



January 7, 2024

Epiphany

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**

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Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-23

✚ Invites worshipers to rise in spirit or body as they are able.

PH - Indicates the Pilgrim Hymnal.

You may notice there are several elements included in our time of worship. We want you to know this is intentional, as each of us may come for differing reasons; each of us may connect to Spirit in different ways. At First Congregational UCC, we are exploring how LOVE inspires us to create space for one another.

Join Us Online!

You can view our worship streamed on our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/RCFirstUCC>. Copies of the video are available on our church web site's video tab www.rcfirstucc.com.

Gathering Music

Musical Selections

French horn alone, or horn and organ

Centering as God's People

Greetings

One: One of my favorite things about the Magi is that they go looking for God. Actively and consistently, day by day, they follow the star until it guides them to Jesus.

All: **No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!**

Prelude

Prelude BWV 550 J.S. Bach; arr. R. Dishinger

Call to Worship

One: Calling all seekers, all dreamers, all believers...
Calling all glass-half-full optimists and lighthouse keepers...
Calling all star-chasers and bedtime prayer speakers...
Bring your questions, your hope, your faith and your fear into this space.

Many: **God is here.**

✚ Hymn

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

PH 488

Invocation (in unison)

Many: **God of starlight,
every part of us is trying to seek you:
our bodies that carried us into this space,**

our heads bowed in prayer, our hearts that keep
 whispering, "There is more than just this."
 We are seeking you. Like a dog looking for its owner,
 who will search the whole house—
 under beds, behind doors,
 in every corner of every room
 until their person is found—
 we are turning over every rock and leaf
 looking for fingerprints that belong to you.
 So meet us halfway. Find us in the maze.
 Quiet the rest of the world.
 Open the door to us with rich laughter and say,
 "Come on in!"
 We know you're near, so know that it's you we seek.
 Find us in these words.
 Gratefully we pray,
 Amen.

✠The Peace

Receiving God's Word

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-23

Pew Bible, NT, page 1

A Message for the Young at Heart

Mary Haan

Anthem

The Star that Shone on Bethlehem

L. Shackley

Sermon

We Keep Seeking

Pastor Erin Erickson

Offerings

Invitation

Offertory

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

R. DeBruyn

✠Doxology

H. Smith

Give thanks with a grateful heart,

Give thanks to the Holy One,

Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, the Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong!"

Let the poor say, "I am rich!"

Because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks.

✠Prayer of Dedication

Receiving God's Blessings

Communion is a gift to the church in all times and places. The Spirit blesses us wherever we are. So those at home are welcome to prepare bread and drink to commune with us and Christians everywhere.

Invitation to the Meal

One: Friends, we know what it feels like to look for God.

We know what it feels like to turn our heads up to the sky, looking for stars or signs. We know what it feels like to walk day after day, hoping that we grow closer to God. We know what it feels like to seek. I think that's part of why we end up here, because we are hoping that in the midst of this messy world we might catch a glimpse of God that will carry us through.

Well friends, I have good news. God is already here. Like a Mighty wind, God is moving through this room. God is at this Table, inviting us forward. The invitation may not be as clear as a star in the sky, but from generation to generation, God has always gathered with God's people. So come to this Table with your questions and your doubts. Come with your joys and your gratitude. Come seeking, come hungry, come curious. Come open. Come not because you have to, but because you can. Come with all of you, for there is room for you here.

Many: This is God's Table; this is God's meal. We are the guests.

One: And so with an attitude of prayer in our hearts, we pray...

**Many: God of today, tomorrow and yesterday,
Like the Magi, we are seeking you.**

Like the Magi, we are bringing ourselves closer to you, step by step, and word by word. So today we ask that you would make yourself known to us. Reach into our spirits and give us a boost of confidence that love is real and we are not alone. Speak to us in this bread. Speak to us in the cup.

Holy God, it is with grateful hearts that we pray together the words your son taught us to pray, saying:

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.

Sharing of the Elements

One: With Christians around the world and throughout the centuries, we gather around these symbols of bread and juice—simple elements that speak of nourishment and transformation. In this meal we remember Jesus,
The words he spoke and the life he lived.
We remember his invitation for us to be transformed from the inside—out. We remember on the night when Jesus and the disciples shared their last meal, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and said,
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”

*(The bread is distributed. The cup in the center is gluten free.
Please hold the bread so that all may eat together).*

Hymn *Let Us Break Bread Together* **PH 288**

(Participation is optional. Please remain seated. We will repeat verse 1 three times or until the organ stops playing.)

One: Let us share the bread of life.

(You may eat the bread.)

One: After their meal,
Jesus took the cup, and poured it, saying,
“This is the new covenant, remember me.”
Let us drink the cup of blessing.

(The cup is distributed. Please drink the cup as you are served.)

Hymn *Let Us Break Bread Together* **PH 288**

(Participation is optional. Please remain seated. We will repeat verse 2 three times or until the organ stops playing.)

Prayer of Affirmation

Many: We believe in a God who promised to Abraham, who wrestled with Jacob, who walked with Ruth, who spoke with Moses, who grieved with Bathsheba, who danced with David, who dreamed with Joseph and who hoped like Mary. We believe in a God who has been loving, inviting, transforming and challenging us from generation to generation.
And we believe that same God is here with us now, saying, “Come on in; there’s room for you here.”
Amen.

Going Into God's World

Community Announcements

✠ Hymn

As With Gladness Men of Old

PH 119

✠ Benediction

Postlude *Sinfonia from "Uns ist ein Kind geboren"* J.S. Bach/J. Kuhnau

Events

Sunday, January 7

Epiphany

- 9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour/
Wellness Wheel

Monday, January 8

- 11:00am: Midday Meditation
- 11:30am: Lunch Recovery Group
- 4:00pm: PEO Meeting BR

Tuesday, January 9

- 11:00am: Midday Meditation
- 11:30am: Church Chat
- 12:30pm: Spiritual Practices
PEO Meeting BF
- 1:00pm: Craft Day
- 4:15pm: Trust Board
- 7:00pm: Young Adult Game
Board Fun

Wednesday, January 10

- 10:00am: WF Board Meeting
- 11:00am: Midday Meditation
- 6:00pm: Bell Choir Practice
- 7:00pm: Choir Practice

Thursday, January 11

- 10:00am: Altar Guild Meeting
- 11:00am: Midday Meditation
- 4:30pm: Dept. of Worship
- 6:30pm: Dept. of Stewardship
and Budget

Friday, January 12

- 9:30am: Watercolor Painting
- 1:00pm: Stained Glass Group

Sunday, January 14

- 9:30am: Worship Service/
Nursery available
- 9:45am: Sunday School
- 10:30am: Fellowship Hour/
Wellness Wheel/
Ron Comely's Birthday
- 10:45am: Pastoral/Personnel
Meeting

Church News

Birthdays

January 7: Kathy Dannenbring

January 12: Lindsay Wathen

January 13: Gabriella Golden

The Wellness Wheel

Every Sunday during Coffee Hour, starting **today** enjoy a brief presentation from a member of our congregation about Wellness!

Grocery Card Sales

After much research and heartfelt discussion, the Dept. of Ministries decided to discontinue grocery card sales at the end of 2023.

Therefore, there will be no card sales starting with the first Sunday in January.

Department members felt that there is a better way for our

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church to support Church Response and the community. Thank you all for your continued support of our church ministries.

Stained Glass Group

Come learn how to create beautiful stained glass works of art. The group will meet on **Fridays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm** in the kitchen. Their next meeting will be on **Friday, January 5 at 1:00pm.**

For more information, contact **Dave Ledford.**



Midday Meditation

Calling all contemplatives! Starting on **January 8**, each **Monday-Thursday at 11:00am**, a midday meditation (20-minute-sit) will be offered in the hallway near the Sacristy. Please feel free to pop-in any time you'd like. For more information, contact Pastor Erin.



Lunch Recovery Group

January 8 and 22 from 11:30am to 12:30pm in the Parlor, the Lunch Recovery Group is open to all those who are in recovery, curious about recovery, or affected by the addiction of a family member.



Church Chat

In January, Church Chat will be held at **11:30am** on the **second and fourth Tuesdays, January 9 and 23.** Watch for information on when the group will meet after January.

Contact **Kathleen Batchelder** or **Becky Fisher** to find out information about the book the group will be reading and discussing.

Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices is a small group of church members and friends who meet to read scriptures together and to engage in practices of prayer and meditation.

Spiritual disciplines require practice and having a group with

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whom to practice can strengthen the discipline and the faith it gives.

Spiritual Practices will be held on **Tuesday each week at 12:30pm**. Please consider joining the group in the church library.

For more information, contact Pastor Erin.

Young Adult Board Game Night

Anyone ages 12-25 is invited for an evening of board games and fun on **January 9** and **January 23** from **7:00 to 9:00pm** in the Fireside Room!

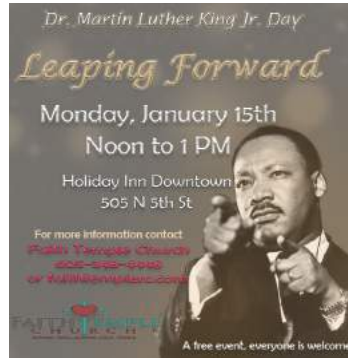


Birthday Celebration

Ron Comely will turn **90** years young on **January 19!** Come have a piece of cake and join the celebration during coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall following worship on **January 14**.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Faith Temple Church would like to invite the members of First Congregational Church to a Martin Luther King Day celebration. Faith Temple is hosting the celebration on **January 15, 2024**, from **noon to 1:00pm**, at the

Downtown Holiday Inn, 505 N 5th Street, Rapid City. Everyone is welcome to attend, and Pastor Erin is one of the speakers!



Ordination Update

Pastor Erin has her Ordination Interview with Committees on Ministry, January 15th, 2024! If all goes well, an Ecclesial Council will be called. Following the Ecclesial Council there is Installation and Ordination.

Christmas Tree/ Sanctuary Décor Takedown

The Sanctuary decor will remain in place as a backdrop for special offering music during worship on **January 14**.

Everyone is invited to help take the tree and Sanctuary decor down at **9:00am** on **Saturday, January 20**. All help is very much appreciated!

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Couples Workshop

A two-day Couples Workshop will be hosted in the Parlor on **January 26 and 27** by licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Lynell Rice Brinkworth. For more information and to register, email Lynnell@SPIRALCOUNSELING.com or call 605-381-5277.

Fellowship Hour Help

Coffee hosts and dishwashers are needed for the coffee hour following worship. Easy instructions are posted for each volunteer opportunity. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall on the sheets located next to the cookies if you can help. If you need assistance, indicate it on the sheet and someone will help you. Thank you!

Prayer Concerns

Please hold the following members and friends in your prayers:



Lee Boyles has ongoing health concerns.

Kay Daugherty's health is improving. Kay's brother-in-law, **Doug Reeves**, has heart issues.

Andy and Barb Knight's son, **John Knight**, faces serious health concerns as the result of a fall, but is doing better.

Ron Laughlin, husband of **Becky Fisher's** cousin, Linda, will receive one year of immunotherapy.

Sheila Long's mother-in-law, Anne Long, is fighting cancer.

Sid Michaels is cancer free.

Jodie Thuringer's father is facing a recurrence of health issues.

Deb Tompkins fell and has a broken knee which is improving.

Deb Tompkins has a young friend, 12-year-old **Max Green**, who lives in northern Kansas. Max was born with cerebral palsy and many other challenges. He was hospitalized with bacterial pneumonia but now is back home. He enjoyed Christmas!

We also pray for those members of our church family who are in care centers or isolated in their homes, including:

Evelyn Bradshaw, Vivian Dittmer, Wes Humke, Eunice Johnson, Merrie Miller, Marrelyce Seaman, Dorothy Slingsby, Helen Snyder and Elena Van Pelt

Important Decisions at Annual Meeting

The Church Board has issued the call for the **145th Annual Meeting** of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Rapid City, South Dakota.

The meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 28, 2024** in the church Fellowship Hall following worship and will include the election of officers and department members, receiving reports of the ministries of 2023 and the adoption of the budget for 2024.

All members and friends of the congregation are encouraged to participate in this important meeting. Local church autonomy and lay control of decisions are hallmarks of our church's style of governing ourselves.

Mark your calendars now and plan to participate in this important meeting as we continue to make history together.



Leaders

Erin Erickson, pastor
Becky Fleming, licensed minister
Mary Haan, Christian Education Coordinator
Alan Glover, choir director, organist
Michael Bossen, bell choir director
Audrey Fenner, organist
John Fenner, French horn
Patti Arneson and Laura Switzer, administrative colleagues
Chuck Rounds, moderator
Denise Webster, treasurer
Carol Boyles, Becky Fisher and Jenny Kozel, congregational representatives
Willis and Pat Sutliff, greeters
Elsie Cushman and Hazel Cushman, acolytes
Enya Wallace, reader
Jim and Denise Webster, coffee hosts
Steve Bareis, dishwasher
Rev. Kathleen Batchelder, pastor emerita
Lynnell Parrott, organist emerita

Credits:

<i>Prelude BWV 550</i> - J.S. Bach; arr. R. Dishinger	Medici Music Press, 2006
<i>Songs of Thankfulness and Praise</i> - R. DeBruyn	OCP, 1990
<i>Sinfonia from "Uns ist ein Kind geboren"</i> - J.S. Bach/J. Kuhnau	Lorenz, 1985
<i>The Star that Shone on Bethlehem</i> - L. Shackley	Somerset Press
<i>Give Thanks</i> - H. Smith	Integrity Hosanna Music, 1978
<i>Go, Tell It on the Mountain</i>	Pilgrim Press, 1958
<i>Let Us Break Bread Together</i>	Pilgrim Press, 1958
<i>As With Gladness Men of Old</i>	Pilgrim Press, 1958

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