

Columbia United Church Of Christ

January 4, 2026
“Epiphany”



CUCC Open and Affirming/Inclusion Covenant:

Columbia United Church of Christ celebrates God's boundless and unconditional love by intentionally welcoming and affirming all God's children.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey;
No matter where you are on your faith journey;
No matter your sexual orientation, gender expression, or identity;
No matter your race, culture, ethnicity, nationality, or politics;
No matter your age, ability, health, relationship status, or family structure;
No matter your social, economic, educational, legal, or life circumstances;
You are welcome here!

Called by Jesus to be an Open and Affirming, inclusive faith community, Columbia United Church of Christ commits to welcoming everyone into the full life of our congregation. Our paths and voices may differ, but we journey in faith together.

*Columbia
United Church
Of Christ*



January 4, 2026

10:30 a.m.

"Epiphany"

**indicates that all are invited to stand, if comfortably able*

*"from oppression and violence, he redeems their life;
And precious is their blood in his sight."*

-Psalm 72:14

Welcome and Greetings

Pastor Rick

Prelude

Connie Loveless

Carrying in the Light of Christ

Adoration of the Magi Matthew 2:1-12 Ashley Ramirez

*Wise Magi from the east come to worship and praise the infant Jesus,
lifting him up as the Messiah, in opposition to Herod.* page# 783

*Gathering Song "We Three Kings" (insert)

*The three solo verses will be sung by our processing Magi.
Congregation sings verses 1 & 5.*

*Call to Worship (based on Psalm 72) Ashley Ramirez

Blessed be the LORD, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God's glorious name forever.

**We pray for the blessings of God's provision to be shared with all;
For God's glory to be proclaimed to the whole earth.**

Grant us Your wisdom, O God;

Bring righteousness to Your people and justice to the poor.

**Help us bring deliverance to those who are oppressed;
The poor, and those who have no helper.**

From oppression and violence, God redeems us;

God brings new life to all of God's precious children.

**In this Epiphany Season, we gather together, sharing the light;
God's wisdom, shining in our lives.
Come, let us worship God!**

*Hymn

"As with Gladness"

(insert)

*Opening Prayer

Ashley Ramirez

God of revelation; on Epiphany we celebrate that moment when the world suddenly saw and understood Your presence in a new and different way. We pray that we may be open to new and different ways of understanding Your presence as well. Forgive us for the times when our eyes are shut and we cannot see Your guiding star. Open our eyes and open our hearts so we may celebrate as those Magi did long ago, and proclaim Your glory to all the world. In Jesus' name we pray; Amen.

*Assurance of Blessing

Pastor Rick

God's blessings are revealed to us in new and different ways all the time; even when we fail to see them. But as we gather to praise and adore God, we know that as blessed children of God, we are forgiven for all our transgressions. Through our repentance and God's grace, we are forgiven, beloved and blessed. Praise be to God!

*Prayer Response “There’s a Song in the Air”

(insert)

*Sharing God’s Gift of Peace

May God’s Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Children’s Time

Pastor Rick

“This Little Light of Mine”

(Sung as children return to their seats)

***This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine!
This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine!
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!***

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 2:13-21

Ashley Ramirez

The birth stories of Jesus continue, as we hear the consequences of the actions of the Magi. Refusing to yield to violent agenda of King Herod, the Magi return home another way. Herod is furious and commits heinous actions against the populace. The Holy Family is saved by divine intervention; and when the danger is over, they return to the Holy Land. The dynamic between the narcissistic bullying of their national leader and the pastoral presence of the Magi is similar to the dynamic between the anticipated arrival of a conquering war-like Messiah held against the humble arrival of our Savior.

Page #784

Sermon

“Magi and Kings”

Pastor Rick

*Hymn

“Brightest and Best”

(insert)

*Invitation to Communion

We will be celebrating altar communion this morning; and no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are invited forward to celebrate this joyful meal.

Matthew's Gospel tells us of the Magi who searched all over the Galilean countryside for Jesus and, upon finding him, bowed down and worshipped him. They were courageous enough to maintain their search; and they were faithful enough to recognize him when they found him. Like the Magi, we search for Jesus. Often, we find him in this memory meal; this sacrament of communion.

As we gather around this table we are reminded of Jesus' incarnation in our hearts and in the world; and Jesus' command to love everyone extravagantly. As we gather, we express that extravagant welcome, inviting all to join us. All are invited, all are welcome, all are called. Come, join in the feast!

Liturgical Dance Trio: Community and Communion

“Vision: The Music of Hildegard von Bingen”

By Souther and Van Evera

On Communion Sunday, we remember how connected we all are. We are part of a larger community as we break bread and share the wine together. Communion is both a sacred individual act and a shared experience. The music of Richard Souther and Emily Van Evera, interpreted through dance, lifts up the ministry of 12th century abess Hildegard von Bingen, calling us to unity.

Pastoral Prayer; Silent Prayer

Invocation

Blessing the Children “What Child is This”

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In the Sacrament of Communion, we most clearly see Jesus in our midst. Our desire to share this presence prompts us to celebrate with our children, granting them a special blessing. During the hymn, our children are invited to come forward via the center aisle and receive a special blessing from Pastor Rick.

Institution; Fraction; Distribution

Please come forward via the center aisle to receive and share communion, remembering the ministry of Jesus Christ and the blessings he brings us. The center ring of cups contain grape juice, and the vessels on the paten contain gluten free bread.

Communion Music

“Still, Still, Still”

Gina Pierson
Arr. Cindy Berry

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Pastor Rick

We thank You, Most Holy God, for refreshment at Your table where we receive the gifts of Christ Jesus. Give us the grace to praise You with our lives, our words, our deeds. We give thanks for the vision of the Magi, searching diligently for You and recognizing You when they found the infant. And now, promising to continue the quest of the Magi and search for Jesus in our world every day, we gather together as one family of faith, singing the prayer You taught us:

The LORD's Prayer *(sung by the congregation)*

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 our Announcements of Community Life

Pastor Rick

Invitation to the Offering

*To give online text "GIVE" to 573.240.4041
You can also give online by visiting our website:
www.columbiaucc.com*

Offertory

"Watchman, Tell Us of the Night"

Gina Pierson
Bowring/Hintze

*Prayer of Dedication

Ashley Ramirez

God of revelation; Like the gifts of the Magi, may these gifts reveal to us and to others the Light that is Jesus. May this Light lead us on into new and challenging ways of living and serving. May we see Your love breaking through in unexpected times and places in our lives every day; and may we always be inspired to share that love with all humankind. Amen.

*Benediction

Pastor Rick

*Response

(insert)

"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing; Jesus, the Light of the World"

Postlude

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

Gina Pierson
Arr. Cindy Berry

Columbia United Church of Christ

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LODO Director: Sara Koenig

lodo.sara.koenig@gmail.com

Custodian: Caleb Berry

calebprenticeberry@gmail.com

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Fred Brandenburg

TODAY IN WORSHIP:

Worship Leader: Ashley Ramirez

Song Leader: Mike Pierson

Ushers: Phillip Neale & Charlie Marcks

Greeters: Jolene Kirchhoff

Technology: Brent Marcks & Ted Dachroeden

Council Stewards: Ted Dachroeden & Kristin Veteto



Online Giving

NEXT SUNDAY IN WORSHIP:

Worship Leader: Kennedy Lucas

Song Leader: Mike Pierson

Ushers: John & Brenda Muench

Greeters: Donna Marsh

Technology: Carissa Graves & John Graves

Council Stewards: Mary Lorber, Jerry Kiesling, Deborah Birkes

COLUMBIA UCC CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator: Jerry Kiesling rollzierp50@gmail.com

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Finance & Stewardship: *Vacant*

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Worship & Music: Edie Diel edie@thedandegroup.com

Pastor: Rev. Rick Oberle rick@columbiaucc.com

NURSERY CARE is available for children in kindergarten and younger in the educational wing. If you need help finding it, ask an usher!

EAT WITH EIGHT - FUN AND FELLOWSHIP IN 2026!

Today is the last day to sign up for “Eat with Eight,” our ongoing fellowship event in the New Year! All you have to do is sign up; you will be put into groups of 7-9 people for dinner/lunch parties once a month January-April. You will meet a different group of people each month! Sign up today in the rear of the Sanctuary or email Alexandra in the church office.

TEAM EARTH LUNCH & LEARN - 1/11/2026

Plan now to stay for our Team Earth Lunch & Learn next Sunday! Rev. Mike Williams will continue the study he began in November focusing on our scriptural mandate towards Creation Care, and we will have the latest Solar updates. For more info, talk to Mahree Skala or Rev. Mike Williams.

CHILI COOKOFF - 1/18/2026

Dust off your Chili pot and get ready to enter our annual Chili cookoff! There will be a sign up sheet in the rear of the Sanctuary for contestants, and we will be looking for judges! Everyone is invited to bring a dessert as well. For more information, talk to Doug Privitt or Brent Marcks.

COMO VALUES DIVERSITY - 1/28/2026

The annual COMO Values Diversity Banquet will be 1/28 at 7:00 a.m. This event celebrates the diversity of the Columbia Community and encouraging us to strive for even more diversity. As usual, CUCC will sponsor a table. This year, Pastor Rick has been nominated for one of their Annual Diversity Awareness Awards! We have ten tickets available- if you want to attend, please talk to Ashley Ramirez or Pastor Rick!

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Sun	1/4	<i>Epiphany Sunday</i>	
		Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
		Fellowship	10:00 a.m.
		Worship (in person and livestream)	10:30 a.m.
		Inclusion & Affirmation Ministry Team	12:00 p.m.
Mon	1/5	LODO Classes resume	
Tue	1/6	Quilters	10:00 a.m.
		Staff Meeting	10:00 a.m.
		Clergy Personnel Committee	6:30 p.m.
Wed	1/7	Chapel Ringers/Celebration Singers	6:00/7:00 p.m.
		Confirmation Class	7:15 p.m.
Thu	1/8	Women's Fellowship	9:30 a.m.
Sun	1/11	Men's Fellowship	7:30 a.m.
		Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
		Fellowship	10:00 a.m.
		Worship (in person and livestream)	10:30 a.m.
		Lunch & Learn	12:00 p.m.
		Fellowship & Hospitality Ministry Team	12:00 p.m.

Columbia UCC Prayer List

Please keep in your prayers this week . . .

The family of Ann Wilke... on their loss (Alethea's Mother)

The family of Rev. Jim Elliott... on their loss

The family of Pam Kaehler... on their loss (Lyn Eggemeyer's friend)

Cliff Beckman... recovering well at Columbia Post Acute

Karleen Martindale... health issues (Kasper's Mother)

Phillip Neale's Niece... awaiting liver transplant

Students and staff at Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary . . . our Partner in Education

Recipients of our Magi gifts this morning

Owen Ramsingh and family

Our Search for an organist/accompanist here at CUCC

Health Issues:

Harold Hackman, Barry Kirchhoff,

Julie Roper (Alexandra's Mother), Ronald Remika (Joe Remika's Brother),

Mark & Connie Fairley, Cody Kile, Dr. Ryan Link; Peri Ann Gulerson;

Jim Posz (Allen's Father), Claudia Hutcherson (Ron Tennill's Sister),

Fred Wilke (Alethea's Father), Julia Marsh (Donna Marsh's Daughter),

Martha (friend of the Veteto family), Ken (Adam Veteto's Cousin);

Linda Hancik and Beverly Wilcox (Corinne Remeika's friends)

Challenges in Life:

Sheila, The Koerkenmeier & Malicoat Families, Kieran Armstrong

Living in Care Facilities:

Gary Ehrhardt, Vernie Blank, Harold Hackman

Living in Independent Living Facilities:

Don Privitt, Cliff & Sue Beckman, Linda Evans, Walter & Patty Schroeder

Serving us in the military:

Christopher Tennill, Dane Wilson, Aaron Dachroeden

If you are interested in joining our Prayer Team or have a prayer request for our team to lift up please contact

Melba Shaffer (573) 474-2997 melbamaes@gmail.com

Or Tricia Soncasie (314) 374-7477 tsoncasie@aol.com

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Matthew 2:1-12

1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem,
2 asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.”
3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him,
4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.
5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:
6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”
7 Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.
8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”
9 When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was.
10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.
11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Matthew 2:13-21

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”

14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt

15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.

17 Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said,

20 “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.”

21 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

All: 1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing
 Opt. Solo: 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I
 Opt. Solo: 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense
 Opt. Solo: 4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a
 All: 5. Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise; Christ and

1. gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
 2. bring to crown him a - gain, King for - ev - er,
 3. owns a De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,
 4. life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
 5. God and sac - ri - fice: al - le - lu - ia,

1. moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 2. ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.
 3. voic - es rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God on high.
 4. bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 5. al - le - lu - ia, sounds through the earth and skies.

Refrain (after 1 & 5 only)

O star of won - der, star of light, star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light.

As with Gladness

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Musical notation for the first stanza, featuring a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes.

1. As with glad-ness sag - es bold did the guid- ing star be- hold;
2. As with joy - ful steps they sped to that low - ly man- ger bed,
3. As they of - fered gifts most rare at the man- ger plain and bare,



Musical notation for the second stanza, featuring a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes.

as with joy they hailed its light, lead- ing on - ward, beam-ing bright;
there to bend the knee be - fore One whom heaven and earth a - dore;
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,



Musical notation for the third stanza, featuring a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes.

so, true Morn-ing Star, may we ev - er-more your splen- dor see.
so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek your mer - cy seat.
all our cost- liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.



Musical notation for the fourth stanza, featuring a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes.

1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
 2. There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonder- ful birth,
 3. We re- joice in the light, and we ech - o the song

There's a moth - er's deep prayer and a ba - by's low cry!
 for the Vir - gin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
 that comes down through the night from the heav - en - ly throng,

And the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
 See, the star rains its fire while the an - gel choirs sing,
 and we wel-come the glo - ri - ous gos - pel they bring,

for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
 for the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a king!
 and we greet in the cra - dle our sav - ior and king.

Unison Gm

Bb

Dm

1. Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,
 3. Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,

Cm

Dm

Gm

dawn on our path - way and lend us your aid.
 vain - ly with gifts Je - sus' fa - vor se - cure.

Bb

Dm

Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - don - ing,
 Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion.

Cm

Dm

Gm

guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.
 Dear - er to God are the gifts of the poor.

2. Shall we give Je - sus our cost - ly de - vo - tion,
 4. Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,


 fra - grance of E - dom, and of - f'rings di - vine,
 dawn on our path - way, and lend us your aid;

What Child Is This

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William C. Dix, 1865; alt.

Luke 2:7-14, 25-32; Matt. 2:11; John 1:14;
John 19:16b-18, 34

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep - ing?
 2 Why lies the Child in man - ger bare where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 Bring gifts of in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in ju - bi - la - tion;



Whom an - gels greet with an - them's sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Give heed, draw near; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The Ho - ly Child, though meek and mild, has come with God's sal - va - tion.



This, this, the an - gels sing, is Christ, God's ho - ly of - fer-ing;
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
 Raise, raise the song on high, the moth - er sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the child of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mar - y!



William Chatterton Dix, manager of an English marine insurance company, wrote a number of fine hymns. This one is always sung to the tune Greensleeves, which first appeared in England in 1580 and is mentioned in one of Shakespeare's plays.

Tune: GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7.6.8.6.7. with refrain
English traditional melody, 16th century

127 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Jesus, the Light of the World

With a gospel feel

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing.
2 Joy - ful all you na - tions, rise.
3 Christ by high - est heaven a - dored;
4 Hail, the heaven - born Prince of Peace!

light of the world. Glo - ry to the
Join the tri - umph
Christ, the ev - er
Hail, the Sun of

new - born King,
of the skies.
last - ing Lord;
right - eous - ness! Je - sus, the light of the world.

Refrain

We'll walk in the light, beau - ti - ful light.

Come where the dew - drops of mer - cy shine bright.

O, shine all a - round us by day and by

night. Je - sus, the light of the world.

The musical score consists of four staves of music. The top staff uses a treble clef, the second staff a bass clef, the third staff a treble clef, and the bottom staff a bass clef. The key signature is one flat. The music features eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with a measure containing a triplets indicator (the number 3 over a bracket) in the middle section. The lyrics are integrated into the musical lines, with the first section ending on a half note, the second section ending on a half note, and the third section ending on a half note.