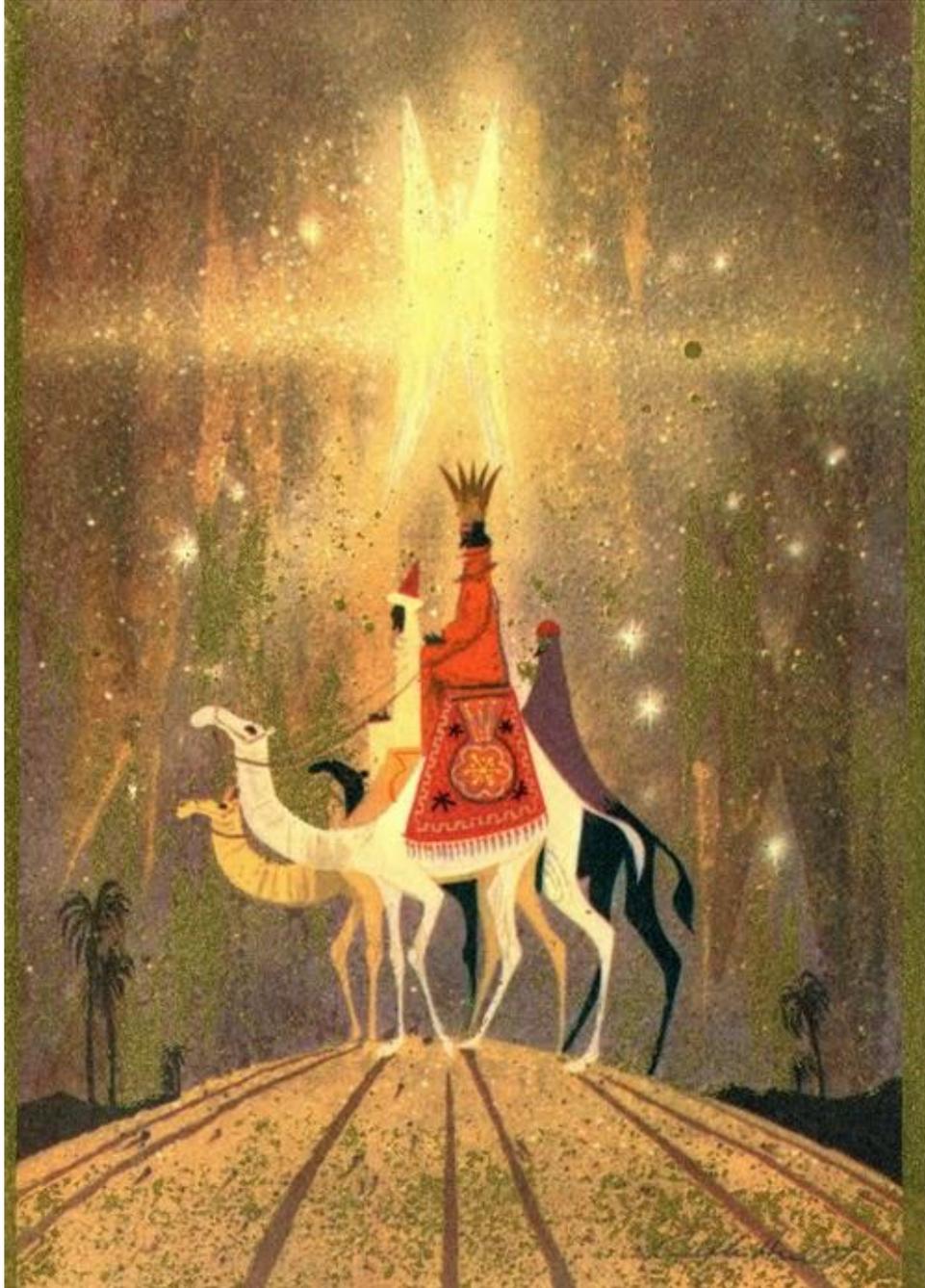




ASHEVILLE
First Congregational
United Church of Christ
Jesus • Justice • Prayer • Peace



Second Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, January 3, 2015

10:30 am

Jesus Justice Prayer Peace

* Indicates to rise in body or spirit

Welcome

Yolanda Adams

Please pass the red friendship pads to sign in at this time. If this is your first time visiting, please legibly write your name and address so we may send you a letter of welcome and more information about our church.

Voluntary

Procession on "We Three Kings" - Barr

Call to Worship

One: Arise! Shine! Your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!

Right Side: *We have seen the star in the east, and we are following.*

Left Side: *We have remembered God's wonder and promise, and we are worshipping.*

All: *We have come not to get presents, but to give them!*

One: Lift up your eyes and look around: God's people now gather together, to open our hearts and sing out our praise.

All: *The mystery of God's wonder and grace is here: Come, let us worship together!*

*Hymn # 139

"The First Nowell"

Unison Prayer

God of wonder and mystery, today we remember how you surprise us in every age. Into the gloom of fear and want, you bring light; into emptiness, you bring abundance; into the cold, you bring warmth. Into the hardness of the world, you bring the greatest power we have known, in the seemingly powerless form of an infant. Enter now, Holy One, among us and within us, and move us to joyful adoration of your mystery and wonder. Amen

Prayer of Confession

One: We remember the Magi, who set out with singular focus on the promise of the heavens.

All: *And we remember the ways that we have lost sight of you, God, as the bright guide for our lives.*

One: We remember that they stayed determined on their journey, not even swayed by Herod's power and promises.

All: *And we remember that often we have started out well, but strayed from your path, detoured by our fleeting fears and desires.*

One: We remember the wise ones who adored the child: wisdom and wealth falling to their knees before a poor infant.

All: *And we remember that too often we have given our adoration to wealth or wisdom, not seeing the Christ in our midst.*

Words of Assurance

One: To each of us who knows that we have lost sight of the promise, or lost the way of our God, or lost hope, God has a promise: "I am with you." God gives a holy presence, and forgiveness, and new hope, in the Christ.

All: *Thanks be to God! Amen!*

Musical Response "Star of Wonder" (tune: We Three Kings)

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

First Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us

All: *Thanks be to God!*

Anthem

"Why Not Buy an Extra Present?"

Why not buy an extra present? When you've bought the others?
Give it to a child who has nothing; Christ has countless brothers.
Be just like the Wise Men with their gifts of gold and myrrh
Make a poor child's Christmas, with a toy to love and share
Why not buy an extra present? When You've bought the others.

Why not visit one who's lonely, as you do the manger?
Why not see the sick and house-bound, though you are a stranger?
Be just like the Wise Men with their gifts of gold and myrrh

Just a friendly visit, is a gift that's rich and rare.

Why not visit one who's lonely, as you do the manger?

Why not feed the poor and hungry, in a third world stable?

Help supply the loaves and fishes, for their meager table. Be just like the Wise Men with their gifts of gold and myrrh.

Having dinner one day helps to lighten their despair.

Why not feed the poor and hungry, in a third world stable?

Time with Children

Rev. Margot Pickett

After a Time with Children, children may go with Gary to the Education Wing for a time of religious exploration and education, and return to the sanctuary before the last hymn.

Children are also welcome to remain in worship.

***Passing the Peace**

Second Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us

All: *Thanks be to God!*

Sermon

“To Follow a Star”

Rev. Margot Pickett

***Hymn #159**

“As with Gladness Those of Old”

Ministry Updates

Yolanda Adams

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Invitation (Congregation reads the *bold italic print*)

This is the joyful feast of the people of God.

Men and women, youth and children, come from the east and west, from the north and the south, and gather around Christ's table.

This table is for all those who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

Communion Prayer

May the God of new beginnings be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the One who makes all things, including us, new.

Children of God, sing praises to the One who gives you new life.

We praise the One who continues to surprise us with hope and grace.

In response to God's infinite love and boundless grace we rejoice... With magi and shepherds, and all the people of faith in all places and times we praise you with joy, saying:

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion.... Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Eternal God, as we gather here to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of your Son in this meal, we remember those who cannot be with us today and all those we know and love who are in need of special prayer this day. (At this time, congregants are invited to say a name or a short prayer.) We ask that you would send your Holy Spirit upon all these we have named and on us and these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us and your church that it may be the champion of peace and justice in all the world. Restore the earth with your grace that is able to make all things new.

Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other and in all our brothers and sisters. Amen.

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Sharing the Elements

(All are welcome at this table. Please come down the center aisle, take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and return by one of the side aisles. Each station has a gluten free option. The dark liquid is wine, the lighter liquid is juice. There will be a communion station in the balcony for those seated there.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Because the broken bread has meant our healing, because the outpoured cup has meant our life, because our common sharing has meant the communion of our souls, and because we have here been

graced by your presence, God, we give you thanks and pray that our lives may be renewed in the life and the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

We Offer Our Gifts

Call for Offering

Offertory “The Magi” (based on De matin ai rescountra lou trin) setting by - Kosche

Prayer

***Hymn #164**

“Arise Your Light Has Come”

***Benediction**

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you.

God has loved us from before all time

In our here and now, let us receive and reveal God’s love,

Through the grace of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



For Today’s Service

Greeters/Ushers: Beaver Wyatt, Mary Ann Brackett

Liturgist: Rev. Paul Frelick

Communion Prep: Carol Duin

Communion Servers: Linda Comer, Craig McIntosh, Rev. Paul Gillespie

Deacon of the Month: Beaver Wyatt

Alternate Deacon of the Month: Judy Slater (Handicap Door)

Welcome! WE ARE...

*AN LGBT OPEN and AFFIRMING Congregation of the United Church of Christ
and a Just Peace Church.*

We are a progressive, risk-taking Christian faith community.

We follow the way of Jesus as the Christ and are welcome, open, and affirming to all.

We believe God is vibrant, alive, and still speaking to us!

We believe that God encourages us to engage the world through acts of mercy, peace, and justice.

Upcoming Faith Formation Classes Starting January 10th

Fear and Love: Jane Stoffer will facilitate a four-week discussion on Fear and Love beginning January 10. The focus of each session is as follows: Love of Self and Other; Be Not Afraid; Perfect Love Casts Out Fear; and Practicing Love. Sundays at 9:15 am in E-107.

Bible Study of 2 Corinthians with Rev. Brenda Lewis: From the time of the earliest Christians, the church has struggled over disagreements related to everything from practical morality to theology and worship style. Join us when you can on Sundays at 9:15 am as we learn how God is still speaking in our current situations through this ancient but still relevant letter. E-101. This is a continuation of her 1 Corinthians class, but no previous attendance required.

For our Visitors and New Attendees

Visitor Orientation on Sunday, January 17TH If you have been visiting with us for a while and want to find out more about the church and membership as well as a short tour of our building please meet Yolanda in Room E-101 (in the downstairs education wing) at noon. The orientation will not be long but it will be informative.

Exploring the Path to Membership Classes: January 24th and January 31st, 9:15 am in E-101. If you have been visiting our church for a while and are thinking about joining, here is an opportunity to learn more about our church and the denomination as a whole. Classes will run for two Sundays beginning on January 24th. Each week attendees will hear from different speakers and have an opportunity to learn and ask questions about our church, what we believe, who we are and also about the wider missions of the UCC. Recommended reading is Balaam's Unofficial Guide to the UCC. We have a few copies available but you can purchase the book on Amazon as well. There will be handouts and a tour of the facility. We invite you to come with energy, questions and to ready to have a joyful and educational experience. We know that not all can make it for both Sundays, but please come when you can. You do not have to come to classes to join the church but it is recommended. If you have questions, please contact Yolanda at ministry@uccasheville.org or 828.252.8729.

Join the church! Sunday February 14th will be New Member Sunday. If you have been waiting and are ready to join the church, this is your day! There will be New Member Bio Forms available in the Narthex beginning in January. Everyone is welcome to join, but we DO need to know ahead of time if you plan to do so! If you'd like to join or have questions, please contact Yolanda at ministry@uccasheville.org or 828.252.8729.

Events and Opportunities to Connect

Women's Retreat January 9: Our theme this year is: The Shimmering Hours. In order to keep the costs low, please bring along any scraps of fabric you may have. Such contributions will also be gratefully received from other members of the church. Just drop them off at church anytime. Our luncheon will be soup augmented by your special sandwiches. Bring two. This buffet mysteriously grows in volume. **The retreat fee is \$15.00 to be paid on Jan. 3.** Reservations may be made online to: ltuenge44@gmail.com or find Loraine Tuenge after worship!

Faith and Flicks screening of *What I Want my Words to do to You*: January 10th at 5:45 pm in the church Library. Documentary; 84 minutes; by Eve Ensler and Judith Katz. Playwright Eve Ensler leads a writers' workshop for the women inmates of New York's Bedford Hill's Correctional Facility, offering an insightful look into the minds and hearts of these women, "hearing them into speech," and giving them an opportunity to tell their stories with clarity and courage.

Game Night! Second Tuesday of each month in Room E-105. 7:00 pm. Join us playing cards and games such as dominoes, Rummikub, etc. Will play for fun and friendship, so no experience necessary! Contact Dennis Vanator & Mary Hawkins if questions: denmary14@gmail.com.

Welcome Home for the Holidays Supply Drive: A supply drive for our recently housed (and formerly homeless) clients of Homeward Bound. Many of their clients who move into housing initially have no income as they apply for jobs and benefits. We work to supply them with household basics such as all-purpose cleaner, toilet paper, garbage bags, feminine hygiene items, dish soap & sponges, paper towels, laundry detergent, toothbrushes & toothpaste. Please leave items such as these in the bin in the Narthex. They will be collecting the bins in mid-January so donate ASAP!

Please don't throw your bulletin in the recycling bin! We are collecting bulletins for a craft project at the Church Retreat. Please just put them in a neat pile in the Narthex after worship. Thank you!

Our Staff

Rev. Margot Pickett, Interim Minister (margot.pickett@uccasheville.org)

Gary Mitchell, Minister of Music and Sacred Arts (cantorucc@aol.com)

Yolanda Adams, Ministry Coordinator (ministry@uccasheville.org)

Harper Leich, Administrative Assistant (admin@uccasheville.org)

Andrea Blankenship, Contract Accountant

Taleese Morrill, Youth Coordinator

Viviana Altamirano, Custodian

First Congregational UCC is located at 20 Oak Street in downtown Asheville. Please send all mail to PO Box 3211 Asheville, NC 28802.

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