

ST. LUKE'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

727 N. Main St.
Independence, Missouri 64050
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Margie Foley, Organist/Pianist
Matthew Bennett, Conductor/Violinist

Rev. E. Paul Emily, Pastor
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Pastors Emeriti: Rev. David Lyon & Rev. Ralph Koch

*If comfortable doing so, you are invited to stand.

The hymns today come from The Methodist Hymnal.

JANUARY 4, 2026

EPIPHANY

SILENT MEDITATION

"O Star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light." --John H. Hopkins, Jr.

GATHERING MUSIC

GREETING

PRELUDE

"A King He's Born to Be"

David and Bonnie Huntsinger

***CONGREGATIONAL HYMN No. 254 "We Three Kings"**

KINGS OF ORIENT

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. [Refrain]

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

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. [Refrain]

Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies. [Refrain]

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Come, join the search for all God will reveal.

All: We are the church, committed to an encounter with the mystery of God.

One: The glory of God has risen upon us.

All: God has sent light to dispel our fears.

One: The radiance of truth surrounds us.

All: Boldly and confidently, we approach our God.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (Unison)

God of Mystery, we often seek you without being open to finding you. We seek you with our own ideas of who you are. We seek you believing we know where we will find you. Forgive us and humble us. Open our eyes and hearts to finding your presence with us as you intend to be revealed. Help us change the direction of our lives so we may live as your children and reflect your love in the world. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

***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. Amen.**

MOMENTS WITH MINNIE

PASTORAL PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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 sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC	“Jesus, O Holy Child”	Otis Skillings
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SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:1-12

SERMON "Brighter Visions Beam Afar"

***CONGREGATIONAL HYMN No. 245 “The First Noel”** **THE FIRST NOEL**

The first Noel 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: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up 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)

And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. [Refrain]

This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay. [Refrain]

Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee,
and offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense. [Refrain]

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

THE BEAUTY OF SHARED GIFTS “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Traditional

***CELEBRATING STEWARDSHIP — DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (In Unison)**

Divine and Loving God, in worship and awe we present this offering to you. May these gifts also be used to proclaim the purpose and mission of Christ. Like the Magi, we too rejoice in the opportunity of worship and giving that is ours. In our giving, let the generosity and peace of Christmas be extended beyond the confines of appointed seasons. Amen

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Affirmation and Renewal of Faith (Unison)

Christ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything Christ might be preeminent. For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Christ all things are reconciled to God, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the cross of Christ.

Words of Institution Sharing the Sacrament

*Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

Gracious God, we thank you for guiding our way to this table. Here you have opened our eyes anew to your presence and to your gift to us through Jesus Christ. You have renewed our strength and courage as we continue the journey of discovering more of your holy nature. Lead us forth in your divine mystery for our lives as your servants. Let us become the incarnation of your presence wherever we go. Amen

*CONGREGATIONAL HYMN No. 240 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

MENDELSSOHN

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

*BENEDICTION POSTLUDE

"Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come"

George Frederick Handel

The Liturgist today is Linda Sehart.
Thank you to Carol Lyon for accompanying the hymns today.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNUAL MEETING

January 25th, immediately following worship.

This will be a hybrid meeting, both in person and on zoom. You will be able to join the zoom meeting as soon as worship ends and the meeting will begin when technology is in place. A link to the zoom meeting will be sent out the week before the meeting.

PRAYER FOR PEACE SERVICE

Boyd Ahrens, former Music Director at St. Luke's UCC, will be playing the organ at the Community of Christ Temple, 1001 W Walnut, Independence for their weekly Prayer for Peace Service, on Wednesdays, January 14th & February 11th, at 1:00 PM. All are welcome to attend. The service is also available on the Temple's Facebook page & YouTube Channels.

SHARING TABLE

Take time on Sundays, or anytime during normal office hours, to **SHOP** at the sharing table. There are Bibles and some old hymnals available if you would like to take one or even more.

WINTER WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

If in person worship is canceled due to winter weather conditions, the announcement will be put on the website, in the Facebook group Windows Into St. Luke's, and on Channel 9. When looking on Channel 9, look for St. Luke's UCC, Independence. There are other churches with the same name.
The service will be livestreamed on Facebook no matter what the weather is.



CHECK IN, SHARE AND COMMENT ON FACEBOOK

If you are worshipping in person, please "Check-in" on Facebook, then, share the service, comment on it and like it. You are encouraged to have your device out during the service.

INSTAGRAM

Use this QR code to follow St. Luke's UCC on Instagram!



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sundays 10:45 AM Online & In person Worship followed by in person fellowship
Monday—Friday, 9:45 AM Live with Pastor Paul in Windows Facebook Group
Monday & Wednesday, 6:30 PM NA Meeting

For more information about any of these, please email the church office at stlukes@stlukesuccindep.org



GIVING OPTIONS

For Giving options click on the QR code to the left.

CONNECT

If you are visiting today we would love to connect with you.
Text CONNECT to 816-312-5053 or use the QR code to the right.



PHOTO/VIDEO POLICY

May it be understood that any pictures/videos taken during any church event may be used for promotion. Church events, including but not limited to, worship services may be broadcast live on Facebook.
If you are not in agreement with this notify the church office.