

(▲ Rise in body or in spirit/Responses in bold)

WE GATHER AS GOD’S PEOPLE

Welcome & Introductions

Lighting the Candles

Call to Worship (Responsive)

God of starlight,
We long to follow you.

**Like the Magi,
we want to pick up the hems of our robes
and run in your direction.**

Like the Magi,
we want to kick up dust with our feet
and make a joyful ruckus
following your guiding star.

**Unfortunately, the stars can be
hard to see from here.**

Your still, small voice can be
hard to hear from here.

So just as you guided the Magi, guide us.

Draw our attention to your Word.

Reveal what it is you want us to hear today,
so that we can follow you.

**With hope in our hearts we pray,
Amen.**

LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD FOR US TODAY

You Are a Blessing

Scripture & Reflection

Ministry of Music – A Tiny Child Will Come

We Can’t Go It Alone

Scripture & Reflection

We Sing – While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks # 75 V 1-3

Do the Good That Is Ours to Do

Scripture & Reflection

We Sing – Angels We Have Heard on High # 38 V 1-3

Hope Is Worth the Risk

Scripture & Reflection

We Sing – The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy # 73

Love Knows Your Name

Scripture and Reflection

We Sing – Joy Is Now in Every Place # 45

The Road Isn’t Straight

Scripture and Reflection

We Sing – We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Refrain:

*O star of wonder, star of light,
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. *R.*

Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising,
worshiping God on high. *R.*

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

▲ PASSING OF THE PEACE

▲ Communion Hymn – Come and Gather

Come and gather, at the stable
They have journeyed far from home
Mary, Joseph, young and able
Travelled ways as yet unknown
With a dream of untold promise
That great things would come to pass
In the sureness of God’s blessing
They found peace and rest as last.

Come and gather, round the manger
Where the Christ child gently lays.
Open up our hearts to wonder
At the glory of that day.
Visit him with thanks and promise,
Peace and hope and love and joy
Take them daily into living
Wrapped up in a baby boy.

Come and gather, at the table
Where we seek him once again
Let us enter into mystery
Needed now as much as then.
In the breaking of the sweet bread
In the pouring of the wine,
We meet him again among us
With a love so dear, divine.

Come and gather, in his footsteps
We will tread where he once went
With the lost and lonely people
Now to them we’re also sent
Loving, working, tending, caring
In our Saviour’s name we pray
In our work and in our worship
We find hope in every day.

Communion Prayer

Ever-present God, our traveling companion,
we follow every path in search of you.

**Sometimes we run as fast as we can,
taking every shortcut
like a child eager to arrive at the
promised destination.**

Sometimes we find ourselves wandering,
unsure of whether we're following the trail
or forging our own way.

**Sometimes we just need to lie down
and stare up at the stars,
resting before we set out once again.**

Wherever we are,
we know you are right beside us.
**Today we lift up to you our family,
friends, and community members
who are traveling difficult roads.
Surround them with your loving presence,
and remind them that they are not alone.**

Strengthen us to travel alongside them.
Let us bring hope, peace, joy,
and love where it's needed most.
**Shine a light in the darkness
so we can find our way to you.**
Holy God, we follow every path in search of you.
And yet, you are already here.

Let the taste of this bread and cup
open our eyes to the places we've met you.
**Let these star words remind us to seek you out
in even the most unexpected places.**

Guide us, invite us, challenge us in the year ahead,
and remind us that we are yours, your beloved,
whom you have claimed, redeemed, and called good.
**We ask all these things in the name of Jesus,
who taught us to pray, saying... Our Father...**

Telling the Story

Prayer for Transformation

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Prayer After Communion

**Holy God who lights our way,
We thank you for this moment of respite
along the journey,
a moment to be filled with good things,
to be reminded of our belovedness
and sent out to be your hands and feet in the world.**

**Though we'd often prefer a straightforward,
step-by-step plan for our lives,
you've instead given us an invitation
to wander, to seek,
to take a different road,
to be guided by a star.**

**May these star words be a map to you,
guiding us to look under every rock
and around every corner,
seeking you out everywhere,
because everywhere is exactly where you are.**

**And next year, when the road
leads back to this very place,
may we find that you were with us
every step of the way.
With hope we pray, amen**

Invitation to Generosity & Prayer of Dedication

THRESHOLD INTO GOD'S WORLD

▲ Silent Night # 67

▲ Commissioning & Blessing

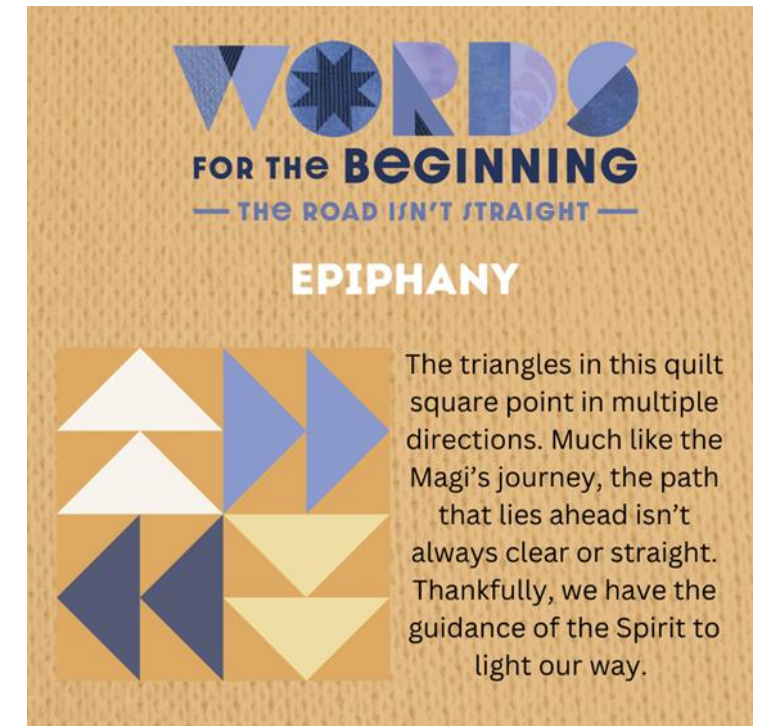
▲ Song of Dismissal – Hope Shines MV # 220

MUSIC TAKES US INTO THE WORLD

*Liturgy – A Sanctified Art
Communion Hymn ~ Rev. Catherine MacDonald*

St. James United Church

United by Faith
Strengthened by Friendship
Building a Community of Love and Justice



January 5, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

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