

# Sunday of the Epiphany

January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 10:30am (online/onsite)  
Umstead Park United Church of Christ



# What do you fear?

INSISTING ON HOPE THIS ADVENT

## GATHERING

Welcome and a Time of Greeting

Rev. Tyler Ung

Invocation<sup>†</sup>

Gwen Reagan

## Meditation

“freedom is the scale.  
getting yourself to freedom, experiencing personal liberation, these are crucial acts, but not enough. we have to continue the risk, find the many ways to get each other free.”

-adrienne maree brown

Prelude

David Wilson

## \*Call to Worship

Rev. Paula Womack

One: Beckoned to this place of belonging, we, of Umstead Park United Church of Christ, with body, mind, and spirit, gather to worship, serve, and proclaim God, unknowable mystery whose center is love, and Jesus the Christ, who makes this loving mystery known.

Many: **With inarticulate words and unfinished lives, we yearn to further embody this holy love, shaping the future as partners with God, who dances and weeps with us along the way.**

*-from the UPUCC Covenant*

## \*Gathering Hymn

#160, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

Congregation

## Time with Children

Rev. Tyler Ung



Let us walk \_\_\_\_\_ in the light \_\_\_\_\_ of the One \_\_\_\_\_ who is Christ, \_\_\_\_\_



let us walk \_\_\_\_\_ in the light \_\_\_\_\_ of God's love.



“King Tingz”

by Nicolette Faison

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## HEARING AND RESPONDING

### Reading of Scripture

Matthew 2:1–12  
*(see insert)*

Gwen Reagan

### Sermon

Rev. Tyler Ung

### \*Responsive Hymn

“We Are Walking in the Light of God”  
*(see insert)*

Congregation

### Prayers of the People

Rev. Tyler Ung



*You are invited to share names or brief joys and concerns.  
To submit written prayer requests for the weekly email, visit  
[tinyurl.com/upuccprayers](https://tinyurl.com/upuccprayers), or scan the QR code to the left.*

### Celebration of Gifts (Offertory)

Rev. Tyler Ung

## COMMUNION

Rev. Tyler Ung

### Remembering and Prayer of Thanksgiving

#### The Prayer That Jesus Taught

words adapted by Mark Miller from “The Lord’s Prayer”

Our God, in heaven, holy is your name.

Your reign come, your will done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and help us forgive, as we have been forgiven.

In the time of trial lead us into light,

for yours is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

#### Communion Liturgy

One: As we share in the bread, may we remember and give thanks for the life that Jesus lived.

**Many: As we share in the cup, may we remember and give thanks for the lives that we are living.**

One: As we receive the fruits of Spirit, we celebrate the communion of all things. Creator, Christ, and Spirit dance as one. So may it always be. Come for all things are ready.

*At this time, you are invited to come forward. The bread may be dipped into the cup and then eaten. The cup contains juice. The center station contains gluten free bread. After receiving Communion, you can receive star words to guide your journey this year.*



# Supplemental Texts and Hymns

## Reading of Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

Gwen Reagan

<sup>1</sup> After Jesus' birth—which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod—astrologers from the East arrived in Jerusalem <sup>2</sup>and asked, "Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage." <sup>3</sup> At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

<sup>5</sup> "In Bethlehem of Judea," they informed him. "Here is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,  
since from you will come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

<sup>7</sup> Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, "Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me—so that I may go and offer homage, too."

<sup>9</sup> After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay. <sup>10</sup> They were overjoyed at seeing the star and, <sup>11</sup> upon entering the house, found the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.

## \*Responsive Hymn

"We Are Walking in the Light of God"

Congregation

1. We are walking in the light of God, we are walking in the light of God.  
We are walking in the light of God, we are walking in the light of God.  
We are walking, we are walking, oh, we are walking in the light of God.  
We are walking, we are walking, oh, we are walking in the light of God.

2. We are singing in the light of God...

3. We are dancing in the light of God...

4. We are living in the light of God...

\*Sending Hymn

"Sing a New World Into Being"

Congregation

1. Sing a new world in - to be - ing. Sound a bold and hope - ful theme.  
2. Sing a new world in - to be - ing where each gen - der class and race  
3. Sing a new world in - to be - ing where the home - less find a home.  
4. Sing a new world in - to be - ing. Join the an - cient proph - ets' cry

Find a tune for si - lent year - ings. Lend your voice and dare to dream:  
brings its rain - bow gifts and col - ors to God's lim - it - less em - brace;  
where no chil - dren ev - er hun - ger but are filled with God's sha - lom;  
for a time of health and plen - ty when all tears have been wiped dry;

dream a\_\_\_ church where all who wor - ship find their\_ lives and loves be - long.  
where the\_\_\_ lines that once di - vi - ded form in - stead the ties that bind.  
where all\_\_\_ peo - ple work for jus - tice, where all\_\_\_ hate and vengeance cease.  
when com - pas - sion flows like wa - ters, pour - ing\_\_\_ balm for all who grieve.

Sing a new world in - to be - ing. Sing as Christ in - spires your song!  
Sing a new world in - to be - ing: risk trans - form - ing heart and mind!  
Sing a new world in - to be - ing: raise the har - mo - nies of peace.  
Sing a new world in - to be - ing: live the prom - ise you be - lieve!

If there is one thing I can't stand, it is when people disregard the spiritual use of herbs, metals, and the stars. For years, there has been a nasty practice of shaming indigenous practices, such as the usage of sage, when high church settings actively use incense in worship. We have come to a tension where anything that does not look like a particular type of Christian practice is perceived as pagan or satanic. For years, I have been reminding people that Jesus was gifted gold, frankincense, and myrrh by people who followed the stars to find him. That is the heart of my piece, King Tingz. I wanted to emphasize the sky and the importance of the stars, a reminder that this was essential to their witness. I wanted to bless each king with a different gift which is found in different places of their attire.



Of the magi, the one bowing is marked with the flower of frankincense on their robe. On their left shoulder is a map of modern Persia, reminding us of their journey back home having to take a new route because they defied the request of Herod. They are crowned with cornrows and covered with more greenery because of their position to the ground. While we celebrate the stars, I wanted there to be some grounding to the earth. As Jesus is both divine and human, he holds space in both worlds.

The king to the right has soft myrrh flowers on her elbow and collar. Her outer arm is holding an infant, not Jesus, while her sleeve holds the Palestinian flag with the Arabic word Nakba, reminding us of the genocide of 1947. She is weeping for the children that Herod commits to murdering because of their defiance. She holds a child in the palm of her hand with deep lament. Her golden crown is surrounded by a blue bandana, a quiet nod to Chola culture found on the West Coast, as Latino Christians have always emphasized the importance of los reyes.

The one to the left is draped in a starry durag and plated in gold. He has a subtle gold bottom grill and his face is celebrated in a gold pattern. He looks up to the sky, more concerned about navigation, as he is the guiding force for the three of them. I gave this king a durag after some research on Persian magi showed me variations of headwear or turbans that emulated that of a durag.

Above all, if there is something I have learned from living in a Hispanic community and attending a Spanish-speaking church, it is that BIPOC communities do not play about los reyes. I wanted aspects of my culture and other American subcultures to be able to see bits and pieces of themselves in this art. But to also see our connection to the stars and the earth alike. I urge this to be a reminder that even if your church does not celebrate herbs, crystals, metals, and the stars, that does not mean they are not Christian practices nor that they are satanic.

# UPUCC Updates

## **Help Host Healing Transitions on 1st Sundays**

We host our friends from Healing Transitions on the first Sunday of each month. If you would like to help with food, drink, and fellowship, sign up via the link on the “News” page of the website. Get to know our neighbors!

## **Staff Love Offering**

Our dedicated UPUCC staff enrich our community through meaningful worship, beautiful music, and loving care. A simple way to say thank you is by contributing to the Staff Love Offering. Visit [upucc.org/giving](http://upucc.org/giving), or drop a check in the offering basket to help us show our heartfelt appreciation!

## **Clean Up Day | Saturday, January 24th**

There are two opportunities coming up for you to connect with our neighbors: First, Justice Theater Project is planning to do a clean up of the area behind the worship space starting at 9:30am. For more information, email Brooklyn Miller at [brooklyn@thejusticetheaterproject.org](mailto:brooklyn@thejusticetheaterproject.org). Second, we are having another Brownleigh Drive Clean-Up in coordination with Healing Transitions and The Great Raleigh Clean-Up. More details to come.

## **Square Dancing | January 31st at 2-4pm**

for Square Dancing. We had a great time with this event last year. No experience needed. No charge but donations are accepted to offset the cost of the Caller. Bring yourself and some friends and join us! Sign up via the link on the “News” page of the website.

## **Mardi Gras Pancake Supper | February 17th**

Save the date for a Mardi Gras Pancake supper! Fellowship will host and more details to come later. If you are interested in volunteering to organize a talent show to accompany the supper (separate from Fellowship Lead Team) please contact Carole Holt at [cholt@triad.rr.com](mailto:cholt@triad.rr.com).

## **We're Hiring!**

Explore two part-time opportunities—Youth Director and Teaching Intern—in our vibrant, progressive faith community. We are thrilled to have Cody Walter Welch on staff as one teaching intern, and are looking to add to our team!

## **Nertz Meet-Up Group**

David Wilson is in the midst of starting a Raleigh Nertz Meet-Up group. If interested, feel free to join the Facebook group linked in the Friday email, or contact David directly ([david@upucc.org](mailto:david@upucc.org)).

Learn more at [upucc.org/news](http://upucc.org/news)!