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**St.
John's
United
Church
of Christ**

401 N. Main St.
P. O. Box 794
Belvidere, IL
61008

**January 7,
2024
Epiphany**

**Worship
10:30 A.M.**

St. John's United Church of Christ

WELCOME VISITORS! Thank you for coming! Please sign a pew card to place in the offering plate.

Office Hours: Tues – Thurs, 9am-Noon stjohs401.org
(815)544-3773 stjohsucc401@gmail.com

Pastor: Rev. Muriel Morley Jahn 815-544-2977
murielmorley@gmail.com
Pastoral Associate: Beth Carson 815-544-6834
Minister of Music: Mary Albrecht 815-547-7503
Choir Director: Jeanne Anderson 815-985-2652

Nursery: The nursery is open! Please check downstairs and meet with the nursery attendant before leaving your child.

Adult and Children's Education resumes this Sunday, January 7th, 9am.

Fellowship Potluck January 14th—Please bring your appetite (and your favorite dish:) after church on the 14th for a fun fellowship lunch!

Pastor Swap January 14th Pastor Muriel is switching pulpits with the Rev. Ted Engelsdorfer of Union Congregational Church in Somonauk, IL. Join us and Rev. Ted for worship (and a potluck meal following)!

You Are Not Alone

The following support groups meet regularly at St. John's

- AL-ANON Thursdays at 7pm. at church & on Zoom **Meeting ID:** 3983002123
Passcode: 102964
- Anxiety Support Group Tuesdays at church & on Zoom at 6pm. **Meeting ID:** 862 9227 0691 **Passcode:** 915601
- Open & Affirming Meet Up LGBTQIA+ & Allies welcome! Help plan the next meet up, speak to Pastor Muriel.
- The Belvidere Group (AA) meets at everyday at 1pm & 7pm. Women's Group meets Mondays 5:30pm
- T.O.P.S. Mondays 11am

Community Ministries

Community Meal: Every 3rd Wednesday from 5p-6p!

Blessing Box: Outside by the Main Street entrance open to all who are hungry 24/7.

Paper Angel Closet: Provides supplies to households in need.

**2 Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**3 Christ rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness
and wonders of God's love,
and wonders of God's love,
and wonders, wonders of God's love.**

Benediction

Postlude

Epiphany Prayer by Rev. Michelle L. Torigian of St. Paul UCC, Belleville, IL

Isaiah 60 prayer: Copyright 2021 The United Church of Canada L'Eglise Unie du Canada

Other Liturgy Prayers: **The Voice: Service Prayers for the First Sunday after Epiphany** was written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ.

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Scripture Isaiah 60:1-6
 Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon Too Late

Communion

Hold your elements out for blessing.
Eat as a sign of your personal faith & drink with Pastor Muriel and the rest of our online
community as a sign of our communal faith.

Prayer of Thanksgiving**Moment for Mission-- Sri Lanka Partnership****Musical Offering****Doxology**

Praise God, through whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God, above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Offertory Prayer**Hymn #132 "Joy to the World"**

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
let earth its praises bring;
Let every heart prepare Christ room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Note for those joining worship online: Today we celebrate Communion. You can participate by having something to eat and something to drink beside you to be blessed and eaten during the ceremony.

Prelude & Lighting the Christ Candle**Announcements****Choral Introit #148 "What Child is This" verse 3**

3 Bring gifts of incense, gold and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;
The Holy Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's salvation
Raise, raise the song on high, the mother sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mary!

Responsive Welcome Statement (Leader Speaks Plain Font, All Speak Bold Font)

At St. John's United Church of Christ, we are Living Outwardly & Valuing Everyone!

We live and work amid God's love!

In that spirit, we extend love to all who come into our midst, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, nationality, skin color, culture, differing abilities, age or political affiliations, to participate fully in all aspects of church.

Our ministry is to bring the Good News of Christ's love to all.

We work in God's name to tear down walls and build community,
to walk with each other through all of life's circumstances,

to provide for those in need,

to offer comfort to the hurting and the sick,

and to uplift the brokenhearted.

Where we fail, we ask for God's forgiveness.

May the Holy Spirit and our siblings continue to challenge us to do better.

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

Call to Worship (Isaiah 60)

One: Arise! Shine!

All: For our Light has come!

One: The glory of the Lord is in this place.

All: The glory of the Lord is in you, in me.

One: See! Be radiant!

All: Our hearts thrill and rejoice! Let us worship in gratitude, in joy, together.

Invocation

Triune God, you come among us in the fullness of your being and affirm the fullness of our humanity—mind, body, and spirit. In you, we find joy and pleasure. In you, we claim peace and hope. In you, we arise to greet a new day and a new way of being. Shape us in this time together that we might reflect your goodness and your way. Amen.

Hymn: Hymn #159 “As With Gladness Those of Old”

1 As with gladness those of old
Did the guiding star behold
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, true Morning Star, may we
Evermore your splendor see.

2 As with joyful steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
One whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek your mercy seat.

3 As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger plain and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you from whom they spring.

4 Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when mortal things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,

Children's Time

Belated Birthday

Blessing Epiphany Gifts**Pastoral Prayer – The Lord's Prayer****Hymn #139 “The First Nowell” verses 1,2 and 5**

1 The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born in a manger, Emmanuel.

2 They looked above and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. [Refrain]

5 Then entered in those magi three,
and bending low upon their knee,
They offered there, in great reverence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. [Refrain]

Epiphany Prayer by Michelle L. Torigian

Divine Glimmer-

The strands of lights are unhooked from the eavestroughs,
And the metallic garland removed from tree's branches.
January's shadows prevail when Christmas is removed.
Yet you are the Great Light.

When the brightness of Christmas has been erased from our sight,
The Epiphany glow in our souls brightens.
May the Epiphany Glow expand from our hearts
to reach our neighbors hurting from the cold nights,
short days, and seasonal silence.

May the Epiphany Glow draw us together
even greater than the parties of December and the hustle of Advent.
May the Epiphany Glow kindle kindness,
knowing that the Christ is present in our midst,
as you, Holy Light, are eager to build your bright realm in our shadowed world.
Amen.