

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church

An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland



LAKE PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IN JOINT FELLOWSHIP

*Sustaining a vibrant and growing congregation through Christian spiritual transformation,
making our work and the church relevant and visible.*

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EPIPHANY

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January 2, 2022

Epiphany Sunday

Celebration of Divine Worship

PRELUDE

Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary

Liturgical Movement led by Rev. Jojo V. Gabuya, *Guest Preacher*

WELCOME

Laurel Williams

INTROIT

March of the Three Kings (French Carol)

arr. Robert Vandall

OPENING PRAYER *[responsive]*

Linda Weingarten & Patty Staggs

God of all time, we praise and adore you for breaking into the darkness of this world with the glorious light of your presence.

A light which made your love for the world visible in the babe born in Bethlehem-

Jesus Christ, your Holy Child, our Saviour.

A light which guided those gift-bearing travellers from afar to find and worship the Christ-child.

A light which leads us to you, now revealed in Jesus Christ.

We pray that you will accept our worship for it arises from hearts and minds in awe over the enormity of your gift to us of pure love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

- Moira Laidlaw, on *Liturgies Online*.

A SONG, SCRIPTURE AND A PRAYER

Opening Song

We Three Kings

UMH 251

1. We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.
*O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*
2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.
*O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*
3. Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.
*O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*
4. 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 light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*
5. Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.
*O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2:1-12 (MSG)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It’s you, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land, no longer bringing up the rear.

From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

SCRIPTURAL RESPONSE *De Tierra Lejana Venimos* UMH 243

(From a Distant Home)

- 1. From a distant home the Savior we come seeking,
using as our guide the star so brightly beaming.
*Lovely eastern star that tells us of God’s morning,
heaven’s wondrous light, O never cease thy shining!
Glory in the highest to the Son of Heaven,
and upon the earth be peace and love to all.***
- 2. Glowing gold I bring the new-born babe so holy,
token of his power to reign above in glory.
*Lovely eastern star that tells us of God’s morning,
heaven’s wondrous light, O never cease thy shining!
Glory in the highest to the Son of Heaven,
and upon the earth be peace and love to all.***
- 3. Frankincense I bring the child of God’s own choosing,
token of our prayers to heaven ever rising.
*Lovely eastern star that tells us of God’s morning,
heaven’s wondrous light, O never cease thy shining!
Glory in the highest to the Son of Heaven,
and upon the earth be peace and love to all.***
- 4. Bitter myrrh have I to give the infant Jesus,
token of the pain that he will bear to save us.
*Lovely eastern star that tells us of God’s morning,
heaven’s wondrous light, O never cease thy shining!
Glory in the highest to the Son of Heaven,
and upon the earth be peace and love to all.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Jojo V. Gabuya, *Guest Preacher*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

*Please feel free to use the name of your choice for God that speaks to your soul.

Our *Creator 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

Prayer of Confession and Resolve [*responsive*]

Linda Weingarten & Patty Staggs

The coming of Christ was not, and is not, widely welcomed.

Wherever there is epiphany there will also be darkness:

the darkness of old superstitions and dogmas which refuse to fade away easily;

the darkness of pride in the half truths that have masqueraded as wisdom;

the darkness of entrenched evil that hates the light and tries to dispose of it;

the darkness of apathy that cannot be bothered to open the shutters;

Let us make our confession together:

*Most holy and most loving God, we admit to you and to each other,
that we are creatures who either through foolishness or willfulness
often choose darkness instead of light.*

*Here and now, we surrender to you our fears and proud opinions,
our short-sighted folly and our pompous wisdom,*

our deep-seated sins and our apathy towards change and renewal.

*Please forgive the darkness and pain we have inflicted on others,
and restore the light-starved hopes and ideals within our own souls.*

*Trusting your grace, we earnestly pray: "Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us."*

Through Christ Jesus our Saviour. Amen!

Bruce Prewer

TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND HOPE

Assurance of Grace

Rev. Jojo Gabuya, *Guest Preacher*

My friends, Epiphany is good news!

The Light comes not to sear and blind us but to save us.

Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners.

In his name I declare to you: Yours sins are forgiven! **Amen!**

Bruce Prewer

PASSING THE PEACE

*As forgiven people Living in the season of miracles,
let us share peace with our siblings in the world!*

SHARING IN COMMUNION OF THE BREAD AND CUP

MESSAGE

“Our Star of Hope”

Rev. Jojo Gabuya, *Guest Preacher*

LIVING AS THE CHURCH, GRATITUDES, OFFERINGS

Living as the Church

Gratitude Times

Offering Time

Offering Words

THANKSGIVING SONG

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

TFWS 2195

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I'll rejoice.
Look to God, do not be afraid,
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
Lift up your voices the Lord is near.*

CLOSING SONG

A Star Shone Bright

W&S 3051

(to Tune: Dues Tuorum Militum; Bless Thou the Gifts UMH 587)

- 1. A star shone bright across the plain and calmed the earth so Love could reign.
'Twas in a child that hope was born, a dream fulfilled! O happy morn!*
- 2. O Son of God, Incarnate Word, O Wisdom's Life, whom angels heard,
come forth again, our hearts console. O heal our hurts and make us whole.*
- 3. From Bethlehem come to our day; reveal to us your holy way.
Be born again, Eternal Fire. O Spirit come our souls inspire.*
- 4. O star shine forth once more this night and flood our streets with heavenly Life
till every heart in Christ shall see the glory of eternity!*

CLOSING PRAYER *(unison)*

Patty Staggs

*We have celebrated together that Jesus Christ came not only for Christians,
but to be known by every person, every country, every culture on earth.*

For he is the Savior of all.

*May we come to know him better and then make him known to others,
especially by the way we live.*

And may almighty God bless you, the Creator, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Go in peace of Christ and walk in his light. Thanks be to God. AMEN!

posted on Liturgy Alive: Models of Celebration (adapt.)

POSTLUDE

Antioch

arr. David Cherwien

[VIEW ALL SERVICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE!](#)

We welcome Rev. Jojo Gabuya from *the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples*.

Josefina/Jojo V. Gabuya
Pronouns: They, Them, Theirs

Josefina/Jojo is a Master of Divinity graduate at Pacific School of Religion. Jojo identifies as an Asian non-binary and transgender person.

Jojo is an interfaith minister in the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, which was co-founded by Dr. Howard Thurman. *They has over three decades of interfaith engagements, including but not limited to organizing social justice events at school campuses, houses of faith, and other venues* They is also an active member of Plymouth UCC Oakland and of St. Mary Magdalen Church in Berkeley. Jojo has been leading worship and preaching since 2017, when *They* was part of the Pulpit Supply Roster of the Northern California-Nevada (NCNC) Conference UCC and as a Member in Discernment.

Jojo is a member of the Advisory and Planning Team of the Trans Faith and Action Network (TFAAN)-The Freedom Center (TFC) in North Carolina and the (Ca-Nv) UMC Philippine Solidarity Task Force, which protect the rights of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming persons and of the Filipinx communities, respectively. In 2020, *They* used to be part of the Next Church (PC-USA) Bloggers Cohort, which gave Jojo the opportunity to blog against racism, transphobia, and other social injustices (*see <https://nextchurch.net>*).

Jojo started *Their* nonviolent human rights activism in college, during the Martial Law years in the Philippines. Inspired by the boundary crossing Jesus' gospel of love and justice, Jojo worked with several nonprofit organizations that focused on poverty alleviation and people (including women, children, and LGBTQIAs) empowerment. Among these were the United Nations Development Programme Philippines, Kairos Canada and the Protestant Church of East Timor, CARE (Cooperative American Relief Everywhere) Philippines, Save the Children Japan, Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project, and the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) - Ministry of Gender in Zambia, Africa. *They* also volunteered *Their* services with some rehabilitation centers, orphanages, and people's organizations as counselor, community organizer, writer/researcher.

Jojo used to work for Wesley Foundation of Merced as Campus Minister at Merced College, UC Merced, and at Wesley House from November 2020 to July 2021. Currently, They is seeking asylum in the U.S. where Jojo wishes to freely and honestly live as Who and What Jojo is. They is scared of returning to the Philippines where the Duterte administration's security forces have been incarcerating, killing, and red-tagging human rights activists, including the LGBTQIA rights activists since 2016.