

Welcome to a special Epiphany service of Scripture & Song here at First United Church of Christ and Conference Center, Second Life.

We have official standing with the Eastern Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ as a Real Life church located in Second Life.

And I still think that's pretty cool, because I have sat in South Central Pennsylvania—I have sat in Northern Maine—
and I am currently sitting in Central Connecticut—
and I still think it's pretty cool that we can partner with my brothers and sisters all across the country
and all of you wherever you are!

Speaking of wherever you are:

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

As we gather together there is some technical information that most of you already know, but just in case someone doesn't:

The service will be in voice and text.

There is a copy of the service in the red book by the door to the sanctuary. You'll want to grab one of those if you need the YouTube links or want the lyrics for today's worship music.

Speaking of which, worship music will be in the media player.

Frequently in my worship service, folk end up dancing right here in the aisles or in the back of the sanctuary, so if the mood strikes you—I say go for it!

And now, a service of Scripture & Song.

THE LIGHT

John 1:1-9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

SONG

<https://youtu.be/-Hb7TZ5FQHI>, "Let It Be Me" ~Indigo Girls

Sticks and stones

Battle zones

A single light bulb

On a single thread for the black

Sirens wail

History fails

Rose-colored glass

Begins to age and crack

While the politicians shadowbox

The power ring
In an endless split decision
Never solve anything
From a neighbor's distant land
I heard the strain of the common man
Let it be me
(this is not a fighting song)
Let it be me
(not a wrong for a wrong)
Let it be me
If the world is night
Shine my life like a light
Well the world seems spent
And the president
Has no good idea
Of who the masses are
Well I'm one of them
And I'm among friends
We're trying to see beyond
The fences in our own backyards
I've seen the kingdoms blow
Like ashes in the winds of change
But the power of truth
Is the fuel for the flame
So the darker the ages get
There's a stronger beacon yet
Let it be me
(this is not a fighting song)
Let it be me
(not a wrong for a wrong)
Let it be me
If the world is night
Shine my life like a light
In the kind word you speak
In the turn of the cheek
When your vision stays clear
In the face of your fear
Then you see turning out a light switch
Is their only power
When we stand like spotlights
In a mighty tower
All for one and one for all
Then we sing the common call
Let it be me
(this is not a fighting song)
Let it be me
(not a wrong for a wrong)
Let it be me
If the world is night
Shine my life like a light

SHEPHERDS & ANGELS

Luke 2:8-14

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J8qjdxzzE>

SONG

<https://youtu.be/IFsDAoCHYiQ>, "Angels We Have Heard On High" ~Lindsay Stirling

GO AND SEE

Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SONG

<https://youtu.be/C2Sf-IuP4mY>, "Go Tell It On The Mountain" ~for KING & COUNTRY

PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE

Luke 2:25-33, 36-38

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,

according to your word;

for my eyes have seen your salvation,

which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.

She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four.

She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

SONG

https://youtu.be/mQq_BbyNEpM, "Today" ~Smashing Pumpkins

Today is the greatest
Day I've ever known
Can't live for tomorrow
Tomorrow's much too long
I'll burn my eyes out
Before I get out
I wanted more
Than life could ever grant me
Bored by the chore
Of saving face
Today is the greatest
Day I've ever known
Can't wait for tomorrow
I might not have that long
I'll tear my heart out
Before I get out
Pink ribbon scars
That never forget
I tried so hard
To cleanse these regrets
My angel wings
Were bruised and restrained
My belly stings
Today is
Today is
Today is
The greatest day
I want to turn you on
I want to turn you on
I want to turn you on
I want to turn you
Today is the greatest
Today is the greatest day
Today is the greatest day
That I have ever really known

MAGI PAY HOMAGE

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking,

‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?

For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“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.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

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.’

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

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.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

SONG

<https://youtu.be/qasM2QT5W14>, “We Three Kings” ~The Roches

THE BOY, JESUS

Luke 2:41-52

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.

When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey.

Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends.

When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, ‘Child, why have you treated us like this?’

Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.’

He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me?’

Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’

But they did not understand what he said to them.

Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.

His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

SONG

<https://youtu.be/5BFetJR0pBQ>, “Mom” ~Meghan Trainer

You might have a mom, she might be the bomb

But ain't nobody got a mom like mine

Her love's 'til the end, she's my best friend

Ain't nobody got a mom like mine

She my world, she's my heart and there's no denying

I'm her girl no matter what even when I'm lying

She loving me, loving me, loving me, loving me, love
She love me like nobody else
I'm telling you, telling you, telling you, telling you all
She taught me how to love myself
You might have a mom, she might be the bomb
But ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Her love's 'til the end, she's my best friend
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine
See we go way back, oh, I remember
All the times that I cried, she made me feel better
She loving me, loving me, loving me, loving me, love
She love me like nobody else
I'm telling you, telling you, telling you, telling you all
She taught me how to love myself
You might have a mom, she might be the bomb
But ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Her love's 'til the end, she's my best friend
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Oh, how she loves me to the moon and back
That's what she told me
Her love never ends, she's my best friend
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine
I was just wanted to call you to tell you I love you
(Aww, I love you, too)
I miss you already
(Aww, that's so sweet, what's going on?)
Just writing songs to my mom song
(Aww, I love you to the moon and back)
My heart hurts, I love you so much
(I love you more)
You might have a mom, she might be the bomb
But ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Her love's 'til the end, she's my best friend
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine
You might have a mom, she might be the bomb
But ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Her love's 'til the end, she's my best friend
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Oh, how she loves me to the moon and back
That's what she told me
Her love never ends, she's my best friend
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine
Ain't nobody (got a mom like mine)
Baby, baby, ain't nobody, no
Ain't nobody got a mom like mine

Happy Epiphany, everyone!

As you go into whatever worlds you sojourn, please remember that it really is just this simple:

God loves you.

So don't forget to love each other.
Go with God,
go in peace,
And amen!

[END]