



Sunday, December 31, 2023

Culmore
United Methodist Church

Welcome and
Good Morning!

Welcome and Announcements



Photo by James Gardner





HAPPY
BIRTHDAY



Opening Prayer

Loving God,

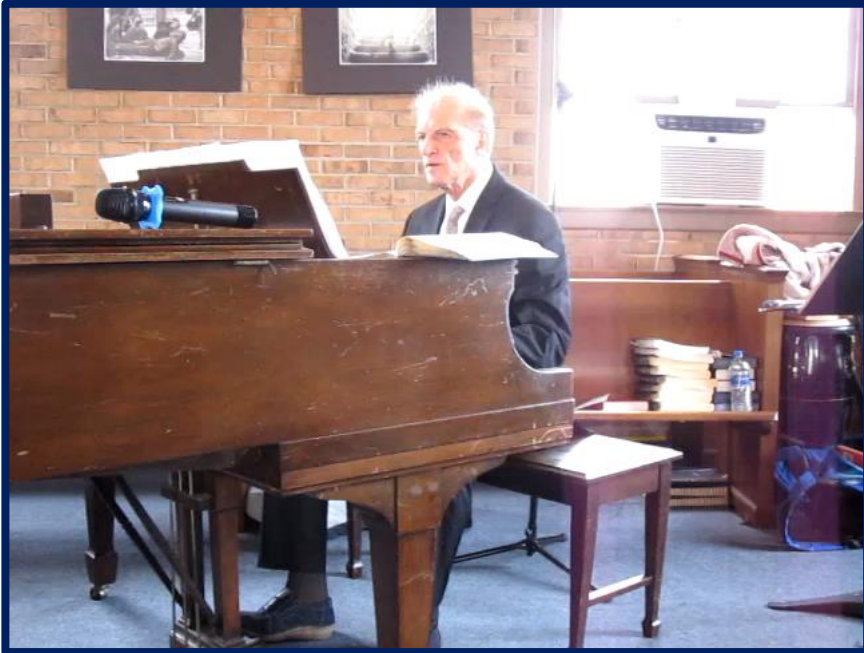
As you led those wise men to you by the light of a star, lead us likewise. Help us to desire to find you as passionately as they did. Keep us from getting lost in the dark. Shine on us the light of faith.

Give us grace to overcome all the obstacles keeping us from your loving arms. May we, like the wise men, find you at the end of our journey. *Amen.*



Lost Lamb

Composed and played by Dr. Naumoff
Sung by Dr. Kang



I wandered away, all on my own.
I am lost and afraid, so alone.
Oh, where is the one to care for me?
In the empty hills, the barren hills,
the lonely hills of Bethlehem.

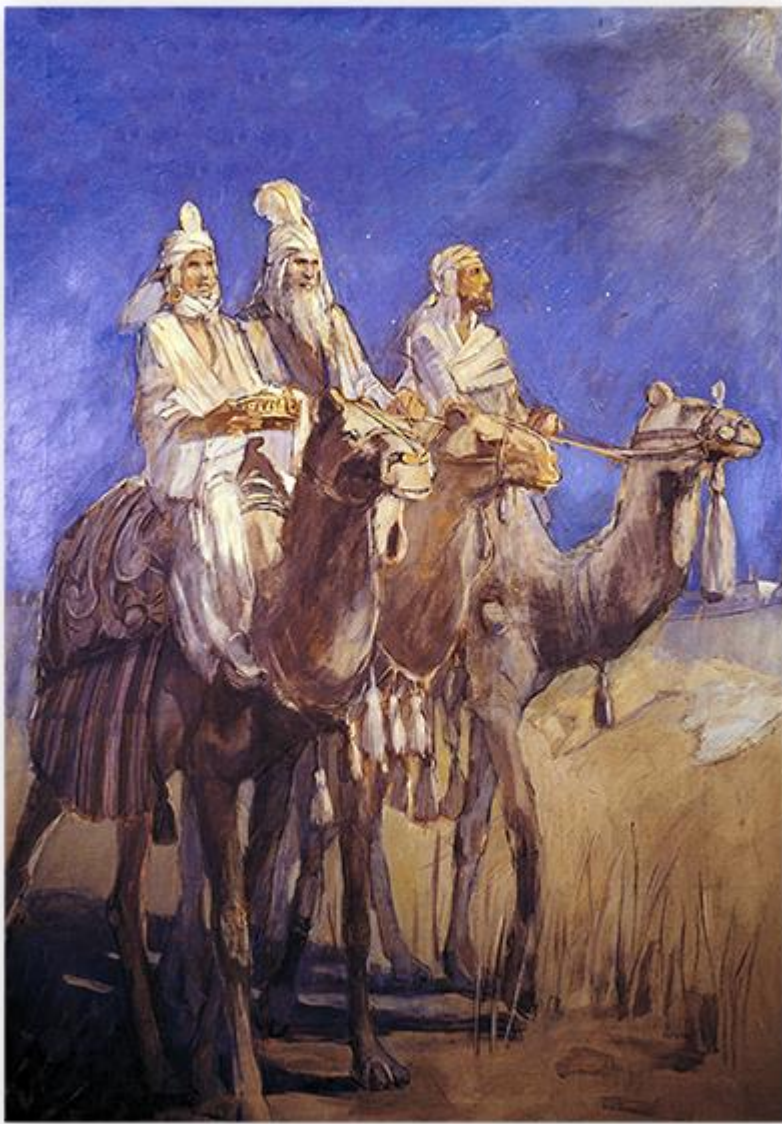
I am far away from home, why did I roam?
Do you hear the call of wolves?
They howl and bay.
Oh, where is the one to rescue me?
In the empty hills, barren hills of Bethlehem.

My dear little lost lamb,
I have found you at last.
Come with me and see the wonders,
What a wonderful great star!
Do you hear the angels singing?
Message of the joy they bring?
In the shining hills, in the happy hills, of Bethlehem!

CHORUS:

Star in the sky,
Beautiful light
Now angels sing Alleluia! Alleluia!





Matthew 2: 1-12 *The Wise Men*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, asking: *Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.*



When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. He called all the chief priests and teachers of the law together and asked them, *Where will the Messiah be born?*

He will be born in Bethlehem in Judea, they replied. Herod then called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.



He sent them to Bethlehem, saying: *Go to Bethlehem and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.*

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

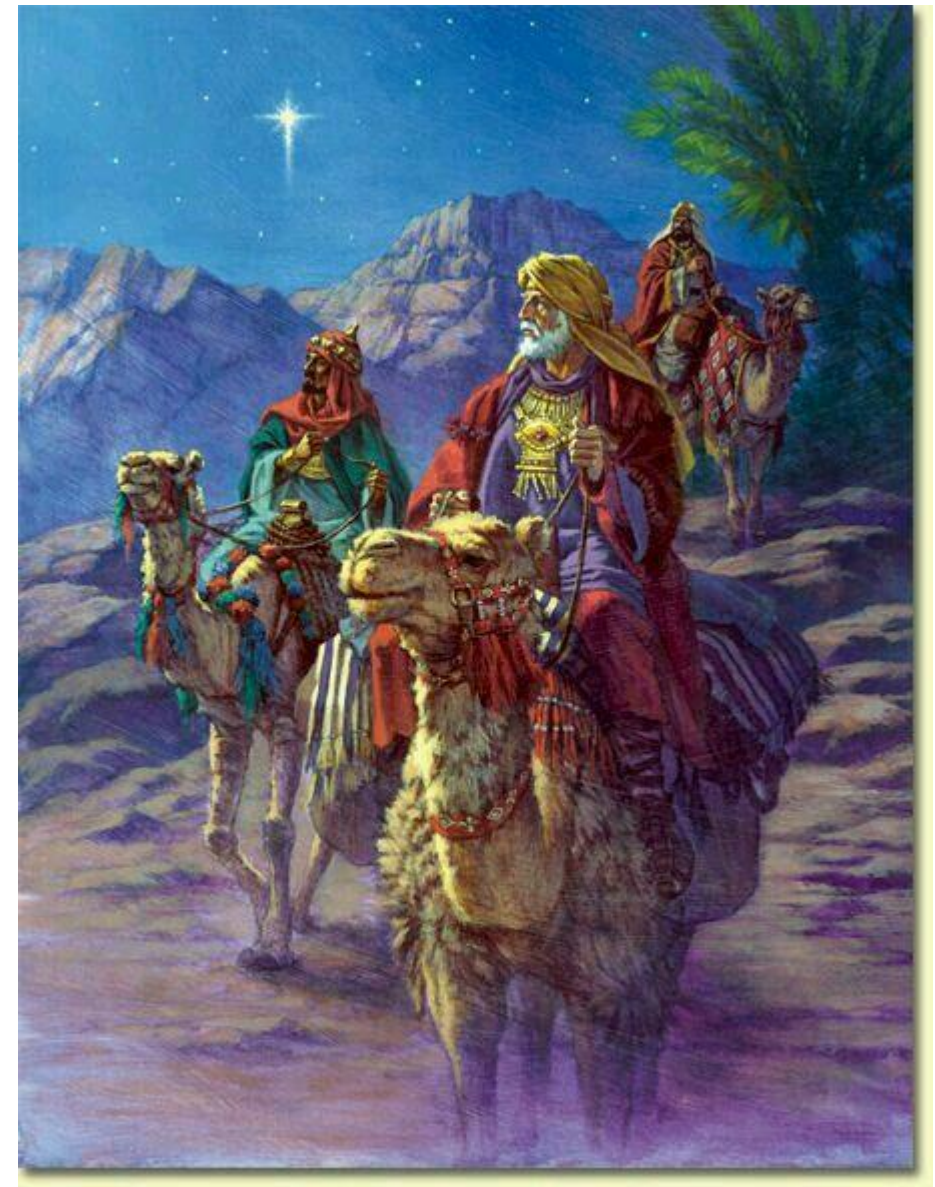
When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.





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 and of incense and of myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.





Who knows their
astrological sign?



Who has looked at
their horoscope for the
day in the paper?



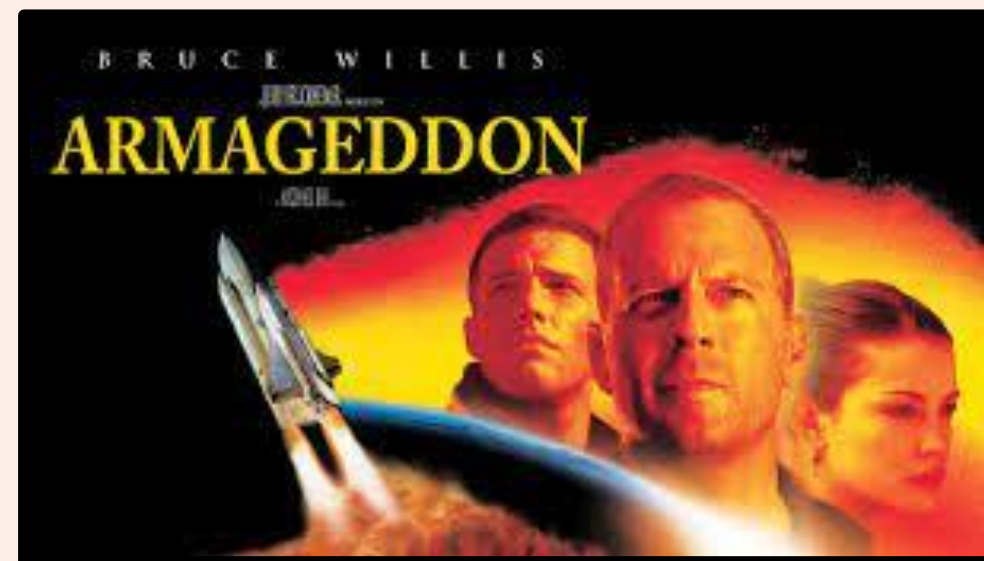
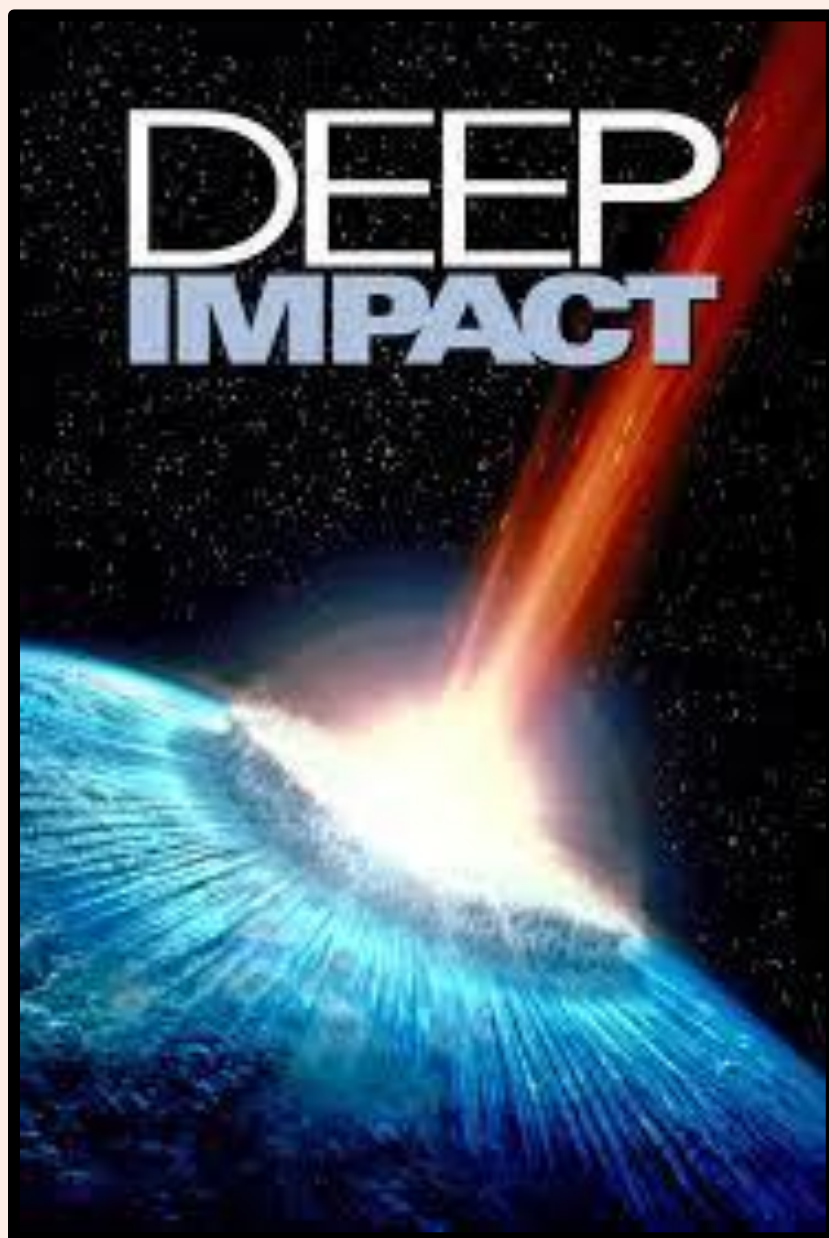
Who has ever read a
book on astrology?



If they lived today, the
Magi -the wise men- would
have done those things, too.



These men advised kings in many lands.





The movies were fiction—
BUT the star was real
...very real.

Dagmar, the Not-So Wise Man

Dagmar

This is really, interesting. There's this amazing star that, according to my calculations, is leading the way to the king of the Jews. And not just any king but THE king. My, my, my.

Caspar

Dagmar, Dagmar, have you seen this new star?

Dagmar

Why, I have indeed, Caspar. I was just thinking about it. My research indicates that it's pointing the way to the Jewish Messiah. What an opportunity, to actually SEE this king of all kings.

Caspar

That's just what I think. As a matter of fact, Balthasar, Melchior, and I are planning to hit the road and follow this star. Do you want to come with us?

Dagmar

For sure, that would be a fabulous thing to do. But I've got some important stuff to do here—I need to refurbish my camel skins; my tent is getting pretty grubby. Why don't you start without me?

Caspar

But Dagmar, you've been studying the stars for years. You know how important this is. You know this chance won't ever come again.

Dagmar

Why, I'm sure you're right. But you haven't seen how ratty my camel skins are looking. Why don't you go and tell me all about it?

Caspar

How can you call yourself a wise man? This is what you've waited all Your life for: To follow a star that actually LEADS somewhere?

Dagmar

Hey! Who are you calling a not-so-wise man? You're going to chuck your job here to chase a star? I'm the one with my feet on the ground; I'm the smart one here.

Caspar

You may be smart, but you're sure not wise, Dagmar.



They presented gifts
and worshipped the child.



The 4th Not-so Wise Man

Jasper

This is really, really interesting. There's this amazing star that, according to my calculations, is leading the way to the king of the Jews. And not just any king but THE king. My, my, my.

Caspar

Jasper, Jasper, have you seen this new star?

Jasper

Why, I have indeed, Caspar. I was just thinking about it. My research indicates that it's pointing the way to the Jewish Messiah. What an opportunity, to actually SEE this king of all kings.

Caspar

That's just what I think. As a matter of fact, Balthasar, Melchior, and I are planning to hit the road and follow this star. Do you want to come with us?

Jasper

For sure, that would be a fabulous thing to do. But I've got some important stuff to do here—I need to refurbish my camel skins; my tent is getting pretty grubby. Why don't you start without me?

Caspar

But Jasper, you've been studying the stars for years. You know how important this is. You know this chance won't ever come again.

Jasper

Why, I'm sure you're right. But you haven't seen how ratty my camel skins are looking. Why don't you go and tell me all about it?

Caspar

How can you call yourself a wise man? This is what you've waited all your life for: To follow a star that actually LEADS somewhere?

Jasper

Hey! Who are you calling a not-so-wise man? You're going to chuck your job here to chase a star? I'm the one with my feet on the ground; I'm the smart one here.

Caspar

You may be smart, but you're sure not wise, Jasper....





We Three Kings of Orient Are - UMH 254



We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain
Moor and mountain
Following yonder star

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold, I bring to crown Him again
King for ever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I
Incense owns a Deity nigh
Prayer and praising,
all men raising
Worship Him, God most high.

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

*O star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, Still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Community Prayer

Dear Lord,

After a lifetime of studying the stars and a knowledge of history, the wise men took action when they saw that special star in the sky. They chose to give their in searching for you—traveling hundreds of miles in dangerous circumstances, not sure where they were going, but bringing expensive treasures to give You. At last they found You.



Lord, You want each of us to give You everything in the same way—all that we are and all that we have are Your precious gifts to us anyway. Help us to remember that You, too, gave everything for us. There may be times when You ask the same of us. You came to light the way for us and now we need to follow it! *Amen*





Offering and Doxology



What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,

If I were a wise man, I would do my part,

Yet what can I give Him — Give my heart.

Benediction

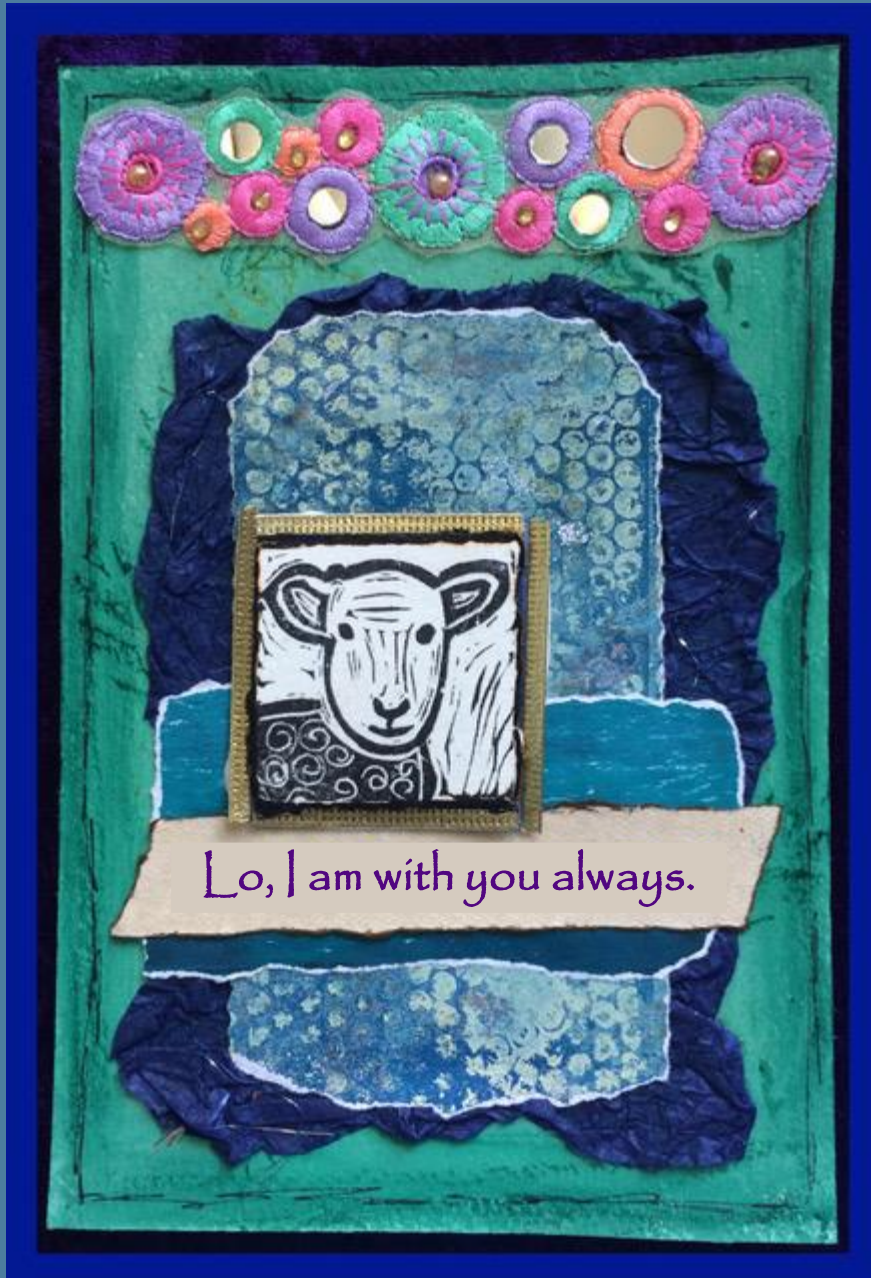
Art by Sue Carroll



Benediction

Go forth, no longer walking in darkness,
but seeing the Light of the World
—Jesus Christ—
before you.

Be wise and fearless like the Magi.
Rise up and follow.



Benediction

Art by Sue Carroll