition, but of radical courage in the face of imperial violence.

These themes echo the Exodus story, where the survival of Moses required midwives, mothers, and daughters to resist Pharaoh's genocidal orders. In both Matthew and Exodus, divine presence is made known through the actions of those who refuse to comply with death-dealing systems. Herod and Pharaoh both seek to protect their power by targeting the most vulnerable—children. Yet in both stories, it is those without seats of power who become agents of salvation. Revelation is not located in the center of empire but in fugitives, dreams, and acts of radical care.

As we annually celebrate Epiphany on January 6, we must reclaim it from the shadow cast by the U.S. Capitol insurrection of January 6. The date has been marked

by violence, white Christian nationalism, and empire-preserving rage. But Epiphany, rightly understood, invites us to name and resist these distortions. The message of Christ does not bless empire; it exposes and confronts it. In a world where ICE functions as a domestic army, tearing families apart and incarcerating migrants, where genocide unfolds before our eyes in Gaza, and where children continue to suffer under the weight of power's greed, Epiphany's call is urgent.

This is not a sentimental season. It is an invitation to see, to name where God is revealed, and to align ourselves accordingly. In dreams, in stars, and in unexpected arrivals, divine presence appears—and those who perceive it are invited into the work of protection, protest, and prophetic imagination.



## CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

Joseph, so often portrayed as silent and secondary, emerges in Matthew's gospel as a model of holy courage. He does not speak a word in this scripture, yet his actions speak volumes. He listens. Not once, but multiple times, Joseph receives divine messages in dreams and responds with immediate trust. He protects Mary and Jesus not through violence or dominance, but by disrupting expectations, relocating his family, and resisting compliance with Herod's regime.



## **WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER**

I AM NO LONGER MY OWN, BUT THINE.

PUT ME TO WHAT THOU WILT,

RANK ME WITH WHOM THOU WILT.

PUT ME TO DOING, PUT ME TO SUFFERING.

LET ME BE EMPLOYED BY THEE OR LAID ASIDE FOR THEE.

EXALTED FOR THEE OR BROUGHT LOW FOR THEE.

LET ME BE FULL, LET ME BE EMPTY.

LET ME HAVE ALL THINGS, LET ME HAVE NOTHING.

I FREELY AND HEARTILY YIELD ALL THINGS

TO THY PLEASURE AND DISPOSAL.

AND NOW, O GLORIOUS AND BLESSED GOD,

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT,

THOU ART MINE, AND I AM THINE.

AND THE COVENANT WHICH I HAVE MADE ON EARTH,

LET IT BE RATIFIED IN HEAVEN.

**AMEN.**