



Yokohama Union Church

January 4, 2026

Epiphany Sunday

Order of Worship

**Those who are able, please stand*

(Children's packets are available in the back for children to use during the service.)

Epiphany is on January 6 and is celebrated 12 days after Christmas. Epiphany Sunday is always the Sunday closest to January 6 and celebrates the Wise Men who came to visit Jesus. **Epiphany** (from Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning "manifestation" or "appearing") refers to the revelation of Jesus Christ as God's Son and the Savior of the world, particularly to the Gentiles (non-Jews) through the visit of the Magi also known as the Wise Men.

Words of Welcome:

Prelude: “Brightest and Best of the Stars” Michiko Okuhara, piano

(Please be in quiet meditation as the acolyte lights the candles representing the Light of Christ.)

***Call to Worship : Liturgist: Riki Morohashi**

Leader: Arise! Shine! The light you have been waiting for is here! Darkness has been banished!

People: God's light of hope floods the earth. God's light comes to us all.

Leader: Lord, make us ready to journey to this Light.

All: Prepare our hearts to receive this Light. Amen.

***Opening Hymn:** Michiko Okuhara, piano

① “*God Rest ye, Merry Gentlefolk*” Verse 1 (see insert)

sing twice with simple motions taught by Pastor Claudia

② “*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*” #185 All verses

Responsive Prayer of Confession:

Pastor: Light of Christ, awaken us this hour to the glory of your presence in our midst.

All: May Christ's light shine among us.

Leader: Shine among us in such a way that the darkness without and within may be pushed back, such that we might truly see what is really real. Help us to recognize our sin for what it is.

All: Forgive us our sins.

Leader: Enable us to behold the world as you created it to be, as you created us to be. Empower us to move from darkness to light, from sin to new life.

All: May your light within us shine through into worship this day, as all days.

Leader: This we pray in the name of the Word made flesh, the light which is the light of all people. Jesus Christ. (*silent prayer of confession*)

Words of Assurance (Isaiah 43:1):

Hear the words of our creator, spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“I have called you by name. You are mine. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.” In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Welcome to Our Guests in Worship:

We welcome everyone to YUC this morning. If there is anyone who has not been here before or has not been to YUC in a long time, please stand up and introduce yourself by saying your name and where you are from. Please also fill out the welcome cards and drop them in the offering bag.

Passing of the Peace:

Leader: Epiphany celebrates Christ as the light breaking through darkness with a God's guiding light. The Peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us share the light of Christ with one another by saying, “Peace be with you.”

Children's Time: Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto

(“Jesus Loves Me” played as children come forward; played again as children return to their seats and **scripture readers come forward.**)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

English: Yuhee Lee Japanese: Chihiro Nakai

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[a] from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” 3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: 6 “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’[b]” 7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” 9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

マタイによる福音書/ 2章 1-12節

イエスは、ヘロデ王の時代にユダヤのベツレヘムでお生まれになった。そのとき、占星術の学者たちが東の方からエルサレムに来て、2 言った。「ユダヤ人の王としてお生まれになった方は、どこにおられますか。わたしたちは東方でその方の星を見たので、拝みに来たのです。」3 これを聞いて、ヘロデ王は不安を抱いた。エルサレムの人々も皆、同様であった。4 王は民の祭司長たちや律法学者たちを皆集めて、メシアはどこに生まれることになっているのかと問い合わせた。5 彼らは言った。「ユダヤのベツレヘムです。預言者がこう書いています。6 『ユダの地、ベツレヘムよ、／お前はユダの指導者たちの中で／決していちばん小さいものではない。お前から指導者が現れ、／わたしの民イスラエルの牧者となるからである。』」7 そこで、ヘロデは占星術の学者たちをひそかに呼び寄せ、星の現れた時期を確かめた。8 そして、「行って、その子のことを詳しく調べ、見つかったら知らせてくれ。わたしも行って拝もう」と言ってベツレヘムへ送り出した。9 彼らが王の言葉を聞いて出かけると、東方で見た星が先立って進み、ついに幼子のいる場所の上に止まった。10 学者たちはその星を見て喜びにあふれた。11 家に入ってみると、幼子は母マリアと共におられた。彼らはひれ伏して幼子を拝み、宝の箱を開けて、黄金、乳香、没薬を贈り物として献げた。12 ところが、「ヘロデのところへ帰るな」と夢でお告げがあったので、別の道を通って自分たちの国へ帰って行った。

Reader: May God bless our scripture reading for today.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Nicene Creed:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic* and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**universal*

Sermon: "Follow the Star" Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto

Hymn of Response: "*The First Noel*" #229 verses 1-3 Michiko Okuhara, piano

Tithes and Offerings / Special music: "*We Three Kings of Orient Are*" Yuhee Lee violin,
Michiko Okuhara piano

***Doxology:** (please stand)

*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. Amen.*

Offertory Prayer:

Loving God, we follow the wise men in giving you gifts, praying that as you receive our acts of offering, you would shine the light of Christ in our hearts to lead us in lives which serve you more deeply. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People:

The Lord's Prayer: (*please say in your own language or tradition or use this one below.*)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Holy Communion / The Great Thanksgiving / Eucharist:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: We thank you, God of all time, for the gift of a new year and for the light of Christ revealed to the world— a light no darkness can overcome. With shepherds and sages, with all who seek your truth, we praise your holy name.

(All are welcome to the Lord's table If you would like to receive a blessing instead, please come forward with your arms crossed across your chest. We will begin communion from the back of the church. After receiving communion, please place the cups in one of the baskets.)

Prayer After Communion:

God of light, you have fed us with Christ, the bread of life.

As we step into this new year, send us out to shine with his light— to guide, to heal, and to love in his name.

All: Amen.

***Closing Hymn:** “*Shine, Jesus, Shine*” #319 Michiko Okuhara piano

***Benediction:** (*remain standing*)

Postlude: “*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*” Michiko Okuhara piano

(The acolyte takes out the light of Christ to the world.)

THOSE SERVING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Ministers: All of us at YUC.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto

Usher and Fellowship: Ma Tian and Xue Zhong

YUC Board Members: Michael Magee, Fumi Ohnuma, Jessie Dang, Ran Oji, Ayako Maenosono, Miho Kobayashi, Pastor Claudia, Pastor Debbie

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *Members and regular attendees at YUC. Please remember to wear your name tags so new people will get to know your names. If you do not have a name tag, please write down your name and give to Ayako or Pastor Claudia.*
- ◆ **Church Newsletter:** *If you are not receiving it, let Pastor Claudia have your email so she can add you to the weekly YUC newsletter list.*
- ◆ **Sunday School:** *Resumes January 11, 2026 @ 9:10am.*
- ◆ **Fellowship Time Snack Box:** *We are asking for snack donations for our church. We will need snacks for this New Year. 2026. Please give to Miho Kobayashi or place in Pastor Claudia's office.*
- ◆ **Please sign up** to be an usher, be a liturgist, read scripture, bring snacks for fellowship or share a testimony.
- ◆ **January 11** *Baptism of the Lord Sunday Rev. Maki Fushii preaching. Matthew 3:13-17
After worship, we will put away the tree and Christmas decorations. Please stay and help.*
- ◆ **January 18** *Rev. Toshi Yamamoto Christian Seminar will be held upstairs in the manse from 12:10pm.*
- ◆ **January 25** *Pastor Debbie preaches.*

Offering Information

“...for God loves a cheerful giver.” – 2 Corinthians 9:7

In-person and online options for offering are available at Yokohama Union Church. See Jessie Dang or Michael Magee for offering envelopes or feel free to use the direct deposit option with Bank of Yokohama.

Bank: Yokohama Bank/ 横浜銀行 **Branch:** Motomachi/元町支店

Type of account: ordinary/普通口座 **Account number:** 1150200

Donate via Credit Card: goyuc.com/give

On Sunday December 28, 2025 we received 75,770 yen for our in-person worship offering.

Attendance: total 41 (34 adults, 7 children)

YOKOHAMA UNION CHURCH is a church where all are welcome. YUC was founded in 1863 and is an ecumenical and international congregation of English-speaking Christians. The word “union” is used to indicate the membership is composed of Christians from many churches and nationalities who are united through a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yokohama Union Church is independent and financially self-supporting; it is an associate member of the National Christian Council in Japan (NNCJ).

YUC WEBSITE: <https://yokohamaunionchurch.org/>

