

Woodbury United Methodist Church



Sunday, January 8, 2023

Woodbury United Methodist Church

January 8, 2023
Baptism of the Lord

*Please stand as you are able.

WE COME TOGETHER IN PRAISE

PRELUDE

Pastorale

Corelli

From the "Christmas Concerto"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come to the waters of baptism. Touch the Spirit's power. Feel the Spirit's loving embrace. Come and be made new.

The voice of God calls over the waters:

"Beloved, receive the Holy Spirit."

The Son of God beckons:

"Beloved, be born of water and the Spirit."

The Spirit of God proclaims:

"Beloved, be born anew this day."

The voice of God calls through our baptism. Come! Let us worship.

*OPENING HYMN

We Three Kings

UMH #254 v 1-3

OPENING PRAYER

Gentle Spirit, Holy Dove, reclaim us through the waters of our baptism. As we long to be more than we have become, remake us through the power of your love. In our yearning to taste the fullness of life, restore us through the wonder of your grace. In our desire to live as your beloved children, make us instruments of your kingdom building, that we may be a light to the nations, and a source of hope to those who sit in darkness. **Amen.**

WE LISTEN FOR THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:13-17

HYMN OF PREPARATION

The First Noel

UMH #245 v 1, 3

SERMON

WE RESPOND IN FAITH

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God is with us in amazing and powerful ways, bringing love and new hope into the world. In our giving this morning, our joy overflows in generosity.

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Nativity Carol

Francis O'Brien

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE

UMH #245

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Be in the gifts we bring before you, O God, as you are ever in the gift of our baptism. Renew your people through this offering, as you have renewed us with your presence this day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Precious Lord, strip away the mask I wear during the week. Lay my soul bare before you today. Let me see genuine love. Show me the love that hates evil and holds on to what is good. Strip away the mask that holds my emotions in check when I should share your love with someone. Let me see the joy of giving to others. Show me the power of blessing those who persecute me. Strip away the mask that grins and lies and lets the world think otherwise about a child of God.

Silence.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

An altar, a pew, a seat on the bus, a kitchen table: all become holy places when we confess before God. Today, in this holy place, God meets us, hears us and forgives us. In this holy place, God empowers us with genuine love to share with a hurting world. Be for God, a holy loving people.

WE GATHER AT THE LORD'S TABLE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty (almighty God), creator of heaven and earth.
You have made from one every nation and people
to live on all the face of the earth.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the
highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
He commissioned us to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth
and to make disciples of all nations,
and today his family in all the world is joining at his holy table.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,

gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

Renew our communion with your Church throughout the world,
and strengthen it in every nation and among every people
to witness faithfully in your name.
By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever.

Amen.

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

THE LORDS PRAYER (unison)

**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 trespasses as we forgive those
who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and
the glory forever. Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (unison)

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

WE SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE IN PRAYER

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

WE GO FORTH IN JOY

*CLOSING HYMN *From a Distant Home* UMH #243 v 1, 2

A BENEDICTION OF REMEMBRANCE AND THANKS

Rejoice in the glory of your baptism each and every day.

We will live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let your spirits soar like eagles but be as gentle as doves.

We will drink deep from the waters of grace.

Go forth to announce the glory of our God.

We go, renewed and made whole, as a blessing to all. Amen!

POSTLUDE *While Shepherd Watched Their Flocks* Handel

Please join us after worship for a time of fellowship and refreshment.

Elements of this service may be taken or adapted from UMC Discipleship.org or the Abingdon Worship Annual 2022, Copyright 2022 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

Visitors are warmly welcomed!

Thanks to all those making special contributions to our worship service today:
James Levario and Patti Thomas, Greeters and Ushers; Shannon Cobb, AV Tech

The Prayer Corner

*Prayers of comfort and peace for the families of Rob Bronson and Erv Story;
Prayers of strength and healing for Anders, uncle of Diane Hibbard; for god's,
loving care and healing and prayers of comfort, healing, and strength for Bob and
Martha Asman, who continue to face medical challenges.*

Woodbury United Methodist Church

We are a welcoming Christian fellowship who celebrate and share God's love with everyone. We seek a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Inspired by His example, we strive to be God's hands in this world. Empowered by God's word, we proclaim the Gospel and serve through worship, study, mission, and community support.

Rev. J. Michael Cobb, Pastor

Pastor's e-mail: pastormichael@woodburyumc.net

Meg Temple, Lay Leader

Chris Shay, Director of Music

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Human Relations Day is Sunday January 15

Human Relations Day is a denomination wide Special Sunday designed to celebrate and raise awareness to further the development of better human relations by involving congregations in community and youth outreach. Fifty-seven percent of the funds received support community developer programs that strive to build, maintain, promote and strengthen racial-ethnic minority congregations through local UMC congregations. Ten percent of the funds received support rehabilitation programs. These programs work to strengthen youth programs that provide positive avenues for youth communities through the churches, mentoring programs, and boys/girls clubs. For more than half a century, United Methodists have observed this churchwide special Sunday in recognition of the message Jesus demonstrated during his life: all of God's children are important.

MLK Day Reading and Discussion

On Sunday January 15, there will be a 3pm gathering at the Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society (283 Main Street North, Southbury) for a reading and discussion of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*. Pastor Michael will be participating and invites all interested to join him. (Did you know that Dr. King wrote this in response to a letter signed (among others) by two Methodist Bishops?

Sexual Ethics and Professional Boundaries training is Wednesday, January 18th, 10am-3pm

If you serve in any congregational leadership position, or if you are interested in doing so at some point, you are strongly encouraged to take this training. (If you have taken it during the past year, there's no need to retake it yet.) This training equips all clergy and laity with a robust, real-world understanding and awareness of employment laws and permissible behavior regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. Gaining the understanding and awareness needed to maintain a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace is a crucial part of eradicating sexual harassment and misconduct in our congregations. Pastor Michael is chair of the Annual Conference committee offering this training and is happy to answer any questions you have.

Erv Story Memorial Saturday January 21

We will gather to remember our friend and brother Erv Story on Saturday, January 21 at Woodbury UMC. Viewing hours are at 10am, with a memorial service to follow at 11am.

Class on the UMC Social Principles starts Monday January 23

Pastor Michael will spend three weeks going through UMC belief on all manner of social issues, including sexuality, gender, economic justice, the environment, guns, the death penalty, reproductive health including abortion, globalization, human trafficking, and much more. Statements on these challenging and often contentious issues are articulated in our Social Principles. If you are interested in any of these topics, or if you didn't realize we have Social Principles, this class is for you!

The UMC believes God's love for the world is an active and engaged love, a love seeking justice and liberty. **We cannot just be observers.** We care enough about people's lives to risk interpreting God's love, to take a stand, to call each of us into a response, no matter how controversial or complex. The job of the church helps us think and act out a faith perspective, not just responding to all the other influences that exist in our society. How do we do that? In part, through our Social Principles, which speak to issues in the contemporary world.

The class is offered **Mondays January 23, 30, and February 6, 6:30-7:15 via zoom.** You can get a copy of the social principles in the fellowship hall (suggested donation \$8). Any questions, please ask Pastor Michael.