

A Baby's Hand

As we enter February, we will be celebrating the time in the Christian year between Epiphany (Jan 6, Manifestation, Mt. 2:1-12) and Candlemas (Feb 2, Presentation, Lk. 2:22-40), in the fourth week after Epiphany. John Bell of Iona has composed a song for this time-period entitled Song of the Epiphany. The lyrics reflect that, even though in plain sight, we do not always have the eyes to see him, to receive his manifestation. The light of the nations will be found in poverty, jeopardy, and obscurity.

"I sought him dressed in finest clothes, where money talks and status grows; but power and wealth he never chose: it seemed he lived in poverty. I sought him in the safest place, remote from crime or cheap disgrace; but safety never knew his face: it seemed he lived in jeopardy. I sought him where the spotlights glare, where crowds collect and critics stare; but no one knew his presence there: it seemed he lived in obscurity. Then, in the streets, we heard the word that seemed, for all the world, absurd: that those who could no gifts afford were entertaining Christ the Lord. And so, distinct from all we'd planned, among the poorest of the land, we did what few might understand: we touched God in a baby's hand." (Sing the Faith, Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2003)

The magi were reported to have been "overwhelmed with joy" at discovering the Christ Child, the bright star uncovering the mystery of this gift to the Gentiles (Is. 49:1-7; Jer. 1:5, Gal. 1:15) that Ezekiel had predicted: "I bring low the high tree and make high the low tree." (Ezek. 17:24). Not the noble cedar on a high mountain where among its branches the birds of the air make their nests, but in the lowly mustard bush (Mk 4:30-32). A revelation that the Songs of Hannah and Mary both reflect (1 Sam 2:7-8; Lk 1:51-53). One of the most ancient songs in the Gospels describes Jesus as one who "humbled himself and became a servant to others," who emptied himself of divinity to become human out of a selfless love (kenosis: Phil. 2:5-8; Mk 10:44-45). As Jesus before him, Paul also found himself homeless and hungry (2 Cor. 11:26-27; Mt 8:20).

As I think about February on our calendar, Matt Maher's anthem comes to mind: "Let all who thirst, come to the water, those who have nothing, let them come to the Lord ... let all who toil come, come to the water, all who are weary, come to the Lord, all who labor without rest ... let all the poor come, all who are laden, bring the children without might, easy the load and light, come to the Lord."

Grace & Peace

Pastor Randy

Twentieth Question on Common Reading: Mark Deymaz (w/Harry Li) The Coming Revolution in Church Economics: Why Tithes and Offerings Are No Longer Enough, and What You Can Do About it

"To bring dreams to reality, prayer, patience, and persistence must be combined with creative thinking and a willingness to take informed next steps." P. 153

- 1) In WOCC's 1996 Mission Statement, we highlighted prayer, attendance, and stewardship in an open and inclusive atmosphere. Do we still engage with this Mission Statement? What are the informed next steps for us now?
- 2) Might "patience and persistence, added to prayer and inclusivity, and combined with creativity" be a part of our 2025 vision?



Thank you for the special Christmas caroling sponsored by the church this Christmas. It was very nice and I joined right in with the carolers!

Lisa Sloan

in
*Loving
Memory*

Duane Wood

January 19, 2025

His Memorial Service will be held at Western Oaks Christian Church on Friday, January 24 at 10:00 am.

Western Oaks Music Minute



Dear WOCC Family,

I hope this article finds you well and filled with the warmth of the holiday season. As we begin a new year, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude and share some exciting news.

A Heartfelt Thank You: First and foremost, I want to extend my deepest thanks to our wonderful congregation for the incredible generosity you've shown to my family this Christmas. Your monetary gift was truly a blessing, and it touched our hearts deeply. Your kindness is a testament to the loving spirit of our church community, and we are profoundly grateful for your support.

Bells of Praise Returns! I'm thrilled to announce that our beloved Bells of Praise rehearsals will be resuming soon! If you've been missing the joyful sounds of our handbell choir, or if you've always wanted to join, now is the perfect time. Whether you're a seasoned ringer or a curious newcomer, we'd love to have you join us. The Bells of Praise is not just about making beautiful music; it's about fellowship, worship, and having fun together.

Looking Ahead: As we step into this new year, I'm excited about the music we'll create together and the ways we'll continue to grow as a church family. Your support and participation make all of this possible.

Thank you again for your generosity and for being such an important part of our church community. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming services and events.

Blessings,

Andrew Orr

Director of Music

Bells Details

- **Date:** January 22
- **Time:** 6:00 PM
- **Location:** Choir Room

CALLING ALL CHILI LOVERS! SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

IT'S TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL WOCC CHILI COOK OFF

4:15 – ALL COMPETITION CHILI MUST ARRIVE IN SCHWIND HALL

4:30 – JUDGES BEGIN TASTING AND JUDGING (OUR MOBILE MEALS COOKS AND DELIVERERS)

5:00 - CHILI IS SERVED!

5:45 – WINNERS ANNOUNCED AND PRIZES GIVEN

6:00 – 7:00 **B-I-N-G-O** FUN WTH PRIZES

SIGNUP NOW in the west entry by Schwind Hall and in the Narthax by the Sanctuary.

You may sign up to bring a side dish (Dessert or Salad or Bread) and/or enter the Chili Cook Off competition January 12 - 25.

The Chili Cook Off is sponsored by the membership committee with assistance from the Chili Champ Consortium.



Calling all youth and parents/ grandparents!

We will meet this Sunday, January 26,
4 pm in the youth room. We will
discuss dates for our meetings and
events for spring and summer.



Western Oaks Christian Church

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



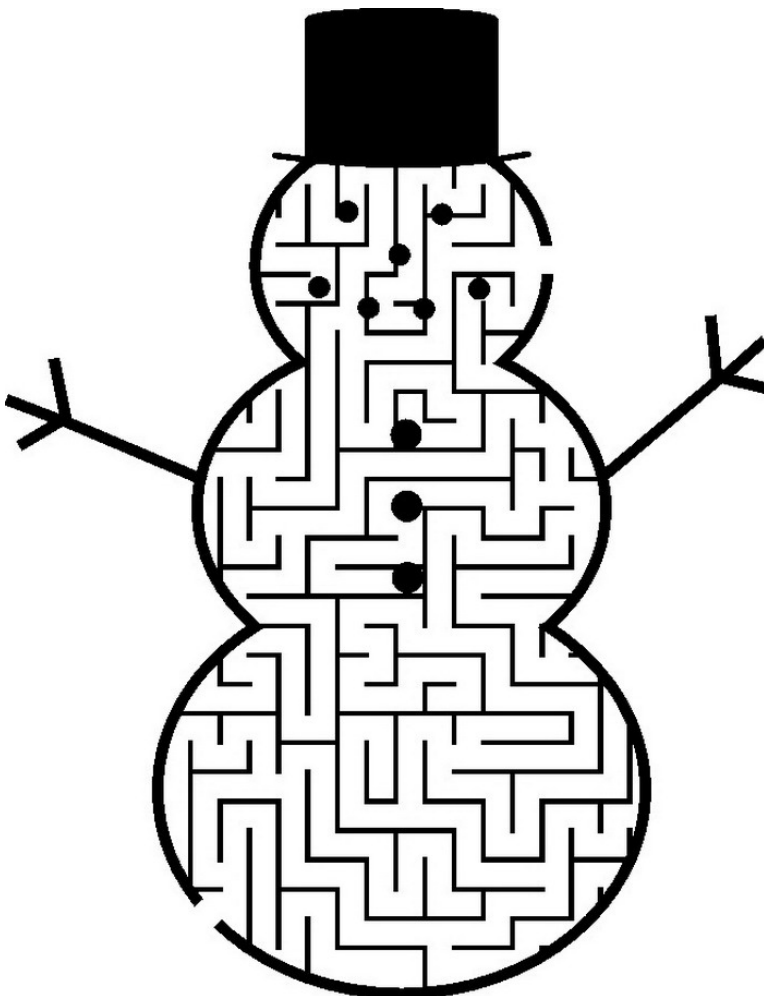
Children's Valentines Party

Coming February 9th 12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.



Young Children through
grade school are invited.

We will eat, do some crafts,
and play games.



WOCC

Youth and Children's Valentine's Dinner

and

Dessert Auction

Sunday 2/02/2025

5:00 pm



Please see Julie or Tobi if you would like to
donate a dessert or decorate a table
All funds raised go to send our kids to camp
and mission trip

Finding Joy In Hard Times



Chi Rho & CYF Midwinter Retreat

February 15-17
at Camp Christian

\$100 per person

Keynotes by Madi Showalter
(Crown Heights Christian Church)

Registration Is Open

Sponsored by the Regional Youth Council

Church Staff
office@woccdoc.org



Interim Minister: Pastor Randy Hill
Associate Minister: Rev. Julia Jordan Gillett
Music Director: Andrew Orr
Pianist: Rosa McCroskey
Praise Band Leader: Ben Frantz
Praise Band: Natalie Griffin and Zach Jones
Nursery Attendant: Skylar Frank
Admin Assistant: Cindy Cannon
Sound Technician: Tobi Bessinger

Sunday, Jan 26 Chili Cookout (Details inside OB)
Sunday, Feb 2 Diversity Sunday - Candlemas
 Dessert Auction (Youth and Children) 5:30pm
Thursday, Jan 16 Disciple Women’s Fellowship 6:30pm
February 15-17 Mid Winter Retreat - CYF & Chi Rho
February 16 - 23 Week of Compassion Offering

Attendance	9:00 am	11:00 am	TOTAL Worship
12-29-2024	22	32	54
1-5-2024	23	42	65

Giving	General	Blessing Fund
12-29-2024	\$770	\$60
1-5-2024	\$1,620	\$30

Upcoming Sermons

Third Sunday After Epiphany (Jan 26, 2025)

Sermon Title: A Tent for the Sun Scripture: Psalm 19
 Theme: Surveying Creation/Environmental Theology

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany or Candlemas (Feb 2, 2025 Diversity Sunday)

Sermon Title: Diverse Presentations Scripture: Luke 2:22-24
 Theme: On Candlemas, in the image of God, we celebrate being diverse members of one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-31a)

“Loving God, Serving our Neighbors”



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